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Editor's Introduction

by Melissa S. Dale, Executive Director and Associate Professor, USF Center for Asia Pacific Studies

We are pleased to announce the publication of the **latest issue of Asia Pacific Perspectives**. In **vol. 16, no 2 (2020)**, we present the multifaceted ways in which scholars in the humanities and social sciences are looking at food and culture in the Asia Pacific.

The idea for this special issue first started with the USF Center for Asia Pacific Studies' fall 2019 symposium, "Have You Eaten Yet? The History and Culture of Food in East Asia" (October 17-18, 2019). The topics discussed at the symposium were wide-ranging, for example, the globalization of Asian cuisines, the impact of transportation on food writing, and the growing importance of restaurant guidebooks in China. The research shared encouraged us to consider what food in East Asia can reveal about the region's past and present.

Beyond satisfying our curiosity about food trends and consumption patterns both past and present, our latest issue also considers themes important for our understanding of Asia Pacific during the 20th and 21st centuries including global modernity, imperialism, the history of food in East Asia, the history of animal health, cultural appropriation, indigenization, and more.

In the feature article for this issue, **Tatsuya Mitsuda** (Keio University) provides a fascinating account of how Chinese animals were made fit for consumption by German and Japanese imperialist bodies in the early 20th century. His research on the production of milk and beef in Shandong Province reveals the different processes the imperialists adopted to meet the dietary needs of the German colonizers and the growing appetite for beef in modernizing Japan. His work will have a broad appeal ranging from readers seeking a more nuanced understanding of the activities of imperialist powers in China to those interested in Japanese food history or the history of animal health.

We are pleased to present two think pieces focused on the field of Japanese food studies. In our first think piece, **Eric C. Rath** (University of Kansas) contemplates the "known unknowns" in Japanese food history and shares the challenges scholars face when researching the history of food, especially in premodern Japan. Rath's commentary on the study of Japanese foods such as sake, beef, and sushi, presented through stories about drinking contests, the origins of our favorite sushi, and "the Japanese meat question," provides important insights into Japanese food culture and leaves readers hungry for more.

In our second think piece, **Christopher Laurent** (University of San Francisco), examines the cuisine of the Korean minority in contemporary Japan. Laurent takes us on a journey

to Osaka's Koreatown where we can virtually smell the grilled meat and kimchi. While celebrating the cuisine of Zainichi Koreans, Laurent argues that the story of Korean food in Japan is really one of cultural appropriation and exploitation. His think piece encourages us to think about where our favorite foods come from and the impact of "culinary poaching" on marginalized communities.

We are delighted to include a graduate student paper in this issue from **Xiaoyu (Jennifer) Zhang** (University of San Francisco). Researching what role Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) plays in the lives of Chinese international students and their eating habits, Zhang sheds light on the continuing relevance of this traditional school of medicine among young Chinese today.

In "Contemporary Filipino Foodways," **Ty Matejowsky** (University of Central Florida) provides a feast for the eyes with his vivid photos of views from the street, household, and local dining. His photos of Filipino food spaces and fast food reveal the presence of the global food industry in the Philippines but more importantly how Filipinos have indigenized outside food influences such as SPAM and ketchup to make them reflect Philippine culture.

In this issue's book review, **Serena Calcagno** (University of San Francisco) reads *The Other Milk: Reinventing Soy in Republican China* by Jia-Chen Fu. While much of this issue of the journal has focused on cows and beef, this review reveals how soybean milk was promoted as the means "to elevate Chinese nationhood via nutrition" in the early 20th century.

As always, we hope that these articles will stimulate further discussion and research on the topic and promote positive change. We appreciate the help and guidance of the journal's **editorial board** in bringing this special issue on food and culture in the Asia Pacific to publication. Thank you to **Neha Cariappa** for being such a dedicated and hardworking editorial assistant from start to finish on this issue. Thank you to **Serena Calcagno**, our incoming editorial assistant, for jumping right in to help read the final drafts. Special thanks also to our production team, **Denise Struempf** and **Kevin Zaragoza** for their attention to detail and design. Last, we thank our authors for their contributions to keeping the production of this issue moving forward, especially during the worldwide pandemic.

Melissa S. Dale, Editor



*The Qingdao Slaughterhouse Cattle Slaughter Room (Date of photograph unknown). Source: Yamawaki Keikichi, *Nihon teikoku kachiku densenbyō yobō shi* (Taishō Shōwahan) *Hōki no hensen 3* (Tokyo: Jūeki chōsa jo, 1938).*

Imperial Bovine Bodies: Rendering Chinese Milk and Meat Fit for German and Japanese Consumption

By Tatsuya Mitsuda, Keio University

Abstract

This article extends and enriches the overlapping histories of food and animals through an investigation of how and why Chinese animal bodies, during the first three decades of the twentieth century, were subjected to a process by which they were rendered fit for German and Japanese consumers. Much of the current historiography for both fields neglects the important impact that imperial activities in East Asia exerted on the international trade of livestock and deadstock and the veterinary regimes put in place to combat the transnational threat of infectious animal diseases. Focusing on Qingdao in Shandong Province, this article sheds comparative light on the contrasting dietary needs of German and Japanese colonizers in shaping how animal bodies in general were processed, how bovine resources in particular came to acquire distinct values, how issues of animal health were coopted into various economic and political arguments, and how different conditions influenced boundary-work that was integral to making Chinese animal products palatable for German and Japanese consumption.

Keywords: food, animals, meat, milk, health, slaughterhouse, Japan, China, Germany, imperialism

Introduction

When German troops seized Jiaozhou Bay in 1898 (located on the southern coast of Shandong Province, northern China) and when Japanese forces took over the leased territory from the Germans in 1914, both latecomers to the imperial scene set about exploiting the natural resources of the region.¹ Coal, cotton, groundnuts, and silk represent some of the most popular exported commodities to which economic historians have turned to show how northeast China, through the ice-free port in Qingdao, became embedded in world markets.² The existing literature has, however, remarked less upon the exploitation of animal resources.³ Cattle, in particular, offered value as a source of milk or beef, the trade of which was also internationalized, with shipments of the latter being exported to numerous countries in East and Southeast Asia. As in the commodification of other natural resources, science and technology played a crucial role in rendering raw Chinese bovine bodies fit for consumption: Shandong cattle were exploited, extracted, processed, tamed, transported, and made to comply with German and Japanese standards of health and hygiene.⁴



Figure 1. Map of Qingdao (1912). Source: Meyers Geographischer Handatlas, Leipzig/Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1912, via Wikimedia Commons.

¹This article will render Japanese and Chinese names with surnames first and given names second, unless they appear in English-language publications.

²Asada Shinji, *Doitsu tōchika no Chintao. Keizaiteki jiyūshugi to shokuminchi shakai chitsujo* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2011); Wolfgang Bauer, *Tsingtao 1914 bis 1931. Japanische Herrschaft, wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und die Rückkehr der deutschen Kaufleute* (Munich: Ludicium, 1999); Ran Gyokuji, *Chintao no toshi keisei shi: 1897-1945. Shijō keizai no keisei to tenkai* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2009).

³For a recent exception, as well as insights into the expanding beef trade in the region more generally, see Thomas David DuBois, "Many Roads from Pasture to Plate: A Commodity Chain Approach to China's Beef Trade, 1732-1931," *Journal of Global History* 14, no. 1 (March 2019): 22-43.

⁴The concept of "rendering" is taken from Nicole Shukin, who employs the concept to reveal not just the economic but also the biopolitical dimensions of livestock production. Nicole Shukin, *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 20-24.

The development of this imperial and transnational foodway was characterized by three overlapping stages. First, the railroad penetrated the interior of China, making it possible to exploit and extract bovine bodies in unprecedented numbers ready for transportation to Qingdao. Second, depending on whether bovine bodies were to be transported dead or alive, a veterinary inspection regime centered around the public slaughterhouse was introduced to process the bodies and mitigate the risks they presented to the health of other livestock and humans. Finally, refrigerated ships packed as much fresh beef as possible into their hulls to satisfy (in the Japanese case) the growing appetite for beef among the broader population. This operational scale could not have been achieved by “human hands” alone; costly and complicated infrastructures, mechanics, protocols, and logistics were aligned to make possible the co-exploitation of the bovine resources that northern China had in abundance.⁵ As a result, the Germans and Japanese paved the way for the internationalization of the meat trade in East Asia.

During the 30 years in which Chinese animal bodies—dead or alive—increasingly traversed national borders, German and Japanese rulers engaged in “boundary-work” that resulted in divisions between people, animals, knowledge, and practices.⁶ Boundaries were drawn between German and Chinese diets. European animal bodies were separated from Chinese ones. Quarantines were imposed to segregate livestock arriving by rail from those kept in Qingdao. Inspections differentiated between healthy and unhealthy livestock. Rules were created to separate hygienic spaces and places from unhygienic ones. Pre-slaughter inspection and post-slaughter inspection took place at different times and locations. Edible bovine products were sharply divided from inedible ones.

Many of these boundaries were constructed with the help of scientists who enthusiastically embraced their role as empire builders. Medical and veterinary experts dictated where these divisions should be drawn. They determined how much the authorities should intervene in the policing of animal bodies. They also assessed the reliability of different serums manufactured by various countries for the purposes of inoculating bovine bodies earmarked for export. Not infrequently, since animals and food were intersecting spheres of interest, physicians and veterinarians (as well as their representative bodies) could contest the other’s expertise, with the results indicating the relative power they held in the colonial apparatus.

Revealing the processes by which Chinese animal bodies were rendered suitable for German and Japanese consumption helps extend our understanding of two intersecting and developing areas of historical research. First, the article intervenes in the growing field of Japanese food history. One problem with the current state of knowledge is how historical accounts of meat—seen as central to efforts to modernize the indigenous Japanese

⁵ Dolly Jørgensen, “Not by Human Hands: Five Technological Tenets for Environmental History in the Anthropocene,” *Environment & History* 20, no. 4 (November 2014): 479–89.

⁶ In Science and Technology Studies (STS), the concept of “boundary-work” is typically used to refer to the divisions created between different forms of knowledge. In an imperial and fluid setting such as Qingdao, where different nationalities, animals, habits, and forms of knowledge mixed, a broader application of the same concept is useful in capturing the boundaries that were drawn and redrawn to process animal bodies.

diet—neglect the extent to which demand for beef was satisfied by countries in East Asia.⁷ Becoming like the modern West involved adopting Western-style diets and eating habits, but it also involved constructing new trade networks from which ingredients for new dishes, such as beef pot (*gyūnabe*), could be sourced.⁸ Building on the work of Noma Mariko, who first drew attention to the significance of Qingdao beef in Japanese markets, this article shifts the focus away from an overt interest in the impact of the West to a reappraisal of the influence exerted by East Asia.⁹ It thus contributes to a growing body of work that rehabilitates the role of China and Korea in shaping modern Japanese food culture.¹⁰

Second, the article builds upon research that is concerned with the history of animal health. Influenced by the “animal turn” in scholarship more generally, historians of medicine have in recent years made concerted efforts to consider the impact of not just human but also animal diseases on modernizing societies.¹¹ Most of the research carried out thus far has concentrated on developments in the West, although some investigations into European colonies have been made. However, with the significant exception of scholars like Robert Perrins, who has looked at animal health in colonial Manchuria, interest in how problems of infectious animal diseases were dealt with in East Asia is lacking.¹² This state of affairs has prompted Iijima Wataru, a leading medical historian, to call on scholars to concern themselves with the history of livestock hygiene.¹³ Given the massive importance of animal health and meat hygiene in the ever-increasing trade in meat and livestock in East Asia today, research that can reveal the evolution of modern regimes of animal and meat inspection in the East Asian context is long overdue.¹⁴ It also helps correct the Western-centric concentration of the current historiography, even while acknowledging the influences of nations like Imperial Germany in the construction of those regimes.

⁷For examples, see Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006); Harada Nobuo, *Rekishi no naka no kome to niku* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1993); Ishige Naomichi, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Ayu Majima, “Eating Meat, Seeking Modernity: Food and Imperialism in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Japan,” in *Critical Readings on Food in East Asia*, Vol. 1., ed. Katarzyna J. Cwiertka (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Miyazaki Akira, *Shokutaku wo kaeta nikushoku* (Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōron sha, 1987).

⁸*Gyūnabe* is known today as “sukiyaki”—a dish usually made with thin slices of beef, vegetables, tofu, and noodles simmered in a sweet sauce.

⁹Noma Mariko, “Nichiro sensō wo keiki to suru gyūka kōtō to shokuniku kyōkyū no tayōka,” *Nōringyō mondai kenkyū* 47, no. 1 (2011): 60–65.

¹⁰See, for example, Timothy Y. Tsu, “Who Cooked for Townsend Harris, America’s First Consul General to Japan? Chinese Cooks and the Beginning of Western Cooking in Modern Japan,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* (Forthcoming); Iwama Kazuhiro, ed., *Chūgoku ryōri to kindai nihon: shoku to shikō no bunka kōryūshi* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2019).

¹¹For a recent overview, see Saurabh Mishra, “An Introduction: Veterinary History Comes of Age,” *Social History of Medicine* (Special Virtual Issue). http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/sochis/veterinaryhistory.html (accessed October 15, 2019).

¹²Robert John Perrins, “Holding Water in Bamboo Buckets: Agricultural Science, Livestock Breeding, and Veterinary Medicine in Colonial Manchuria,” in *Healing the Herds: Disease, Livestock Economies, and the Globalization of Veterinary Medicine*, eds. Karen Brown and Daniel Gilfoyle (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 195–214.

¹³Iijima Wataru, “Pesuto pandemikku no rekishigaku,” in *Eisei to kindai. Pesuto ryūkō ni miru higashi ajia no tōchi-iryō-shakai*, eds. Nagashima Takeshi, Ichikawa Tomoe, and Iijima Wataru (Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku shuppankyoku, 2017), 24.

¹⁴Clive J. C. Phillips, *The Animal Trade* (Boston: CABI, 2015).

Due to space constraints, this article must exclude comparisons with other colonies such as South Africa, India, and Kenya.¹⁵ It is concerned foremost with revealing how German attitudes were more conservative while Japanese attitudes were more progressive during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Why were German perspectives focused narrowly on the colonizers' own diets and constructing a health regime that protected the Western inhabitants of Qingdao itself, while the Japanese focused more broadly on the Japanese diet as a whole and constructing a health regime that sought to strengthen—through abundant supplies of cheap beef—the Japanese body? Based on analyses of untapped archival documents and primary sources in German and Japanese, this article contributes to the growing body of international research shedding light on the relationship between food animals and modernization.¹⁶

Rendering Chinese Milk Fit for German Consumption

One of the most influential scholars to shape German views of Shandong was the Prussian geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen. He received financial backing from the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce to make extensive field trips to China in the late 1860s and early 1870s, conducting surveys that mapped out not just the geography of the land but also the economic resources the country could offer the world.¹⁷ Shellen Wu has recently remarked that because of this body of work, Richthofen is celebrated in the West “as a pioneer of scientific exploration in China” but “vilified in China for opening the floodgates of imperialism.”¹⁸ As early as 1868, Richthofen saw much potential for extracting the untapped deposits of coal in Shandong Province and believed that both the West and the Chinese could benefit from its export through the development of railroads.¹⁹ His pronouncement is widely considered to have provided scientific justification for the selection of Qingdao as the first German colony in East Asia and contributed to the massive investment sunk into constructing a railroad that linked Qingdao to Jinan (the center of Shandong Province), with the principal aim of opening up the coal mines in Boshan for international trade.

Compared to his enthusiasm for resources such as coal, Richthofen showed relatively little interest in the economic potential of livestock. Large numbers of cattle, pigs, dogs, and

¹⁵ Karen Brown, *Mad Dogs and Meerkats: A History of Resurgent Rabies in Southern Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011); Saurabh Mishra, *Beastly Encounters of the Raj: Livelihoods, Livestock and Veterinary Health in India, 1790–1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Kusunoki Kazuki, *Afurika sabanna no genzaishi. Jinruigaku ga mita Keniya bokuchikumin no tōchi to teikō no keifu* (Kyoto: Shōwa dō, 2019).

¹⁶ J. L. Anderson, *Capitalist Pigs: Pigs, Pork, and Power in America* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2019); Joshua Specht, *Red Meat Republic: A Hoof-to-Table History of How Beef Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019); Rebecca J. H. Woods, *The Herds Shot Round the World: Native Breeds and the British Empire, 1800–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press Books, 2017).

¹⁷ Ferdinand von Richthofen, *China: Ergebnisse eigener Reisen und darauf gegründeter Studien*, 5 vols. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1877–1912).

¹⁸ Shellen Wu, “The Search for Coal in the Age of Empires: Ferdinand von Richthofen’s Odyssey in China, 1860–1920,” *The American Historical Review* 119, no. 2 (2014): 339.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 349–50.

chickens dotted the landscape of Shandong, but they rarely entered his field of vision. One exception was when he turned his attention to the topic of food, which rendered more visible the (dead) animals he must have encountered. For Richthofen, it was inconceivable that Europeans would choose to eat like the natives—the Chinese diet was simply “unpleasant”—and so it was necessary to find ways of procuring Western staples such as meat and milk.²⁰ Continuing to adhere to a European diet was difficult: the Chinese generally consumed very little meat, fish, or dairy.²¹ For this reason, Richthofen counseled his countrymen to hunt pheasant, quail, and pigeon, but he reassured them that despite the low demand for them, Chinese towns did sell beef, chicken, and eggs.²² He warned his compatriots, however, to avoid pork. Precisely because it was exceptionally popular among the locals, Richthofen considered Chinese pork to be “unclean” and thus unworthy of German consumption.²³ Several years after Richthofen penned his observations, German colonists began to live in the leased territory towards the end of the nineteenth-century and quickly set about making their own arrangements for the provision of meat and milk. They also inherited suspicions about the native diet that informed the rules drawn up on the inspection of both. This attitude reflected a broader infatuation with high standards of hygiene that served to erect a wall between the Germans and the Chinese and to exacerbate the racial segregation that characterized Qingdao as a colony.²⁴

Milk rather than meat proved to be the most vexing concern for the newly arrived colonists. With the arrival of large numbers of German women and children, the demand for milk and dairy products spiked. While Chinese mothers appeared to have had few problems breastfeeding their own babies, German mothers (perhaps due to difficulties acclimatizing) appear to have struggled, making it necessary for cow’s milk to be readied as a supplement.²⁵ Since the Chinese did not share this custom of drinking fresh milk and did not possess the corresponding knowledge to breed and rear dairy cows, the Germans found it hard to extract sufficient amounts from the teats of indigenous cows, which only produced between 1.5 and 2 liters of milk per day.²⁶ Moreover, in comparison to European breeds, Chinese cows had shorter lactation cycles, which meant they could not be milked as frequently or for long periods. Such a desperate situation was exacerbated by Chinese merchants’ perceived penchant for mischief. They were seen to adulterate deliveries of milk by diluting them with water or limewater. To address this situation, the German authorities were quick to lay down rules. To be able to do business with the Europeans, milk merchants

²⁰ Ferdinand von Richthofen, *Kiautschou. Seine Weltstellung und voraussichtliche Bedeutung* (Berlin: Georg Stilke, 1897), 135.

²¹ Frederick J. Simoons, *Food in China: A Cultural and Historical Inquiry* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 1990), 293.

²² Richthofen, *Kiautschou*, 135.

²³ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁴ Sabina Groeneveld, “Far Away at Home in Qingdao (1897–1914),” *German Studies Review* 39, no. 1 (February 2016): 68–69; Agnes Kneitz, “German Water Infrastructure in China: Colonial Qingdao 1898–1914,” *NTM Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik und Medizin* 24, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 431–34.

²⁵ Max Eggebrecht, *Der tierärztliche Anteil an deutscher Kulturarbeit im Schutzgebiet Kiautschou (China)* (Berlin: Tierärztliche Hochschule Berlin, 1923), 20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

had to register their names and addresses; cattle that were diseased or suspected to be diseased needed to be reported and quarantined; and severe penalties were imposed when regulations were flouted.²⁷ It also led to concerted efforts to import German cattle—mainly East Friesian and Jeverland breeds—which would then be crossbred with Chinese cows in the hope of achieving better yields.²⁸ By intervening in the reproductive process, the German colonizers hoped the milk would improve the health of German bodies weakened by their new environment.

Responsible for securing and policing stable and safe supplies of milk were German veterinarians who otherwise spent most of their early years in Qingdao busy fulfilling their military duties.²⁹ Also tasked with overseeing the breeding programs, they rarely extended themselves beyond the colonial enclave. That was in stark contrast to their responsibilities back home, where the elites of the profession—the veterinary officers—assumed a more international field of vision. Sparked by the trichinosis outbreaks in the 1860s, which revealed that consuming raw pork could cause human death, by the 1880s, veterinarians in the metropole became acknowledged experts in an inspection regime that centered on newly built public slaughterhouses, where meat and the health of animals were assessed as fit for consumption or trade.³⁰ One major reason for the development of such a costly regime was the political nature of the international trade in meat and livestock. Cheap imports of pork from the United States could be removed from German markets, and imports of Russian cattle, which were held chiefly responsible for infecting domestic cattle with diseases, could also be expelled to prevent the infection of German livestock earmarked for export to such lucrative markets as the United Kingdom.³¹ While Qingdao was also exposed to the risks of epizootic outbreaks from Shandong Province, the overriding veterinary concern in the leased territory was the health of their own German dairy cows. Despite the increased importance of cattle exports to countries like Russia in later years, interest in animal health narrowly focused on protecting the food security of the colonizers. It was not until the Japanese takeover in 1914 that broader interests informed veterinary policy.

Rendering Meat Fit for German Consumption

Meat took on less importance for the colonizers than milk, but this did not prevent the Germans from introducing public meat inspection controls along the lines that had been introduced in their homeland, where the state was increasingly involved in mandating scientific inspection of food animals before and after slaughter.³² In 1899, Ernst Rassau, the

²⁷ Manuel Töpfer, *Der Veterinärdienst des Deutschen Reiches in China von 1898 bis 1914* (Gießen: DVG, 2010), 20.

²⁸ Eggebrecht, *Der tierärztliche Anteil*, 20.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁰ Tatsuya Mitsuda, "Entangled Histories: German Veterinary Medicine, c. 1770–1900," *Medical History* 61, no. 1 (2017): 38–42.

³¹ Tatsuya Mitsuda, "Trichinosis Revisited: Scientific Interventions in the Assessment of Meat and Animals in Imperial Germany," *Food and Foodways* 27, nos. 1–2 (2019): 64–66.

³² For an overview of this development in Europe, including Germany, see Peter A. Koolmees, "Veterinary Inspection and Food Hygiene in the Twentieth Century," in *Food, Science, Policy and Regulation in the Twentieth Century*, eds. David F.

first veterinarian in Qingdao, felt that the colony did not need to introduce a full-blown meat inspection regime based on the German model.³³ Yet he also acknowledged that some form of meat inspection was needed upon witnessing how meat was typically prepared in China, where there appeared to be very little care taken to maintain high standards of hygiene and to minimize the risks of infection, spoilage, or adulteration. Echoing sentiments expressed by Richthofen, German colonizers feared contamination of the meat they consumed.³⁴ Moreover, German employment of Chinese kitchen staff was liable to increase the risks of “disgusting” and “harmful” food entering circulation.³⁵ Local butchers who handled the slaughter of animals were no better. Rassau was shocked to see them gleefully devour infected meat to prove to him that it caused no harm. In the 1860s, scientists had leveled a similar critique at German butchers, whose knowledge of meat handling was labeled unscientific, but German criticism, when directed at the Chinese, assumed racial undertones. Not least due to such fears, regulations based on those from Rassau’s native Hesse-Nassau were introduced in 1899, making it mandatory for animals slaughtered for human consumption to undergo veterinary inspection.

Constrained by the lack of dependable hands with which to reduce the threat of Chinese animal bodies, it became necessary for the Germans to limit the spaces in which slaughter took place. At the outset, Rassau made periodic visits to neighboring villages to inspect their slaughter in designated sheds. As this proved time-consuming, Rassau set up a temporary slaughterhouse in Hsiauniwa, located in the south-west of the town. Rather than Rassau making trips to them, traders now needed to bring livestock destined for European consumption to him in this centralized location. Temporal conditions were tightened, too. Merchants were required to deliver livestock a few days before slaughter, which gave Rassau time to assess their health more reliably before they were put down.³⁶

Despite this strengthening of spatial and temporal controls, Rassau also pointed out that in view of the “still insufficient numbers of surveillance and supervisory personnel,” the kind of meat inspection carried out back in Germany could not be implemented without the erection of a proper slaughterhouse.³⁷ In time, local concerns meshed with imperial dreams of creating a “model colony” to construct a state-of-the-art slaughterhouse.³⁸ Following study trips to Shanghai and Germany, the governor-general decided to build a slaughterhouse based on the Dresden abattoir³⁹ that would showcase the best of German

Smith and Jim Phillips (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 53–68.

³³ Ernst Rassau, “Fleischbeschau in Deutsch-China,” *Berliner Tierärztliche Wochenschrift* 22 (1899): 263–65.

³⁴ Töpfer, *Der Veterinärdienst*, 24.

³⁵ Rassau, “Fleischbeschau,” 263.

³⁶ Töpfer, *Der Veterinärdienst*, 20.

³⁷ Rassau, “Fleischbeschau,” 264.

³⁸ Mechthild Leutner and Klaus Mühlhahn, „Musterkolonie Kiautschou“: *die Expansion des Deutschen Reiches in China: deutsch-chinesische Beziehungen 1897 bis 1914. Eine Quellensammlung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 178.

³⁹ The term abattoir is the more formal and modern name for a place where the large-scale, mechanized, and government-regulated killing and inspection of animals takes place. It will be used interchangeably with the term slaughterhouse.

science and engineering.⁴⁰ Opened in 1905, the slaughterhouse, which cost an eye-watering one million marks to build, quickly acquired a reputation as the best in East Asia. However, expectations that meat exports could further German commercial interests appear to have played a subordinate role in the endeavor—the slaughterhouse was built primarily to police the overlapping boundaries between Chinese producers and German consumers that meat-eating unavoidably involved.

While there are no records that detail the process by which the Qingdao abattoir came to be built, the slaughterhouse clearly adhered to some basic principles that underpinned the construction of German abattoirs.⁴¹ First, the slaughterhouse was located outside the town, reflecting the need to prevent the spread of disease to other animals kept in the vicinity.⁴² Second, the abattoir was constructed with connections to the railroad in mind, making it possible to prevent disruption to the general urban traffic. Third, the slaughterhouse separated the stockyard from the slaughterhouse itself, making it possible to limit infection and maintain cleanliness. Fourth, the slaughterhouse was built with further expansion in mind. Located on the west coast and near a harbor, it did not hinder the expansion of the town farther to the east. Built in the shape of a square, where the front faced the main thoroughfare, there was space for further development on the three remaining sides. Finally, the slaughterhouse stored sufficient supplies of water, which was needed in abundance to flush out to sea the significant amount of excreta and blood intrinsic to the slaughtering process.

Significant attention was also paid to the interior design of the slaughterhouse, especially with regard to setting up a transportation system that combined rails, winches, and pulleys. One major advantage of this arrangement was that it obviated the need for human hands to repeatedly use winches for hoisting weighty animal bodies. Once animals were hooked up to the rails, the suspended bodies could proceed along the tracks. Contact with the floor was thus avoided, making it possible for bodies to move seamlessly and in one direction between the different rooms as they awaited dissection, inspection, and refrigeration. A second advantage of the transportation system was that the efficiency of the slaughterhouse increased as its reliance on winches decreased. Spatial requirements could thus be reduced, and slaughterhouses could be made one-fifth or one-sixth the size of conventional slaughterhouses.⁴³ A third advantage of the transportation system was that the final product improved. The meat looked more appetizing; it did not spoil or lose shape as easily; and the losses that had bedeviled older practices were reduced. In his handbook, the architect Oskar Schwarz praised the transportation system developed by Beck & Henkel in Kassel that was installed in Qingdao.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Eggebrecht, *Der tierärztliche Anteil*, 12.

⁴¹ *Denkschrift betreffend die Entwicklung des Kiautschou-Gebiets von Oktober 1902 bis Oktober 1903* (Berlin, 1904), 44.

⁴² Oskar Schwarz, *Bau, Einrichtung und Betrieb von öffentlichen Schlachthöfen*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Springer, 1898), 77.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁴⁴ Max Eggebrecht, "Die Schlachthofanlage in Tsingtau," *Zeitschrift für Fleisch- und Milchhygiene* 4, no. 18 (January 1908): 110.

Railroads and Meat Exports

Located close to the main station at Qingdao, the slaughterhouse benefited from the development of the railroad. Financed by German banks and built by German engineers, in 1904, the *Schantung Eisenbahn Gesellschaft* completed the line between Jinan and Qingdao—a distance of 494 kilometers—making it possible to travel between the two towns in just 12 hours, when previously the journey had taken 10 to 12 days.⁴⁵ As Table 1 shows, the number of transported livestock gradually increased. By 1907, the volume had reached a staggering 26,214 large and 9,400 small animals per year. Such was the popularity of cattle that the Shandong provincial government attempted to restrict the numbers being traded for fear that vital farm work would grind to a halt on account of the dwindling amount of available bovine labor.⁴⁶ Between October 1905 and October 1906, a total of 15,600 animals were brought into Qingdao, of which 6,621, or 42 percent of all livestock, were transported by rail. However, not all the livestock transported on the Shandong Railroad were destined for Qingdao: a significant proportion were transported between the different provincial towns that served as intermediate stops. Yet more than one-third of all livestock carried, according to 1906 figures, ended up in Qingdao.⁴⁷ When the Tianjin-Pukou line was completed in 1912, which linked Jinan and Peking, access to animal bodies in north China increased further. Thanks to the railroad, livestock in Shandong and beyond were opened up for major economic exploitation.

Table 1: The Number of Livestock Transported on the Shandong Railroad, 1904-08

Year	Large Animals	Small Animals
1904	298	5
1905	1,538	722
1906	7,595	374
1907	26,214	9,400
1908	19,428	20,136

Source: Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde, R8127 4144: Schantung Eisenbahn Gesellschaft, 1899-1929. Compiled from business reports (Geschäftsberichte) 1904-1908.

Upon completion of the railroad, the number of livestock brought to the abattoir in Qingdao steadily increased; however, most were destined for export through the newly developed port to Vladivostok, Manila, Shanghai, Dalian, and other parts of China.⁴⁸ During the early twentieth century, it appears that most animal bodies were transported

⁴⁵Leutner and Mühlhahn, *Musterkolonie*, 387.

⁴⁶Asada, *Doitsu tōchika no Chintao*, 135.

⁴⁷Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde (BArch-B), R8127/4144: Schantung Eisenbahn Gesellschaft 1899-1929 Bd. 1. Geschäftsbericht 1906, Anlage 6.

⁴⁸Dubois, "Pasture to Plate," 38.

alive on ships. This accounts for the discrepancy between the numbers transported by rail and the numbers processed in the Qingdao slaughterhouse. As Russia (the main driving force behind escalating demand for beef) introduced refrigerated ships on the relatively short route that linked Qingdao and Vladivostok, this discrepancy was gradually resolved, and the slaughterhouse was increasingly tasked with the preparation of fresh meat for shipment to Siberia, as evidenced by the installation of more refrigeration facilities in the slaughterhouse.⁴⁹ By the second decade of the twentieth century, the fresh meat trade boomed, especially with Russia during the winter months.⁵⁰ Following a decade of modest increases, the number of all animals slaughtered exceeded 20,000 in 1910 before peaking at 45,420 on the eve of the First World War.

Table 2 The Number of Livestock Slaughtered at Qingdao, 1901-1914

Year	Number
1901	9,180
1902	11,913
1903	13,614
1904	14,991
1905	14,849
1906	14,566
1907	11,142
1908	16,261
1909	18,210
1910	20,955
1911	21,716
1912	28,571
1913	45,420
1914	29,288

Source: Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) Ref. B07090858200: Seitō Shubi gun minsei bu. Seitō tojyū jo (March 1918), 0027.

The rising number and concentration of livestock being transported changed the nature of the risks posed by infectious animal disease. In the pre-railroad era, the number of livestock arriving in Qingdao was relatively small, the places from which they had been driven were geographically limited, and the movement of animal bodies was slow and varied. However, as the railroad became the preferred mode of transportation, the number of livestock increased, the origins of livestock diversified, and the movement of animal bodies

⁴⁹ *Denkschrift betreffend die Entwicklung des Kiautschou-Gebiets von Oktober 1907 bis Oktober 1908* (Berlin, 1909), 42.

⁵⁰ Bundesarchiv Freiburg (BArch-F), RM3/7133: Kiatschou im Jahre 1912.

became swift and uniform. Such a change brought with it both risks and opportunities. The European experience had already demonstrated how the development of an international rail network helped spread infectious disease more rapidly and widely. Similarly, the expanding railroad network in northeast China elevated the threat of epizootics in Qingdao because the railroad helped penetrate the “hinterlands”—an area notorious for virulent epizootics such as rinderpest⁵¹—from which cattle would be brought to market in Jinan. Yet the railroad, because it made the compilation of statistical information possible, also provided public health authorities with a better map of the movement of animal bodies. The railroad also made it possible for veterinarians to concentrate on the main checkpoints at which livestock arrived. Disembarking in bulk, livestock could be herded speedily to quarantine from the railroad station and, if destined for shipment as fresh meat, taken to the nearby slaughterhouse.

Contesting Veterinary Expertise

For the veterinarians who managed the slaughterhouse, the increasing popularity of the meat trade elevated their standing as scientists, and the slaughterhouse, which provided veterinarians with an abundance of healthy and diseased animal bodies as specimens, became a place for the production of scientific knowledge. As Max Eggebrecht, Rassau’s successor, reflected, prior to the opening of the abattoir there had been “little time for scientific work.”⁵² When the public slaughterhouse was opened, working conditions radically changed: veterinarians gained access to a fully equipped laboratory, library, and the tools for microscopic analysis that made it possible to research and manufacture serums for inoculations.⁵³ As the slaughterhouse became a one-stop station for the inspection of thousands of animal bodies, Eggebrecht, who had studied bacteriology in Berlin in 1903, could construct an authoritative map of epizootics across Shandong Province and extrapolate beyond it to the rest of northeast China. In his observation of rinderpest, Eggebrecht belittled the Chinese statistics on the disease, condemning them as wholly unreliable, imprecise, and incomprehensive.⁵⁴ Lacking the kind of controlled and hygienic environment that the Qingdao slaughterhouse boasted, where precise and reliable measurements could be conducted, he poured scorn on the credibility of Chinese diagnoses.⁵⁵

Such increased confidence about veterinary expertise accounts for why Eggebrecht took a daring step in 1909 to propose widening the erstwhile local scope of sanitary measures. A few years earlier, rinderpest had wiped out the German and Australian bulls that had been imported as part of the dairy cattle breeding program. Preventative measures, inoculation

⁵¹ Rinderpest is an acute, highly contagious viral disease of ruminant animals, primarily cattle, which used to pose a major threat to livestock economies across the globe.

⁵² Max Eggebrecht, “Untersuchungen über die Rinderpest in Ostasien,” *Zeitschrift für Infektionskrankheiten der Haustiere* 7, nos. 1-2 (1910): 55.

⁵³ *Denkschrift betreffend die Entwicklung des Kiautschou-Gebiets von Oktober 1904 bis Oktober 1905* (Berlin, 1906), 33.

⁵⁴ Eggebrecht, “Rinderpest,” 60.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

included, had turned out to be ineffective. Determined not to repeat earlier mistakes, Eggebrecht moved to demand greater controls on the movement of bovine bodies, asserting that “cattle driven from the interior of Shandong Province” should be barred from entering the leased territory.⁵⁶ In doing so, the veterinarian pointed the finger at the practice of driving cattle by land rather than transporting them by rail. He argued that such “unchecked freedom in the traffic of cattle” elevated the risk of epizootic outbreaks among Qingdao livestock, which were typically turned out to graze on the outskirts of town. To prevent infections and to ensure the success of the breeding experiments, Eggebrecht co-opted the railroad as a tool of defense. He believed that it should be made mandatory for traders to transport all livestock by rail, which made it easier to ascertain and control the movement of animal bodies. Recommending the small port station of Ritthausen as an offloading point for all newly arriving cattle, Eggebrecht lauded its geographical advantages. Its location next to the sea provided a “natural barrier” against infection while the railroad itself functioned as an artificial border that would minimize the spread of disease to the east.⁵⁷ As part of these bold measures, Eggebrecht also pleaded to make it obligatory to inoculate all cattle arriving in Qingdao and called for the mass manufacture of serums, requesting six heads of oxen that would act as donors.

German physicians vehemently objected to the broad scope of the veterinary proposals and intervened in matters of animal health to reassert their political and scientific authority. Describing the call as going “too far,” Walter Uthemann, the chief medical officer, made it known that such a far-reaching sanitary measure that encompassed the entire territory “should not be contemplated at all.”⁵⁸ In general, the proposal was unfeasible. Making Chinese traders obey such a regulation would waste time and money. Physicians also pointed out that Shandong cattle were resistant to rinderpest anyway; thus, it made little sense to inoculate them against a disease for which they were already immune. Rather than concern themselves with Shandong cattle, veterinarians should limit themselves instead to keeping a firm eye on imported German stock. Making sure that imported cattle were inoculated in places en route to China, such as Egypt and Hong Kong, would be sufficient. For this reason, Martini, another medical officer, went as far as to argue that discussion about the spaces in which inoculated German cattle should be kept was superfluous. As he put it, “The only feasible way lies in inoculation. Thus, it is not necessary to place much weight on the choice of location with regard to the stalls.”⁵⁹ Such criticism led to an exchange of abusive language from both professions. As a result, the proposals to extend boundaries were abandoned, reflecting the relatively weak position of veterinarians in the colonial apparatus.

⁵⁶ BArch-B, RA86: Veterinärwesen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten Bd.1 1903, 1910-1914. Vorschläge zur Durchführung von Zuchtversuchen mit deutschem Vieh, 25 November, 1909.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ BArch-B, RA86: Letter from Gouvernmentarzt Uthemann, December 20, 1909.

⁵⁹ BArch-B, RA86: Stellungnahme zu dem Bericht des G.T. vom 25.11.09, Tsingtau, December 20, 1909, 10.

The Problem of Livestock Production: The German Experience

Fundamental to shaping this focus on the local was the German assessment of Kiautschou—the German name for the territory—as a colony. Compared to the German Empire’s other colonial possessions, notably in Africa, the Chinese colony was overwhelmingly a commercial—not agricultural—enterprise. Peasants who made up most of the inhabitants were subsistence farmers who were uninterested in breeding animals for broader markets. Once their value as sources of traction deteriorated, local farmers would simply replace them with draught animals that had been bred and reared in the interior of Shandong. Such dependence on animal resources in Shandong Province was shared by the colonizers. To satisfy European appetites for milk and meat, the Germans had little choice but to source food animals locally. For this reason, when compared to the draconian measures taken back home, a more liberal attitude toward the policing of livestock arriving from the hinterlands of Shandong had to be adopted. Failure to do so not only risked undermining the colonizers’ food security but also threatened their identity as Germans, which they maintained through adherence to a diet that was different from that of the Chinese. Given that there was no livestock industry—broadly conceived—to speak of, such a decision was a relatively simple one to make, despite the efforts of veterinarians to suggest otherwise.

That is not to say that the Germans were uninterested in livestock breeding more generally, especially after the foundation of the German-Chinese University (*Deutsch-Chinesische Hochschule*) in 1909, which was meant to impart German science and engineering knowledge to the locals. Two years after its opening, the authorities decided to add a third department for agriculture and forestry, with Wilhelm Wagner as its head. Comprising four courses in the fields of agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, and horticulture, the department erected facilities for animal husbandry, including an experimental station where studies were conducted into the crossing, breeding, and feeding of German and Chinese domestic animals.⁶⁰ Three Jeverland cattle, two native Chinese cows, and three half-breeds were kept. Stopped abruptly by political events, Wagner nonetheless managed to publish the results of his research into Chinese agriculture in 1926.⁶¹ His work revealed that the physiological characteristics of Chinese cattle left a lot to be desired. On average, Chinese cattle weighed approximately 322.9 kilograms—a fact that compared unfavorably to the heavier German cattle. Upon slaughter, relatively little meat could be harvested. Comparing Chinese breeds with European ones, Wagner was emphatic in his conclusions: “When one compares the figures...one cannot for the moment doubt that the Chinese cow can complete at all with the European breeds with regard to its fatness.”⁶² To be sure, the governor-general did promote the export of cattle, dreaming of transporting livestock to Europe on journeys that were two weeks shorter than similar trips made from Shanghai. Given Wagner’s gloomy assessment, however, such a plan would not have involved livestock the Germans themselves would have bred and reared.

⁶⁰ Wilhelm Wagner, *Die Organisation der land-und forstwirtschaftlichen Abteilung der Deutsch-Chinesischen Hochschule* (Tsingtau: Haupt, 1912), 13.

⁶¹ Wilhelm Wagner, *Die hinesische Landwirtschaft* (Berlin: Paul Parey, 1926).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 576.

The Japanese Appetite for Beef

Any plans the German colonizers had in store for the leased territory came to an abrupt halt with the outbreak of the First World War, which presented the Japanese with the opportunity to wrestle control of Jiaozhou Bay from the Germans.⁶³ Unlike their European counterparts, the Japanese immediately recognized the potential offered by bovine resources in northeast China, chiefly as meat—not least because they had already pursued business interests under the noses of the Germans. As early as August 1915, the *Peking Daily News* had reported on the steps being taken in Kobe, Japan, for the construction of a tinned beef factory. Captain Hino, a military advisor to the Chinese government, could barely contain his excitement. He boasted that the combination of cheap labor and inexpensive meat that could be derived from the abundance of cattle in Shandong almost certainly guaranteed that profit could be made.⁶⁴ Two years after this report, the occupying Japanese army was also enthused by the massive bovine resources the province seemed to promise, estimating that Shandong alone boasted 600,000 head of cattle with millions beyond its borders.⁶⁵

Importing Shandong cattle and beef from Qingdao also made economic sense. In a feasibility study conducted by the Japanese military government, Qingdao compared favorably with other places such as Tianjin, Nanjing, and Pukou.⁶⁶ At 2 *yen 50 sen* per head, Tianjin was the most inexpensive location for shipping but was inferior to Qingdao because its port froze over during the winter months—the period of the year when beef was most in demand back in Japan. In the case of Nanjing, the existence of a large slaughterhouse and refrigeration facilities made the metropolis an attractive proposition, but it was located too far away from the main livestock market at Jinan. Ultimately, the military government concluded that Qingdao was the best location for the beef trade because of its railroad link to Jinan, its state-of-the-art slaughterhouse, and its ice-free port through which regular supplies of fresh meat could be shipped all year round. No interest was expressed, however, in the province's dairy-producing potential. This reflected the relative success of the Japanese agricultural sector's increasing milk production in contrast to its struggle to provide similar amounts of beef.

One reason for this hunger was the association that had been forged between meat—especially beef—and modernity.⁶⁷ As part of its drive toward Westernization, the Meiji-era (1868–1912) elites vigorously promoted the consumption of meat and dairy—neither of which had previously been a major part of the indigenous diet—because they were seen to be more nutritious than the typical Japanese fare that consisted mainly of plant-based

⁶³ At the bequest of the British, who were keen to nullify the German naval threat in Asia-Pacific, the Japanese launched an attack on Qingdao shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, hoping to increase their own presence on China soil.

⁶⁴ Bundesarchiv Freiburg (BAarch-F), RM3/6734: Handelsverhältnisse, 1915–1920. *Peking Daily News* (August 10, 1915), 15.

⁶⁵ Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), Ref. C03024621100, Military Archives, "Chintao no genkyō (April 1917)," sheet 0734.

⁶⁶ Seitō Gunsei Sho, *Santō ushi oyobi santō no chikusan butsu* (Seitō Gunsei Sho: Seitō, 1916), 53–54.

⁶⁷ Cwierotka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, 24–34.

ingredients. By the end of the nineteenth century, taboos about meat-eating as defilement, especially in rapidly expanding towns and cities, had evaporated, and meat had become an accepted—albeit peripheral—part of the Japanese diet, thanks to the popularization of dishes such as beef pot.⁶⁸ Not insignificant in the arguments elites put forward was the reference to the Chinese as predominantly eaters of pork. Intellectuals pointed to this eating habit, as well as to the fact that many Indians were vegetarians, to show that it was beef that enabled the British to assert their dominance in many parts of Asia.⁶⁹ Rubbing shoulders with the advanced West thus meant the procurement of affordable beef, the production of which was limited in mountainous and population-dense Japan. With the chief exception of Hokkaido, Japan had neither sufficient tracts of arable land to cultivate crops that could adequately cater to both human and animal needs nor enough flat spaces in which large herds of cattle could be kept. Consequently, production costs for domestic beef were high, hindering its take-up among the broader population. To an extent, demand could be met by Korea, which had already become a colony. Yet most of the Korean cattle were sought after as sources of labor on Japanese farms. It was only after their time was up as draught animals that they were then slaughtered to provide beef for Japanese stomachs. This explains the expectations heaped on Shandong cattle in general and Qingdao beef in particular as a new source of cheap energy to power Japanese imperial bodies in much greater numbers than had hitherto been possible.

Rendering Chinese Meat Fit for Japanese Consumption

The Japanese ability to see the sanitary significance of the German-built slaughterhouse grew as quickly as their economic appreciation of Shandong's bovine resources. In 1915, Matsubara Kiichirō and Matsuo Hiroshi, both veterinarians, rushed to pen pieces about the slaughterhouse.⁷⁰ They marveled at the scale, technology, and coordination that made the slaughterhouse the best in East Asia. Matsubara gleefully remarked that when the abattoir was operating at its limit, it was able to process 2,000 head of livestock in a single day, including a maximum of around 400 cattle—the processing of animal bodies could even take place late into the night. Similarly striking was the system of chains and pulleys operating on rails that wound its way around the interior and rendered meaningless the weight of animal bodies. Equally significant was how water was an integral part of the operation. To keep the interior spotlessly clean, a plentiful supply of fresh water—the volume and temperature of which could be controlled—was available. Finally, the Japanese were impressed by the rules that governed the interactions between human and animal bodies. Detailed protocols governed when, where, how, and by whom livestock were to be slaughtered, body parts stripped, contents inspected for signs of disease, passed fit for human consumption, moved,

⁶⁸ Majima, "Eating Meat, Seeking Modernity."

⁶⁹ Tatsuya Mitsuda, "'Vegetarian Nationalism': Critiques of Meat Eating for Japanese Bodies, 1880–1938," in *Culinary Nationalism in Asia*, ed. Michelle T. King (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 25.

⁷⁰ Matsubara Kiichirō, "Santō shō oyobi chintao no chiku sangyō," *Chichi to Niku* 6, no. 6 (1915): 45–51; Matsuo Hiroshi, "Kansei chintao tojō no sōkan," *Chichi to Niku* 6, no. 7 (1915): 29–37.

cleaned, and stored. Most significantly, Chinese workers could be drilled to disturb as little as possible the smooth flow of processing animal bodies. As Matsuo aptly put it: “rules during the German era were as strict as they could be.”⁷¹ The majority of the rules and regulations that the Germans had laid down the Japanese studiously adopted. The fact that many Japanese veterinarians had either studied in Germany or received instructions from those who had undoubtedly facilitated their acceptance.



Figure 2. *The German-built Slaughterhouse in Qingdao (Date of photograph unknown). Source: Yamawaki Keikichi, Nihon teikoku kachiku densenbyō yobō shi (Taishō Shōwa hen) Hōki no henshen 3 (Tokyo: Jūeki chōsa jo, 1938).*

Despite these glowing reports, the Japanese still saw areas for improvement— not in the interior of the slaughterhouse, but in the spaces that surrounded it.⁷² One major change the Japanese introduced was to construct a covered area for biopsies. Since veterinary inspection of live animal bodies had previously taken place in the stockyard, the weather periodically interfered with inspection. This was a problem, especially during the winter months when the slaughterhouse was at its busiest and its most profitable. Not only could operations be severely disrupted, the controlled conditions under which veterinary examination took place could also be compromised; it was vital for the production of reliable veterinary knowledge that conditions were constant throughout the year.

Another improvement the Japanese introduced was to change the flow of movement of animal bodies between the stockyard and the slaughterhouse. Under German rule, livestock had been led directly from the stockyard through the main gates to their places of slaughter. As large numbers of animals loitered and waited their turn, excrement and urine would quickly accumulate, clogging up the central space in the premises and generally disrupting human and animal traffic. To solve this problem, the Japanese forced livestock to take a

⁷¹ Matsuo, “Kansei chintao tojō,” 34.

⁷² JACAR, Ref. B07090858200, Foreign Affairs Archives, “Seitō tojū jo (March 1918),” sheet 0030.

detour and enter the premises through a side entrance, where discharged animal matter presented less of a nuisance.

Finally, the Japanese made changes to the water supply. Under the Germans, supplementary supplies of water were stored in a tank, where germs easily accumulated. The Japanese improved it by connecting the slaughterhouse to the water supply and adding ventilation to keep the water as fresh as possible. Common to all these measures was how the Japanese tended to target the *surroundings* of the slaughterhouse. Concerned as the Germans were about perfecting the slaughterhouse itself, where the movement of animal bodies was placed under exacting levels of control, they had given less thought to the spaces in which animal bodies moved before their actual slaughter. Building upon the German foundations, the Japanese veterinarians could devote their time and effort to extending the sanitary boundaries of the slaughterhouse complex.

Empowering Veterinarians

Despite the praise heaped on and improvements made to the slaughter process, the export of cattle and beef to Japan was not inevitable. Japan's concerted drive to become a meat-eating nation was hampered by the invasion of major epizootics originating from China and Korea from the 1870s.⁷³ In the case of rinderpest, an outbreak was recorded virtually every year since 1900, inflicting significant economic damage on agricultural activity as it made its way from the south to the north of the country. Upon their takeover of Qingdao, the Japanese thus brought with them a historically conditioned skepticism of imported Asian animal products. Between 1915 and 1918, these fears were duly confirmed when a total of 226 cases of infectious animal disease were detected.⁷⁴ Citing issues of reliability, the Committee of Port Veterinarians (*Kōmu jūikan kaigi*) expressed its dissatisfaction with the serums being injected into live cattle and banned this practice. Yet, after the end of the First World War, as meat prices skyrocketed, such concerns took a backseat. Faced with escalating pressures, Yamawaki Keikichi, a veterinary officer who witnessed the discussions, remembered how "purely scientific" recommendations were replaced with "flexible and practical measures of prevention."⁷⁵ At a meeting convened by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce on July 7, 1919, veterinarians hastily decided to make mandatory the inoculation of all cattle earmarked for export to Japan.

Crucial to this policy reversal was that Japanese veterinarians would be placed in charge of engineering and administering the serum, the manufacture of which the Russians had previously monopolized. In 1918, experiments conducted on several hundred cattle in Jinan and Qingdao revealed the ineffectiveness of the Russian-made serums.⁷⁶ In contrast, the serum produced by the Rinderpest Manufacturing Facility (*Gyūeki kessei seizōjo*) in Busan,

⁷³Yamanouchi Kazuya, *Shijō saidai no densenbyō: Gyūeki konzetsu made no 4000 nen* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppan, 2009), 80–91.

⁷⁴Yamawaki Keikichi, *Nihon teikoku kachiku densenbyō yobō shi. Hōki no hensen 3* (Tokyo: Jūeki chōsa jo, 1938), 32.

⁷⁵Ibid., 46.

⁷⁶JACAR, Ref. B07090858200, Foreign Affairs Archives, "Seitō tojū jo (March 1918)," sheet 0039.

Korea, proved to be more reliable. It was here in 1917 that a group of leading Japanese veterinarians successfully came up with a rinderpest serum that was effective for six months, making it possible to buy the time that was needed to export and slaughter cattle for the Japanese market. For the first year or so, the ministry decided to request a one-ton supply of serum from the Korean governor-general. Given the large amount that would need to be generated, this arrangement proved to be temporary. After a short period of considering self-manufacture in the slaughterhouse, the Qingdao authorities decided to provide subsidies to a company that would be tasked with the production of serums instead.⁷⁷ Established as the Shandong Drugs Research Center (*Santō yakubutsu kenkyū jo*), the delivery of serums began in 1921.

Similar to the Rinderpest Manufacturing Facility, which married imperial and veterinary interests for the purposes of taming and exploiting Korea's bovine resources, the Shandong Drugs Research Center was also designed to serve a combination of Japanese imperial, scientific, and commercial interests—but in China. Similar to the port town of Busan, Qingdao functioned as a collection point for animal bodies, primarily cattle, presenting a range of diseases that not only represented a threat but also an opportunity for amassing research material.⁷⁸ Securing this kind of wealth and breadth of cattle, horses, pigs, and dogs back in Japan was deemed impossible, but due to its geographical proximity to the interior of Shandong, Qingdao was the ideal laboratory for the science of animal health. Through the provision of serum, the Shandong Drugs Research Center thus fulfilled an important role in taming and exploiting Shandong cattle, where Chinese bovine bodies could be cleansed and rendered fit for consumption by Japanese bodies.

Shipping and Meat Exports

Establishing the background is important to understand the complicated nature of cattle and beef exports from Qingdao. As Table 3 demonstrates, the First World War had a devastating impact on the live cattle trade with Russia. In 1915, the Japanese military government in Qingdao experimented with exporting 99 head of live cattle to the port of Yokohama, but it was not until 1919 that the trade was resuscitated, with Japan emerging as the main trading partner at the expense of the Russians. More significant is the parallel development in the fresh beef trade, the exports of which quickly grew to surpass those of live cattle. Numbers were already exceeding 10,000 heads by 1919 and grew exponentially to reach more than 40,000 by 1921, peaking at more than 65,600 in 1928. In fact, the meteoric rise in the volume of fresh beef exported was at the expense of the live cattle trade, which had peaked in 1920 and never recovered.

⁷⁷ Yamawaki, *Nihon teikoku kachiku densenbyō yobō shi*, 62–63.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 64–65.

Table 3: The Number of Exports of Live Cattle and Fresh Beef from Qingdao, 1912-1930.

Year	Heads of Live Cattle	Heads of Fresh Beef
1912	16,665	--
1913	28,413	--
1914	17,542	--
1915	3,972	--
1916	933	86
1917	263	662
1918	544	7,656
1919	2,422 (1,648 to Japan)	12,647
1920	13,192 (11,565 to Japan)	33,268
1921	3,423 (to Japan only)	41,770
1922	6,721 (to Japan only)	49,155
1923	4,918	62,772
1924	2,582	52,177
1925	1,048	45,177
1926	307	57,435
1927	--	64,604
1928	--	65,194
1929	--	54,692
1930	--	58,865

Source: Yamawaki Keikichi, *Nihon teikoku kachiku densenbyō yobō shi (Taishō Shōwa hen) Hōki no henshen 3* (Tokyo: Jūeki chōsa jo, 1938), 29.

Such a mixed picture reflected the rushed policy to fast-track the export of risky live cattle before refrigeration technology had been sufficiently introduced on ships. The fact that the Ministry of Agriculture had mandated inoculation in the first place was because it was necessary to ensure that live cattle survived the long and treacherous voyage from China to Japan without succumbing to infectious diseases while onboard. The transportation of live cattle, especially during the summer months, could also be financially risky. In the case of one ship, *Kantonmaru*, which was loaded with 471 cattle and set sail in August 1922, the impact of the weather was devastating.⁷⁹ A combination of sizzling heat and nearly typhoon-strength winds caused the death of 110 head of cattle onboard. Such risks were reduced when transporting fresh meat, since more could be packed in the hull of ships; it was especially profitable in the winter as the space that had to be reserved for ice could be freed up to accommodate greater quantities of meat. In the case of the *Nikkōmaru*, the largest ship owned by the shipping company Nihon Yūsen, the equivalent of 1,200 head of

⁷⁹ Jūeki chōsa jo hōkoku daisanji hōkoku (Tokyo: Jūeki chōsa jo, 1923), 32.

cattle could be crammed in during the winter months while only 700 could be carried in the summer.⁸⁰ For these reasons, once refrigerated shipping became common and reliable, it was only a matter of time before the live cattle trade petered out. Not surprisingly, the Shandong Drugs Research Center quickly fell into financial trouble as a result, as demand for its serums plummeted. In contrast to Korea, which continued to export live cattle as a source of Japanese farm labor, the attraction of Shandong cattle was as food—it was as meat that Chinese cattle commanded value on Japanese markets.

In contrast to the German interest in the railroad, the Japanese tended to concern themselves more with the technicalities of shipping. Predicting the mass transportation of fresh meat on refrigerated ships, the military government in Qingdao pointed to how the slaughterhouse would need to synchronize its operations with shipping schedules.⁸¹ They anticipated that requests would be made that involved the quick and large scale slaughter of “hundreds” of cattle, which would also have to be frozen in preparation for shipment. Later, as the meat trade gathered pace and the number of refrigerated ships carrying fresh meat increased, shipping routes were shortened. No longer did ships make time-consuming stopovers at Ujina, in Hiroshima, and travel times were shortened by a few days to ensure faster turnovers, save on the fuel needed to power refrigerators, and decrease the risk of spoilage.⁸²

At the receiving end, in the ports of Kobe and Osaka, the authorities busily implemented infrastructural improvements.⁸³ Pointing to instances of spoiled meat, the Qingdao meat merchants also pressured the port authorities to shorten the time it took to offload cargo. Rather than offload freight from ships out at sea, it would be better, they argued, for ships to dock at a floating pier, from which boxes of fresh meat could be carried quickly and directly into refrigeration facilities. Such a cold-chain operation was already in place in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom, and these places were lauded as examples for Japan to emulate. In response, the Kobe Port Authorities pointed out that ships were already shifting to this new mode of offloading cargo, leading to significant amounts of time being saved.

Contesting Medical Expertise

As the trade in fresh meat boomed, the abattoir as a facility acquired greater importance, becoming a major sticking point for Japanese commercial and scientific interests as diplomatic developments placed Japan under international pressure to return Qingdao to the Chinese, which eventually took place in 1922.⁸⁴ Like the Germans, the Japanese were deeply

⁸⁰ Minami Manshū Tetsudō Kabushikigaisha, ed., *Manshū gyū nihon yushutsu ni kansuru chōsa* (N.p.: Minami Manshū Tetsudō, 1930), 260.

⁸¹ JACAR, Ref. B07090858200, Foreign Affairs Archives, “Seitō tojū jo (March 1918),” sheet 00032.

⁸² Nihon Yūsen Kabushiki Gaisha, *Wagasha kaku kōro no enkaku* (N.p: Nihon yūsen kabushiki gaiisha kamotsu ka, 1932), 39.

⁸³ JACAR, Ref. B09041331300, Foreign Affairs Archives, “Bōeki narabi torishimari kankei (August 1926),” sheets 0345-0351.

⁸⁴ JACAR, Ref. B07090848000, Foreign Affairs Archives, “Chintao seigyū namaniku kumiai seigansho (June 1921).”

suspicious of the locals when it came to meat inspection, criticizing Chinese merchants for their blasé attitudes toward the handling of livestock and deadstock. As Yamawaki put it, Chinese merchants were “fine about killing diseased cattle and eating them and [were] indifferent to outbreaks of animal diseases.”⁸⁵ This view underpinned the objections to handing over the slaughterhouse to the Chinese. Most vocal were Japanese beef merchants who made concerted efforts to keep the abattoir as it was—as a public facility, costs for inspection and slaughter could be kept low. Closely tied to this financial argument, however, was a concern about the strictness of inspection, which the Japanese feared would be compromised if the operation of the slaughterhouse were handed over to the Chinese. Ever since the Japanese had assumed control of the abattoir, steps had been taken to introduce an inspection regime that involved pre- and post-slaughter inspection. The chief veterinarian of the slaughterhouse, Iseyama Hanzaburō, argued that such rules reflected the desire to protect human and animal health, and he reminded the authorities that it was because the rules were so strict that exports had been historically permitted in the first place.⁸⁶ Eventually, ownership of the abattoir was handed back to the Chinese, but as a result of these lobbying activities, Japanese veterinarians retained control over inspection.

In time, the fact that the vast majority of exports were in the form of meat—not livestock—gave rise to bureaucratic and professional conflict in the early 1930s. The Ministry of the Interior, responsible for human health in the hands of physicians, called on the Ministry of Agriculture, responsible for the policing of animal health in the hands of veterinarians, to relinquish its control of meat inspection. Pointing to statistics that showed that 60,000 head of cattle were now being shipped as fresh meat from Qingdao as opposed to just 70 head of live cattle, the Ministry of the Interior complained that it had its work cut out. While meat inspection in Japan increased, the inspection of live animals lay idle. The response of the Ministry of Agriculture was as curt as it was critical. Meat came from animals, it reminded its bureaucratic counterpart, the health of which had to be subjected to veterinary inspection before it could be transformed into meat fit for human consumption. It also exploited historical arguments. Northern China, it pointed out, was home to countless diseases that could easily spread and threaten Japanese economic interests. The main purpose of having Japanese inspection in Qingdao lay in the advantages that it had as an early warning system that would flag the development of epizootics—concerns about human health were thus secondary. The fact that pre-slaughter veterinary inspection had been put in place at all was to confirm—despite the risks that China posed—the safety of exports in the face of increased demand for meat back in Japan.

⁸⁵ Yamawaki, *Nihon teikoku kachiku densenbyō yobō shi*, 32.

⁸⁶ JACAR, Ref. B07090848000, Foreign Affairs Archives, “Chintao seigyū namaniku kumiai seigansho (June 1921),” sheet 0084.

The Problem of Livestock Production: the Japanese Experience

For most of the period under review, the Japanese, despite their growing appetite for beef and avid interest in exploiting the bovine resources of Shandong, did not seriously involve themselves in the breeding of cattle. However, the situation began to change in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Under the guidance of the Japan Chamber of Commerce, indigenous breeding practices were improved. Selective breeding programs witnessed the importation of Japanese bulls, which were then crossed with indigenous cows in an effort to improve the quality and the quantity of the resulting meat. However, the Japanese complained strongly about Chinese breeding practices. They bemoaned the fact that selective breeding was virtually unheard of and despaired at the haphazard way the Chinese went about choosing their cows. Pessimism about animal husbandry in Shandong increased as the Chinese authorities clamped down on the cattle trade, imposing tariffs on sales in order to prevent the flight of animal labor.⁸⁷ Political instability also sapped Japanese enthusiasm for Shandong cattle. In 1928, as anti-imperialistic sentiments ran high, armed conflict broke out between the Japanese Imperial Army and Kuomintang's Northern Expeditionary Army in Jinan. This incident was just one major example of a series of smaller conflicts that impacted the stability of the meat trade. Not only did Jinan, as the main livestock market in the region, suffer from political instability, but breeders, fearing for their lives and livelihoods, were also forced to migrate north.

In light of these circumstances, the Japanese looked to the even greater, yet still vastly untapped, bovine resource that was Manchuria, which, by the mid-1920s, placed third in the number of livestock after the United States and Australia. In contrast to the hesitation that characterized efforts at improvement farther south in Qingdao, the Japanese in Manchuria took an early interest in the breeding of livestock.⁸⁸ In 1907, the Kwantung administration had established an experimental farm in the port of Dairen, which was later moved to a larger site near the town of Jinzhou in 1924. In 1913, the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR), going further than the Shandong Railroad Company ever did, followed suit with the foundation of the largest agricultural station in Manchuria, encompassing more than 200 hectares near the town of Gongzhuling, which was 650 kilometers from the port of Dairen. Both facilities boasted staff in their hundreds, and gradually, by the early 1920s, concerted efforts were made to improve the poor condition and small stature of Chinese livestock in general. To this end, animals were imported from across the Japanese Empire and beyond for crossbreeding programs.

When the SMR founded the Animal Disease Research Institute at Mukden, located in central Manchuria, in 1925, a new phase was entered. Tasked with investigating such epizootics as rinderpest, anthrax, and foot and mouth disease, the Institute manufactured serums that would contribute to combating disease and making Manchurian cattle

⁸⁷ Dubois, "Pasture to Plate," 36.

⁸⁸ Perrins, "Holding Water in Bamboo Buckets," 200.

(*mangogyū*) fit for consumption by Japanese bodies. By the end of the 1920s, the export of Manchurian cattle thus became a distinct possibility. Compared to previous undertakings in Busan or Qingdao, the taming of Manchurian livestock—a hotbed for a variety of epizootics—represented a different prospect. Neither Busan nor Qingdao had been sources of endemic epizootic disease, the policing of which in both places had been directed at livestock being brought in from the interior, increasingly by rail. As coastal locations, their geographical conditions were vastly different, too. How Manchurian cattle were tamed, considered fit for Japanese bodies, and transported as Japan colonized this region are questions that extend beyond the scope of this article; but it certainly built on the experience and knowledge forged in Qingdao.

Conclusions

Over the first three decades of the twentieth century, Qingdao became a major hub for the exploitation, processing, and taming of Chinese animal bodies for the production of food destined for European and Japanese consumption. Common to both periods of German and Japanese colonial rule and influence was the extent to which a combination of disgust at the unhygienic habits of the indigenous population and the threat of infectious animal diseases emanating from the interior of Shandong Province shaped the construction of a public inspection regime that conferred on veterinarians the power to realize the stable, safe, and adequate supply of food animals, cattle in particular, for the consumption of non-Chinese people. As a result of the Germans introducing and then the Japanese improving upon inherited technologies and protocols—such as the railroad, the slaughterhouse, and ships—an increasing number of animal bodies, particularly in the form of meat, became an economic resource, the movement of which—dead or alive—was subjected to spatial, temporal, and sanitary controls. However, the Germans and the Japanese struggled to cope with the challenges posed by epizootic threats caused by the mass transportation of animal bodies by rail or sea, expressed frustration at the “backward” nature of Chinese treatment of animal bodies, and attempted unsuccessfully to improve livestock production in a region that had little prior tradition of engaging in animal husbandry.

Despite these commonalities, the German and Japanese negotiation of animal bodies differed widely. At its most fundamental, the difference manifested itself in the German focus on the provision of milk for local consumption and the Japanese interest in meat, especially beef, for consumption back in Japan. In the case of the Germans, despite mooted the idea of comprehensive inoculation, the focus was on the locally informed conservatism regarding veterinary interventions that implicated the broader province of Shandong. That contrasted with the approach of the Japanese, who were more willing to intervene in bovine bodies and took to import and then manufacture serums for use in a comprehensive program of inoculation. Some of this can be explained by the relative standing of medical and veterinary expertise at the time. Whereas veterinarians assumed a subordinate position to physicians during German rule, Japanese veterinarians enjoyed more clout. Due to the early interest in meat, as well as the existence of a state-of-the-art slaughterhouse, Japanese

veterinarians functioned as important scientists from the very beginning of Japanese rule. They quickly reported on the German-built abattoir, were influential in undertaking initial conservative assessments of exporting live cattle and were at the forefront of the decisions to relax policies as domestic circumstances changed. Japanese veterinarians also benefited from a broader imperial network of veterinary expertise that could be relied upon to provide more effective serums, for example. Thus, when it came to handing back control of the abattoir to the Chinese, veterinary arguments were exploited effectively and played on fears about the dangers of epizootics. They were also effective when the Ministry of the Interior attempted to wrestle control of meat inspection from the Ministry of Agriculture's veterinarians.

In the end, as the Japanese faced the limits of Qingdao as a stable source of meat, they turned to Manchuria as the next frontier from which to satisfy Japan's growing appetite for beef. While the Germans were narrowly interested in the need to maintain a European diet as colonizers, the Japanese were more broadly interested in embracing meat as modernizers. Moving from the coastal regions of the Asian mainland to its interior, the exploitation of bovine resources and the taming of animal bodies entered a new phase in the 1930s as the Japanese intervened more forcibly in the reproductive process itself.

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THINK PIECE: Known Unknowns in Japanese Food History

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Abstract

As more scholars enter the field of Japanese food history, we are all becoming aware of how much more there is to learn. Our progress rests on the availability of primary sources which are plentiful for some topics but nonexistent for others, especially for premodern Japan (before 1868). This essay explores several “known unknowns,” instances when my own research on sake, recipes, and restaurants faced unanswered questions due to a lack of sources. I also touch briefly on meat eating in premodern Japan, which is another long-standing issue of debate in food history.

Keywords: Japanese food, sake, sushi, meat consumption, restaurants

Researching what ordinary people ate in the past is like trying to scratch an itchy foot through a shoe, according to cultural geographer Arizono Shōichirō who studied the diet of the peasants in early modern (1600-1868) Japan. Arizono’s exasperation stemmed from the fact that there are no primary records describing precisely what ordinary people ate on a daily basis in the early modern period.¹ But ordinary meals often escape notice even today.

¹ Arizono Shōichirō, *Kinsei shomin no nichijōshoku: Hyakushō wa kome o taberarenakatta ka?* (Ōtsu: Kaiseisha, 2007), 2, 4.

Americans are better able to recall what we ate for Thanksgiving last year than for breakfast last week. Food served for celebrations is memorable and it is recorded in diaries and other documents in contrast to what French philosopher Jean-François Revel (1924-2006) called the “silent cuisines,” the diet of the peasant and middle class that evolved slowly over time without drama.² Such cuisines are silent also for the fact that few people bother to write about them, often because the daily bread or grain porridge are too prosaic to mention. But even elite cuisine is silent in some instances. One could read all of *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu’s (c. 978- c. 1014) epic of love and tears set at the Heian-period (794-1185) court, and wonder what Genji and the aristocrats ate either at banquets or for their breakfast, as Takeshi Watanabe observed. Watanabe has tried to answer this question by working through other sources. He contends that aristocrats were interested in food, but they portrayed themselves as indifferent to it. Hence they purposefully omitted descriptions of foods and eating from their fictional versions of an ideal world.³ Silence about food for them was intentional, but it leaves the scholar scratching their heads, if not their feet.

This essay examines a few “known unknowns” in Japanese food history as a way of sketching where some of the boundaries of knowledge end and where supposition begins. In preparing this essay, I asked a dozen colleagues who work on food in Japan about where they encountered blackholes in their research or had questions that remain unanswered due to a lack of primary sources. Unfortunately, few responded to my query. (Perhaps we are all reluctant to admit what we do not know?) So, this became a personal essay focusing on areas of the unknown that I have encountered in my own work. My narrative examines three topics: sake, recipes, and restaurants, which come from my own research. I also introduce another longstanding question in Japanese food history regarding the prevalence of meat consumption in premodern Japan (before 1868) to show that sometimes trying to explain an absence presumes that absence.

Sake's Secrets

Sake is often mistranslated as “rice wine,” and that is a misstatement for two reasons. First, although rice is the main ingredient for sake, the beverage is created in a process more similar to brewing beer than fermenting wine. Wines rely upon the natural sugars available in the fruit for the yeast to convert into alcohol; but in the case of sake, a mold called *kōji* 麹 is used to break down the starches in the grain into sugars and muster them for fermentation. Beer brewing does the same process by malting. So, sake is not created like a wine. Second, the typical alcohol by volume (ABV) for most wine varies between 12.5% and 14.5%, depending on the variety. Sake is 20% ABV, although brewers usually dilute the alcohol content down to 16% ABV, thereby creating more sake and improving the taste -- they say.

² Jean-François Revel, “Retrieving Tastes: Two Sources of Cuisine,” in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer (New York, Berg: 2005), 52.

³ Takeshi Watanabe, “Gifting Melons to the Shining Prince: Representations of Food in the Late Heian Period,” in *Devouring Japan: Global Perspectives on Japanese Culinary Identity*, ed. Nancy Stalker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) 48, 53.

In other words, sake is stronger than a typical wine. By law, table wines sold in the United States have to have an ABV of 14% or below.



Figure 1. Sake. Denshu Japanese Sake, Koichi Oda / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>). Available from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Denshu_Japanese_Sake_-_Flickr_-_odako1.jpg (Accessed August 7, 2020).

Whatever the alcoholic beverage, current law requires printing the ABV on the bottle, but the strength of premodern sake remains a mystery. The ABV of sake is an important question if we want to judge the fortitude of drinkers in premodern Japan. Medieval samurai exchanged shallow cups of sake at banquets, referring to each cupful as a round (*kon* 献). The foods meant to accompany these rounds were listed as the “menu” (*kondate* 献立). *Record of Things Seen and Heard* (*Kanmon gyoki* 看聞御記), the diary of imperial prince Fushimi no Miya Sadafusa (1372–1456), records a banquet in 1422 when warlord Uesugi Tomokata served the shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori (1394–1441) twenty-seven rounds of drinks.⁴ When Shogun Yoshinori hosted Emperor GoKomatsu (1377–1433) he served seventy rounds of drinks.⁵ One can find even more astounding tales of drinking in the early modern period. Where the size of drinking cups is unspecified in medieval sources, a famous drinking contest in Edo (Tokyo) in 1649 featured six cups ranging in size from 30 ounces to 1.44 gallons. The winner of this contest supposedly polished off all of these cups, drinking the equivalent of 4.3 gallons of sake.⁶

⁴ Kitajima Daisuke, “Ōuchishi wa nani o tabeta ka: Shokuzai to shite dōbutsu riyō,” in *Chūsei shakai no kōzō*, vol. 4 of *Nihonshi kōza*, ed. Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai and Nihonshi Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004), 130–32.

⁵ Sakurai Eiji, *Muromachibito no seishin*, vol. 12 of *Nihon no rekishi kōza* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2011), 239.

⁶ Yoshida Hajime, *Sake* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 2015), 175–76.



Figure 2. Sake Cups. 20useruser19 / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>). Available from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/Three_sake_cups.jpg (Accessed August 7, 2020).

Would it be possible for anyone to drink 4.3 gallons of sake and survive? In 1900, the average weight of a twenty-year old Japanese male was 53 kg (117 lb), according to the Ministry of Education which began recording those statistics that year.⁷ Assuming premodern sake had a lower ABV than modern sake around the level of a table wine at 14%, then that 117 lb male would consume a lethal amount of sake after polishing off just a third of a gallon.⁸ Even if we assume that the aforementioned sake drinkers were fatter and imbibed over a long period of time, either the amount of sake they consumed must have been far more diluted than the modern beverage or their drinking prowess was embellished considerably, if not both. Otherwise the man who consumed 4.3 gallons of sake should be dead several times over if the story about him is true. Yet, without knowing the potency of medieval and early modern sake we cannot be sure of their fate. They might have been drinking the equivalent of near beer with .5% ABV.

Another related issue is how much rice was dedicated to sake brewing in premodern Japan. Historian Charlotte von Verschuer has put to bed the long-persisting assumption that rice was Japan's preeminent staple grain since it arrived in that country in the prehistoric period. She estimates that before the year 1700, rice accounted for only 25% of the diet of ordinary people who subsisted instead on other grains and foraged foods.⁹ Even in the first half of the twentieth century, when rice became more prominent in the diet of peasants,

⁷"Weight by Age and Sex (F.Y.1900--2004)," Statistics Bureau, accessed January 7, 2020, warp.da.ndl.go.jp.

⁸"Blood Alcohol Chart For Estimation," Alcometers, accessed January 7, 2020, breathalyzeralcoholtester.com.

⁹Charlotte von Verschuer, *Rice, Agriculture, and the Food Supply in Premodern Japan*, translated and edited by Wendy Cobcroft (New York: Routledge, 2016), 299-300.

they typically consumed it in a porridge mixed with other grains and greens; and in some households only the men ate the rice leaving the women the millets and other fillers left in the pot.¹⁰ Estimates of rice production and consumption including von Verschuer's, however, are unable to account for the amount of rice destined for sake instead of the table. Jesuit missionary João Rodrigues who lived in Japan from 1577 to 1614 estimated that in the late sixteenth century, one-third of the rice in the country went to sake brewing.¹¹ Rodrigues also condemned drinking contests and the amount that Japanese imbibed in general, so his observation comes from someone critical of Japan's drinking culture. But, he offers a reminder that the greater the amount of rice that became a beverage, the less there was available for people to eat. Arizono Shōichirō estimates that 15% of the rice in the early modern period was grown for sake making.¹² By then, brewers in Itami near Osaka shipped between a million to 11.6 million gallons of sake annually to Edo, roughly the equivalent of a gallon to 11.6 gallons per person in that city of one million residents depending on the year.¹³ Itami may have been the most productive brewing region, but it was not alone. Edo had its own breweries and other regions sold their sake in the city. One samurai author of the early nineteenth century estimated that Edo's citizens consumed almost 30 million gallons of sake annually.¹⁴ This estimate was probably an exaggeration for an author critical of the wasteful spending he witnessed in Edo. How much sake was consumed per capita may never be accurately known, but the citizens of Edo clearly loved to tipple.

The Riddle of Recipes

The word sake appears in Japanese records in the eighth century, but the recipe has changed considerably over the centuries. For instance, brewers in the ancient and medieval periods sometimes added wood ash to sake, darkening the color and tempering the bitterness of an alcoholic beverage that fermented too quickly in the summer time. This method was used before sake brewing switched to the winter months exclusively in the early modern period.¹⁵

¹⁰ Eric C. Rath, *Japan's Cuisines: Food, Place and Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), 88-91.

¹¹ Harada Nobuo, *Rekishi no naka no kome to niku: Shokumotsu to tennō, sabetsu* (Tokyo, Heibonsha, 1993), 144.

¹² Arizono Shōichirō, *Kinsei shomin no nichijōshoku*, 48.

¹³ Yoshida Hajime, "Edo no sake jijō," in "*Okashi to osake no daigassen*" ten: Nishikie Taiheiki mochi sake tatakai, ed. Toraya Bunko (Tokyo: Toraya Bunko, 2002), 12.

¹⁴ Mark Teeuwen, Kate Nakai, et al., trans. *Lust, Commerce, and Corruption: An Account of What I Have Seen and Heard, by an Edo Samurai* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 372.

¹⁵ Yunoki Manabu, *Sakezukuri no rekishi, shinsōpan* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 2005), 29-30.



Figure 3. Crucian carp lactic acid sushi (*funazushi*) and sake, Shiga Prefecture, 2019. Author photo.

Sushi is another dish that changed dramatically over the course of a millennium, to the point that what was first called sushi would likely be unrecognizable to most people as the same dish today. Like sake, the word sushi dates to the eighth century in Japan. The ingredients for making sushi appear in *The Procedures of the Engi Era* (*Engishiki* 延喜式), a collection of laws and customs completed in 927. The *Engishiki* indicates that sushi was made from rice, salt, and fish, but the exact way these ingredients were supposed to be combined was unstated.¹⁶ Based upon Chinese records, Japanese scholars infer that ancient sushi was made through lactic acid fermentation, a process of pickling the fish in salt and rice that took months, if not years, and gave it an extremely sour taste while rendering the bones soft enough to eat.¹⁷ The problem is that that Chinese source often cited as illustrative of sushi making in ancient Japan, *The Important Arts for the People's Welfare* (*Qimin yaoshu*) compiled in the mid sixth century and attributed to Jia Sixie, includes sake in its primary sushi recipe and adds spices such as orange peel. The same text suggest using the sushi in soups.¹⁸ Some early modern Japanese sushi recipes do contain sake, but not spices. Ancient Japanese sushi does not survive in the archaeological record, so we are left hunting for clues in textual evidence. Unfortunately, the first surviving Japanese recipes for sushi date to the early modern period. Thus, much of the history of sushi in Japan between the eighth and seventeenth century is based on inference and on assuming that changes in the words for sushi indicate a change in the recipe. For example, the word *namanare* 生成 / 生熟 first appears in a fifteenth century diary. Sushi scholars take that word translated as “fresh

¹⁶ Hibino Terutoshi, *Sushi no rekishi o tazuneru* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), 26-27.

¹⁷ For a discussion of lactic acid sushi, see Eric C. Rath, “Some Tasting Notes on Year-Old Sushi: *Funazushi*, Japan’s Most Ancient and Potentially Its Most Up-to-Date Sushi,” *Gastronomica: The Journal for Food Studies* 20.1 (2020), 34-41.

¹⁸ Hsing-Tsung Huang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 6 *Biology and Biological Technology, Part V: Fermentation and Food Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Huang views rice as the basis for all of the sushi recipes in the *Qimin yaoshu*, but there is scholarly debate about that point. Eric C. Rath, *Oishii: The History of Sushi* (London: Reaktion Books, forthcoming, 2021).

matured sushi” to mean that sushi eaters no longer waited the months (and sometimes years) for their sushi to undergo full lactic acid fermentation, and instead ate it only after a few weeks or days.¹⁹ But, surely some impatient or ravenous sushi eaters must have consumed their sushi “fresh matured” long before then. We do not know. What is clear is that ancient and medieval sushi were different from modern versions. The now globally famous nigirizushi consisting of a slice of fish on top of rice best eaten immediately after it is made did not debut until the early nineteenth century.



Figure 4. Nigirizushi. Nandaro / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>), Available from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fd/Sushi_Kanagawa_Japan_%282013%29.JPG (Accessed August 7, 2020).

The California Roll is now as well-known as nigirizushi, but its origins are also shrouded in mystery. The tasty combination of avocado, mayonnaise, rice, and imitation crab rolled up in nori can be found in sushi restaurants, supermarkets, and university cafeterias in the United States, making it the poster child for American sushi. Sushi scholars trace its origins to Los Angeles’s Little Tokyo, but disagree on when it was invented suggesting dates between 1962 to 1971.²⁰ Urban legend combined with the fact that the first mention of a California Roll in a newspaper article dates to 1979 means that the identity of the inventor of the iconic roll, if there was such a person, will likely remain a mystery.²¹ Today, the California Roll fights for attention with other rolls stuffed with all sorts of ingredients and topped with a variety of

¹⁹ Hibino, *Sushi no rekishi o tazuneru*, 50.

²⁰ James Farrer, Christian Hess, Mônica R. de Carvalho, Chuanfei Wang, and David Wank, “Japanese Culinary Mobilities: The Multiple Globalizations of Japanese Cuisine,” in *Routledge Handbook of Food in Asia*, ed. Cecilia Leong-Salobir (London: Routledge: 2019), 45, 47; Robert Ji-Song Ku, *Dubious Gastronomy: The Cultural Politics of Eating Asian in the USA* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014), 44-47.

²¹ Jonas House, “Sushi in the United States, 1945–1970,” *Food and Foodways*, 26.1 (2018), 58.

colorful and spicy sauces whose origins are equally as obscure. As someone who has written about the history of sushi, I view these creative innovations as further evidence that sushi is one of the world's greatest anonymous cuisines, one that keeps evolving silently in new ways that few can predict and fewer still can (or should) take credit for.

Restaurants Don't Save Menus

If the sushi restaurants of Los Angeles's Little Tokyo had preserved their menus then we might be able to know once and for all the identity of the inventor of the California Roll, but restaurants are poor record keepers, at least when it comes to menus. Much of the supposition that Edo-period nigirizushi was more than twice as large than the nigirizushi of today is derived from an early twentieth century cookbook written by Koizumi Seizaburō 小泉清三郎 (1884-1950). Koizumi was the grandson of Hanaya Yohe'e 華屋与兵衛, the person many view as the inventor of pressing fish on top of rice and calling it nigirizushi.²² Koizumi continued the

restaurant started by and named after his great grandfather through the early twentieth century, even reopening it after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923. Yet, the records of that establishment, which could shed much light on the history of sushi, do not survive. Kyoto has many old restaurants that have been in the same family for centuries. The owners of these establishments take pride in their pedigrees and in their age-old collection of serving ware and other artistic treasures in their storehouses. But when it comes to documents, these restaurateurs have little to show either because their forbearers never kept any records or because they are unwilling to reveal these papers to scholars.²³ I suspect the former, because



Figure 5. California Roll. Mk2010 / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>). Available from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/19/California_Rolls.JPG (Accessed August 7, 2020).

²² Koizumi Seizaburō, *Katei sushi no tsukekata* (Tokyo: Ōkura Shoten, 1910).

²³ This was my experience interviewing Kyoto restaurant owners for my book *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010). Japanese scholars have likewise reported a lack of archival materials from restaurants in Kyoto and Osaka, Okumura Ayao, "Ryōriya no ryōri," in *Ryōriya no kosumorojii*, ed. Takada Masatoshi (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 2004), 58. One exception is the Kyoto restaurant Mankamerō 萬亀樓, which holds the

the centuries-old restaurants from Kyoto are always keen to remind prospective diners of their history, and displaying something like an old menu would be an ideal way to do that were one available.

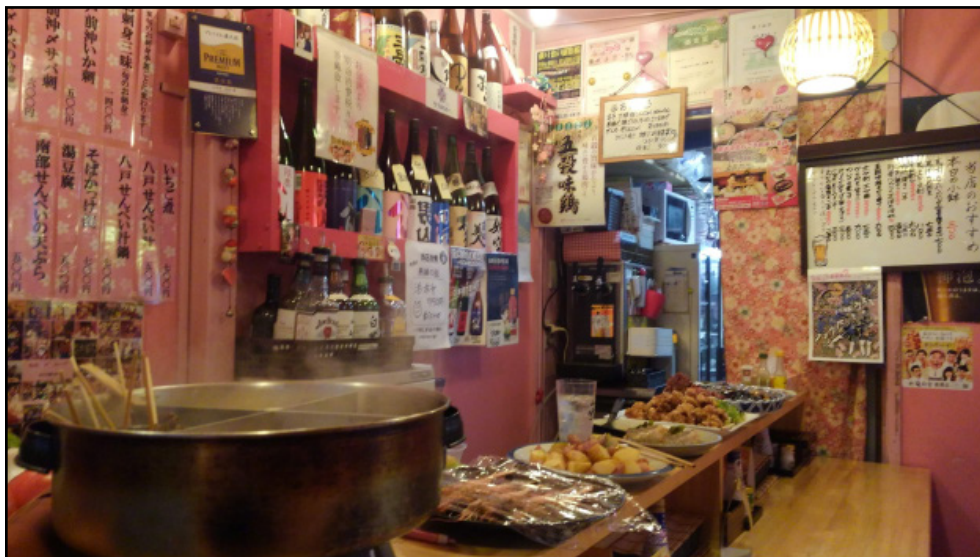


Figure 6. Restaurant Interior, Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture (2018). Author photo.

Fortunately, some ardent collectors have saved historical menus and restaurant ephemera. The New York Public Library allows online access to its menu collection with over 17,500 menus digitized as of June 2020 (menus.nypl.org). The library at the University of Toronto Scarborough houses the Harley J. Spiller collection of Chinese takeout menus, soon to be made available digitally online (utsc.library.utoronto.ca). And the Culinary Institute of America has over 30,000 menus in its collection, many of which can be viewed online (ciadigitalcollections.culinary.edu). Among the hundreds of culinary texts published in the early modern period in Japan, menu collections (*kondateshū*) form a significant genre. But unlike restaurant menus which list dishes that were actually served to customers, these early modern Japanese menu collections were meant to be a “fantasy with food” offering readers a vision of the possibilities for banqueting in ways that they could never afford or create in real life.²⁴ These descriptions of elaborate meals were a form of gastro pornography that titillated the reader, but ultimately left them unsatiated. How readers actually satisfied their gastronomic desires remains an open question.

The Meat Question

The history of meat eating in the premodern period is, as food scholar Katarzyna Cwiertka noted, “one of the most contentious aspects in Japanese history.”²⁵ It is contentious because

document collection of the Ikama 生間 school of ceremonial cuisine (*hōchō shiki* 包丁式).

²⁴ Rath, *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan*, 122-23.

²⁵ Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 24.

scholars have tried to explain an absence. Available evidence suggests that animal protein was only a minimal part of the diet in premodern Japan. In 1900, when more reliable record keeping begins, annual per capita meat consumption comprised mostly of beef was only 800g.²⁶ So why didn't the Japanese eat meat? Buddhist prohibitions against taking life are often cited for Japanese aversions to meat historically. But Buddhist influences in China and Korea never stopped their populations from consuming animals, and fish have long been viewed as a prominent part of the diet in Japan. Historians like Harada Nobuo have argued that the ancient state made meat eating taboo viewing it as inimical to rice agriculture. Harada cites a proclamation by Emperor Temmu in 675 that prohibited the consumption of horse, cow, dog, monkey, and chicken and set some seasonal limits on fishing.²⁷ For Harada, the emperor's prohibition provides evidence why meat, with some exceptions like fish, was not on the Japanese premodern table. Yet, archaeological discoveries since the 1980s have led to wider acceptance that meat eating was much more prevalent in premodern Japan than was once assumed.²⁸ After all, how else does one explain piles of cut and gnawed bones in medieval and early modern trash pits? In that light, Temmu's prohibition should be reinterpreted as only affecting court ceremonies and not as a ban on meat eating for commoners, who continued to devour whatever animal life was available to them.²⁹ Just as Charlotte von Verschuer has argued that the prevalence of foraging and other grains in the diet in the ancient and medieval period cannot be fully known by reading the documentary record, which focuses largely on rice as the unit for taxation and for its prominence in the diet of the elite, so too must have commoner consumption of meat escaped the attention of the elite.³⁰ Thankfully, archaeology is shedding more light on the question of the extent of meat eating. For instance, excavations of early modern Edo reveal the bones of fox, racoon dogs (*tanuki*) and otters.³¹ Specialty stores in Edo sold these beasts as well as fox, deer, monkey, boar and pork as "medicinal foods."³² In that light, the question should change from why the Japanese did not eat meat in premodern Japan, into how scholars can ascertain the amount of meat that was consumed.

²⁶ Vaclav Smil and Kazuhiko Kobayashi, *Japan's Dietary Transition and its Impacts* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012), 49.

²⁷ Harada Nobuo, "'Kome shikō' saikō," in *Shokubunka kara shakai ga wakaru*, ed. Yano Keiichi. (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2009), 31-33, 36-37.

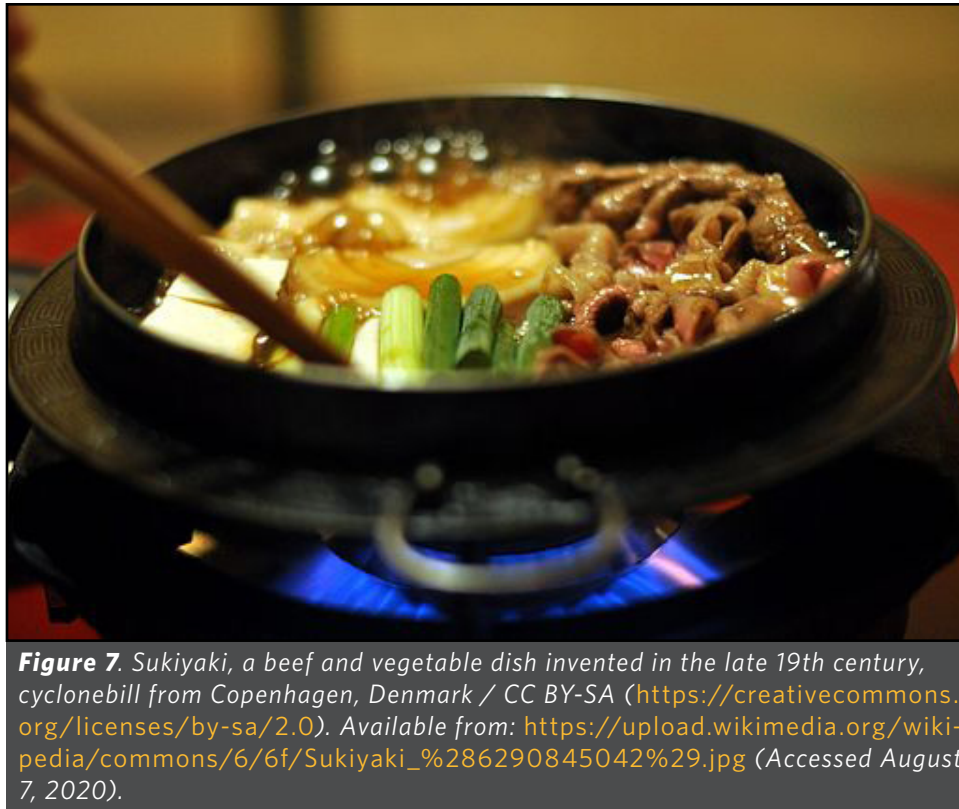
²⁸ Matsui Akira, "Dōbutsu kōkogaku kara mita chūsei no dōbutsu riyō," in *Dōbutsu to chūsei: Eru, tsukau, kurau*, ed. Ono Masatoshi, Gomi Fumihiko, Hagihara Mitsuo (Tokyo: Koshi Shoin, 2009), 19-21.

²⁹ Hirabayashi Akihito, *Kamigami no nikushoku to kodaishi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007), 225.

³⁰ von Verschuer, *Rice, Agriculture, and the Food Supply in Premodern Japan*, 8, 133.

³¹ Junzō Uchiyama, "San'ei-chō and Meat-Eating in Buddhist Edo," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 19.2 (1992), 30.

³² Ehara Ayako, *Katei ryōri no kindai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2012), 18.



Japanese food history abhors a vacuum. Where there is a gap in the sources, someone will fabricate a story, often casting a prominent cultural figure to fill the role as inventor. Scholars seeking to write a history of the multi-course *kaiseki* 会席 meal in the 1930s looked to tea master Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591) as the person who they asserted had perfected an earlier style of dining also called *kaiseki* (but written as 懷石) for the tea ceremony. The attribution paid homage to the tea schools who claimed Rikyū as their founding patriarch and published the scholars' research; and the story stuck to this day in the secondary literature even though its evidentiary base is entirely apocryphal.³³ Rikyū's contemporary, the warlord Uesugi Kenshin (1530-1578), has been credited with inventing *nattō* when soybeans were said to have fermented for the first time on a straw saddlebag on Kenshin's horse.³⁴ Others claim that Shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199), the founder of the Kamakura warrior government, accidentally created the same dish the same way four centuries earlier.³⁵ It is stories such as these surrounding food that fire the imagination, and gives depth to food in Japanese culture, raising it to the level of a cuisine on occasion. The same stories also prompt the food historian to probe the more complicated picture of the past, a process that depends on the availability of sources for its success.

³³ Rath, *Japan's Cuisines*, 34-64.

³⁴ Higuchi Kiyoyuki, *Shokumotsu to Nihonjin* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1979), 48.

³⁵ Kawano Shinjirō, *Chūsei toshi Kamakura: Iseki ga kataru bushi no miyako*. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005, 223.

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THINK PIECE: Diaspora, Exclusion and Appropriation: The Cuisine of the Korean Minority in Japan

By Christopher Laurent, Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Asia Pacific Studies, University of San Francisco (AY 2019-2020)

Abstract

Zainichi Koreans are descendants of Koreans that immigrated to Japan during the colonialization of the Korean peninsula. Although most are born in Japan and speak better Japanese than Korean, they remain marginalized in a society striving to remain homogenous. This essay places the cuisine of Zainichi Koreans in its broader social context. A number of scholars recognize the contribution of Koreans and their food to Japanese cuisine. However, while Koreans living in Japan are relegated to subaltern status, their food is expropriated and celebrated as part of Japanese society. This essay examines the power structure that frames the Japanization of Korean food. The theoretical implication is to reframe culinary erasure and appropriation as part of an integrated system that includes ethnic economy, minority marginalization and systemic discrimination. More broadly, it argues that the structures of domination that have been well documented in the Western context also exist in East Asia.

Keywords: Zainichi Koreans, Japanese colonialism, Japanese cuisine, yakiniku, culinary appropriation

Stepping off the train at Tsuruhashi station—the stop for Osaka’s Koreatown—it is immediately clear you have arrived in a different part of the city. A maze of narrow alleyways twists and turn under the train tracks. Smells of grilled meat and brightly lit signs pull you into an alien world of sights and smells. Ethnic Korean residents carrying on their daily business brush shoulders with excited Japanese sightseers, tourists in their own land. Most outsiders come to this historically Korean neighborhood to experience a bit of the Korean wave: K-pop, Korean dramas and a burgeoning food culture emanating from South Korea. Here, one finds grandmothers hawking all forms of *kimchi* made from rock seaweed, shallots and even tomatoes competing with each other for creativity. Outside barbecue joints, colorful posters displaying selections of organ meat remain a lasting symbol of how the community has adapted to survive. Today, few Japanese consumers need to make the trip to this ethnic neighborhood as grilled meat, *kimchi* and savory pancakes are readily available outside these cultural enclaves in the frozen food aisles of grocery stores or popular restaurant chains. Although these specialties emerged in places like Tsuruhashi, they have become an integral part of the Japanese foodscape and are now considered by many to be native to the island nation. What process enabled the domestication of Korean food in Japan and why is this issue relevant to contemporary Korean residents in Japan?



Figure 1. Narrow alleyway at Tsuruhashi station. Author photo.

Studies on the historical development of Japanese cuisine recognize the place of Koreans and their food in Japan.¹ However, these analyses have stayed neutral, silencing some of the greater injustices. While Koreans living in Japan are relegated to subaltern status, their food is expropriated and celebrated as part of Japanese society. This essay seeks to rectify this omission by paying close attention to the power structure that frames the domestication of Korean food in Japan. The idea for this think piece first emerged in 2018

¹See Katarzyna Cwiertka, “Culinary Culture and the Making of a National Cuisine,” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Japan*, ed. Jennifer Robertson, 415–428 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007); Sonia Ryang, *Eating Korean in America: Gastronomic Ethnography of Authenticity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2015).

while doing ethnographic fieldwork that examined the state of anti-Korean discrimination in Osaka, Japan. Participant observation and informal discussions with ethnic Koreans made clear the importance of food culture in their lives engendering a number of reflections on the assimilation of Korean cuisine in Japan. This essay aims to first frame the historical context to better understand the contemporary predicament of Koreans that immigrated to Japan during the colonization of the peninsula. Second, it will argue that their cuisine is distinct from the cuisine of South Korea and the cuisine of Japan. Finally, it will broaden the discussion on culinary appropriation to assess what is at stake for marginalized communities. The theoretical implication is to reframe culinary erasure and appropriation as part of an integrated system that includes ethnic economy, minority marginalization and systemic discrimination. More broadly, this article argues that the structures of domination that have been well documented in the Western context also exist in East Asia.

The Invisible Minority

According to the Japanese Ministry of Justice, 479,193 North and South Korean inhabitants live in Japan, constituting the second-largest minority in a nation otherwise perceived as homogeneous.² About two-thirds of these Korean inhabitants living in Japan are classified as special permanent residents that are born in Japan and speak better Japanese than Korean. The current predicament of this population is tied to the Korean Peninsula's thirty-five years as a colony of Japan (1910-1945) when large numbers of Koreans migrated to Japan often coerced into forced labor.³ Although some scholars question the use of the term "coerced conscription" (*kyōsei renkō*),⁴ it remains a topic of contention between Korean and Japanese politicians especially in the case of comfort women.⁵ Still, Japanese colonial rule in Korea was devised as a system of exploitation that pushed millions of Koreans to immigrate to Japan. It is worth noting that Japanese colonialism was explicitly modeled on European colonialism.⁶ Thus, contemporary structures that are a legacy of colonialism in Japanese society resemble the ones present in Western societies. The Japanese colonial project took great care to reproduce strategies of subjugation, colonial administration and racial hierarchy within their empire. This hierarchy, with Japanese at its apex, helped promulgate stereotypes that

²"Zairyū gaikokujin tōkei [Foreign Resident statistic]," Japanese Ministry of Justice, December 2018, accessed April 8, 2020, http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/toukei/toukei_ichiran_touroku.html. However, Fukuoka points out that such estimates do not take into account naturalization and mixed couples' children. See Fukuoka Yasunori, *Lives of Young Koreans in Japan* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2000), 21.

³Xavier Robillard-Martel and Christopher Laurent, "From Colonization to *Zaitokukai*: The Legacy of Racial Oppression in the Lives of Koreans in Japan," *Asian Ethnicity* 21, no. 3 (2020): 396.

⁴Erik Ropers, *Voices of the Korean Minority in Postwar Japan: Histories Against the Grain* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 27-59.

⁵Chung Haeng-Ja, "The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan by C. Sarah Soh," *American Anthropologist* 112, no. 2 (2010): 337-338; Hayashi Hirofumi, "Disputes in Japan over the Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' System and Its Perception in History," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617 (2008): 123-32.

⁶William G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 6.

justified Korean's inferior status. For example, after the 1923 great Kanto earthquake, rumors of Koreans poisoning wells prompted the massacre of thousands of Korean civilians living in the Tokyo area.⁷ These stereotypes—Koreans as unruly and prone to criminality—endure today in Japan's popular imagination.

After peace was ratified with the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951, Japan was forced to surrender its colonies. Out of the 2 million Korean laborers in Japan at the end of World War II, about 600,000 remained in Japan after the Second World War.⁸ Although Koreans were located at the bottom of the social ladder, many opted to stay in Japan in the hope that the political and economic situation would soon improve in Korea. Few ended up making it back home and their descendants constitute the basis of the Korean population living in Japan. Although these Korean residents were regarded as Japanese nationals, the independence of Korea meant that they were stripped of their nationality as Japanese imperial subjects, effectively becoming stateless. While some Koreans were able to naturalize as Japanese citizens, most remained non-Japanese citizens in a country that sought to exclude them. Why did so few Korean residents in Japan choose to naturalize? The reasons are diverse, ranging from the lack of resources necessary for such a complex process to the fact that Japan proscribes dual citizenship. As they were excluded from desirable occupations, Korean laborers were relegated to unwanted jobs like scrap collectors, gambling hall owners and employees at hole in the wall restaurants. Unable to rent property from Japanese landowners, Koreans were relegated to living in ethnic ghettos and shantytowns where they could afford to live.

Over time, Koreans remaining in Japan inherited the ambiguous status of *Zainichi* granting them long-term residency without giving them the same rights as Japanese nationals. They became outsiders living inside Japanese society. Still today, a significant number of *Zainichi* Koreans live in ethnic neighborhoods, occupy similar work sectors and have access to limited educational opportunities.⁹ The situation of the descendants of people who came during colonial times should, however, be contrasted with recent immigrants from South Korea or, "newcomers," who arrive in Japan with more economic and educational capital. In contrast to South Korean "newcomers," *Zainichi* Koreans today remain a disenfranchised population having suffered from historic discrimination for generations. To escape discrimination, many *Zainichi* Koreans will attempt to pass as Japanese. For example, the vast majority of *Zainichi* Koreans today do not use their Korean names in public life opting instead to use a Japanese pseudonym.¹⁰ As most *Zainichi* Koreans are born and raised in Japan, they are culturally, linguistically and physically nearly indistinguishable from

⁷ Sonia Ryang, "The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Massacre of Koreans in 1923: Notes on Japan's Modern National Sovereignty," *Anthropological Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (2003): 731-48.

⁸ Edward W. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan, 1904-1950* (New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951), 27.

⁹ Suzuki Kazuko, *Divided Fates: The State, Race, and Korean Immigrants' Adaptation in Japan and the United States* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 124-130.

¹⁰ Kawai Yuko, "Deracialised Race, Obscured Racism: Japaneseness, Western and Japanese Concepts of Race, and Modalities of Racism," *Japanese Studies* 35, no. 1 (2015): 23-47.

Japanese people.¹¹ Since most are not Japanese citizens, they are not protected by the same civil rights like access to social welfare or voting rights. To make matters worse, most *Zainichi* Koreans were initially affiliated with North Korea, a regime hostile to Japan.¹² Unlike South Korea, North Korea was proactive in protecting *Zainichi* Korean interests in Japan, building schools, providing business loan schemes and encouraging civil rights activism within Japan. Although today the majority of Koreans in Japan have shifted their nationality to South Korea, they remain perceived as infiltrators by Japanese far-right activists. As for the Korean residents that remain politically affiliated with the North, they continue to suffer the most severe forms of discrimination in education and work opportunities.¹³

This historical overview aims to contextualize the current struggles of *Zainichi* Koreans. Although Japanese colonialism is over, the legacy of this system endures within Japanese society. *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan have been far from passive in resisting oppression and have obtained some victories. For instance, *Zainichi* Korean activists won important lawsuits enabling them to work in Japanese companies, repealed fingerprinting laws reserved for criminals in Japan and managed to gain minimal reparations for their exploitation. Yet, by many measures, they still endure systemic discrimination.¹⁴ In fact, with each hard-won victory (e.g. limited voting rights in local elections, access to pension plans), there has been a considerable backlash. The Japanese far-right has systematically portrayed *Zainichi* Koreans as abusing the welfare system, targeting Korean residents in violent demonstrations and calling to expel them out of the country or exterminate them.¹⁵ In the last few years, hate speech and online bullying against Koreans have drastically increased.¹⁶ In this context, the food culture of Koreans has been a potent symbol of resistance and an economic resource. In *Zainichi* Korean households, simple dishes like *kimchi* stew (*kimchi tchigae*) endure the test of time as a reminder that after three generations in Japan they will not be completely assimilated. In Osaka's Koreatown, restaurants selling *Zainichi* Korean specialties are impossible to miss as they are at the center of the social and economic life of the community.

¹¹ Kim Bumsoo, "Changes in the Socio-Economic Position of *Zainichi* Koreans: A Historical Overview," *Social Science Japan Journal* 14, no. 2 (2011): 236; Erin Aeran Chung, "The Politics of Contingent Citizenship: Korean Political Engagement in Japan and the United States," in *Diaspora without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 148.

¹² David Chapman, *Zainichi Korean Identity and Ethnicity* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 130.

¹³ According to one North Korean citizen interviewed, the decrease in public funding of North Korean-affiliated schools is the most important source of contemporary discrimination in Japan. See Adam Beije, "The Changing Contours of Discrimination in Japan: The Treatment of Applicants from North Korea-Affiliated Schools in Japan to National Universities," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (2009): 118.

¹⁴ The influential study by Kim Myenong-su and Tadashi Inazuki, "*Zainichi kankokujin no shakai idō* [The Social Mobility of *Zainichi* Koreans]," in *Kaisō shakai kara atarashii shimin shakai e* [From a Class Society to a Society for New Citizens], ed. K. Kosaka, 181-198 (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppansha, 2000), is often cited as proof of the social mobility of *Zainichi* Koreans. However, this study only takes working men of South Korean nationality into account, excluding most of the *Zainichi* Korean population from its calculations.

¹⁵ Robillard-Martel and Laurent, "From Colonization to Zaitokukai," 1-20.

¹⁶ Yamaguchi Tomomi, "Xenophobia in Action: Ultrnationalism, Hate Speech, and the Internet in Japan," *Radical History Review* 2013, no. 117 (October 1, 2013): 109.



Figure 2. Popular Zainichi Korean food stalls in Tsuruhashi, Osaka. Author photo.

Food of the Disenfranchised

The vast majority of ingredients and food processing techniques that make Japanese cuisine what it is today came from continental Asia via the Korean Peninsula.¹⁷ For example, the predecessor of emblematic Japanese foods like miso and soya sauce both emerged in China.¹⁸ These foreign elements were transformed—some might claim refined—and adopted as uniquely Japanese. As the Japanese Empire began to expand in the early 20th century, Japan began to swallow up the human, economic and culinary resources of its growing empire. For example, Chinese migrant laborers brought ramen noodle soups to Japan.¹⁹ Additionally, a Taiwanese entrepreneur that immigrated to Japan during the colonial period developed instant ramen, a processing technique that played a crucial role in spreading this dish from Japan to the rest of the world.²⁰ Korean migrant laborers also played a significant role immigrating in large numbers to cities with the closest links to the Korean Peninsula. Today, cities like Osaka that have large *Zainichi* Korean communities have made *Zainichi* Korean dishes an integral part of their local cuisines. More recently, South Korea's growing economic and cultural importance across East Asia has helped fuel considerable interest in South Korea's popular cuisine. Although *Zainichi* Koreans have had some measure of success riding this wave of popularity, it is important to remember that *Zainichi* Korean cuisine is significantly different from the contemporary cuisine of South Korea as both cuisines evolved in different directions.

¹⁷ Ishige Naomichi and Paul Kegan, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 47.

¹⁸ Katarzyna Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 139-140.

¹⁹ Barak Kushner, *Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen - Japan's Favorite Noodle Soup* (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2012), 13-14.

²⁰ George Solt, *The Untold History of Ramen: How Political Crisis in Japan Spawned a Global Food Craze* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 91.

During the colonization of the Korean Peninsula, Korean laborers migrated to Japan fleeing poverty in search of employment in a country in need of an inexpensive workforce. This exploited workforce was relegated to dangerous and undesirable occupations like working in mines and factories.²¹ After World War II, these laborers had two options: go back to a country ravaged by colonialism and civil war, or stay in a country that had few opportunities for its own citizens. To survive their exclusion from the labor market, a large number of Korean residents turned to entrepreneurship. Restaurants, born out of large cities' ethnic ghettos, have shaped Japan's palate and foodscape. This phenomenon is not unique, as throughout the world, immigrant communities have turned to food entrepreneurship as a form of economic survival. Although restaurants can offer a means to generate income for immigrants, it is a risky endeavor requiring a lot of work with little initial return. *Zainichi* Korean entrepreneurs have had to be frugal to stay afloat. Restaurants are more often than not family businesses with family members working for little or no money. When owners have too many overhead costs, they save wherever possible on ingredients and preparation time. Economic constraints can be limiting but they can also be the source of tremendous culinary creativity. Although few would credit them for such entrepreneurial genius, *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan have created a popular cuisine from the leftover scraps of Japanese consumers.

During and shortly after World War II, Koreans were notorious for illegally brewing unfiltered rice wine known as *makkoli* in Korean and *doburoku* in Japanese. Although for many Koreans this strategy was a means of survival, illegal brewing was met with violent repression by the Japanese authorities.²² The dismantlement of illegal Korean breweries would periodically lead to lethal confrontations between Korean residents and the Japanese police. Although these events are all but erased from Japanese historical consciousness, moonshine is experiencing a revival among the Japanese working classes. *Zainichi* Koreans have had to operate on the margins of legality to survive their exclusion. Although participation in the illegal economy of US-occupied Japan was beyond a doubt exaggerated, many Koreans had little recourse but to depend on the black market, as they were not eligible for food rationing.²³ Koreans had to contend with chronic food shortages for key ingredients like rice and had to come up with creative dishes to sell in order to make a living. The resulting *Zainichi* cuisine blends Korean and Japanese influences using the resources available to this disenfranchised community. Such necessity fueled culinary creativity, an attitude that is still very much alive in the contemporary Korean food stalls of Osaka's Koreatown that sell *kimchi* made from ingredients ranging from rock seaweed (*iwa nori*) to tomatoes.

²¹Naitou Hisako, "Korean Forced Labor in Japan's Wartime Empire," in *Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown Histories*, ed. P. H. Kratoska (Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 90-98.

²²John Lie, *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 135.

²³Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Freedom of Hate Speech; Abe Shinzo and Japan's Public Sphere," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 11, no. 8-1 (2013): 5-28.



Figure 3. Diverse kimchi offerings in Osaka's Koreatown. Author photo.

The Japanese consumer's fondness for *kimchi* encapsulates Japan's relationship with the food of the *Zainichi* community. In Japan, *kimchi* was originally known as Korean pickles (*chōsenzuke*). And until the 1980s, ethnic Koreans in Japan were the main consumers of this ethnicized food, as it remained stigmatized by Japanese.²⁴ Several factors contributed to the Japanese consumer's adoption of *kimchi*. As traditional Japanese pickles decreased in popularity, Japanese producers began to make their version of *kimchi*, competing with each other.²⁵ In addition, the explosion in popularity of *kimchi* was also linked to the rise of the ethnic and health food trends in the 1990s in Japan. In particular, women consumers shifted from a dislike for pungent foods towards a craving for food with many health benefits.²⁶ The popularity of *kimchi* in Japan transformed it into a side dish staple and a main ingredient in stir-fries and hotpots.²⁷ To respond to increasing demand, Japan's domestic production increased tenfold from 1980 to 2000.²⁸ Japanese producers would eventually seek to export the Japanese variety of unfermented *kimchi* (*kimuchi*) to South Korea, their former imperial subject. When Japan nominated *kimuchi* as its official Olympic food, this trade conflict with South Korea would morph in the so-called "Kimchi Wars."²⁹ In response, South Korea would

²⁴ Lee Yon-sun. *Kimuchi Monogatari* [A Tale of Kimchi] (Tokyo: Kōsonsui-kōshoin, 2002).

²⁵ Cwierka, Katarzyna, "From Military Rations to UNESCO Heritage: A Short History of Korean Kimchi," in *Culinary Nationalism in Asia*, edited by Michelle T. King, (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 82.

²⁶ Sasaki, "Nihon no kimuchi (5) [Japanese Kimchi (5)]," 16-18.

²⁷ Chong Dae-Sung, *Yakiniku, kimuchi to Nihonjin* [Yakiniku, Kimchi and the Japanese] (Tokyo: PHP kenkyū, 2004), 127-135.

²⁸ Chong, *Yakiniku, kimuchi to Nihonjin* [Yakiniku, Kimchi and the Japanese], 127.

²⁹ Han Kyung-Koo, "The 'Kimchi Wars' in Globalizing East Asia: Consuming Class, Gender, Health, and National

file a claim with the UNFAO that later became the international standard for *kimchi*-making.³⁰ The international standardization of *kimchi* was only possible because South Korea has at its disposal a state apparatus that minorities like the *Zainichi* Koreans do not possess.

Cities with historically large Korean populations have also adopted the cuisine of Korean residents as their own. The city of Fukuoka's proximity to the Korean Peninsula made it an ideal settling point for many Koreans. One of the city's specialties, spicy cod row (*karashi mentaiko*), is now considered a Japanese dish. Also, the city of Osaka has by far the largest population of *Zainichi* Koreans and their influence on the local cuisine can hardly be ignored. Savory scallion and seafood pancakes called *chidjimi* are common street food in the city and a likely precursor to Japanese *okonomiyaki*, a dish that is the pride and joy of Osaka residents.³¹ Many of Osaka's Korean residents hail from Jeju Island which still influences the city's foodways. For example, the Jeju regional dish of abalone porridge (*jeonbok-juk*) is sold in many *Zainichi* Korean restaurants under the Japanese name *awabi gayu*. Additionally, Tokyo's Shin-Okubo neighborhood continues to have a lasting impact on the capital's foodscape. Tokyoites visit Shin-Okubo for a taste of Korea's most recent food craze born out of South Korea's vibrant consumer market. In the last few years, cheese spicy chicken stir-fry (*chīzu takkarubi*) has been a popular dish most restaurants will serve to consumers in search of novelty. Worth noting, most Koreans living in Tokyo's Koreatown are recent immigrants from South Korea. These "newcomers" tend to have more economic resources and better knowledge of South Korean culinary trends. *Zainichi* Koreans have been less successful capitalizing on the South Korean cultural wave that has swept throughout Asia. However, unlike recent South Korean immigrants, *Zainichi* Koreans receive little recognition for their contribution to the Japanese food scene.



Figure 4. Food novelties offered in Tokyo's Shin-Okubo Korean neighborhood. Author

Identity" in *Consuming Korean Tradition in Early and Late Modernity: Commodification, Tourism, and Performance*, ed. Laurel Kendall (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 149.

³⁰Katarzyna Cwiertka, "Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War: Food in Twentieth-Century Korea" (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 136.

³¹Nakamura Kinya, *Kankoku no washoku Nihon no Kan-shoku — bunka no yūgō henyō* [Korean Japanese Food, Japanese Korean Food Fusion and Transformation of Culture] (Tokyo: Tsuge Shobō Shinsha, 2007), 64-67.

Taking Koreans Out of *Yakiniku*

Yakiniku, or grilled meat, restaurants are by far the most emblematic culinary contribution of the *Zainichi* Koreans. These restaurants occupy a privileged place in the formation of *Zainichi* Korean identity, which is illustrated in a recent movie.³² Facing marginalization, *Zainichi* Korean immigrants opened eateries that were the precursors of these grilled meat restaurants. The only significant difference between these Korean owned businesses and contemporary *yakiniku* restaurants is the amount and the caliber of the meat served.³³ *Yakiniku* restaurants became extremely popular during the years of Japan's rapid economic growth. Between 1963 and 1979 in Tokyo alone, the number of restaurants rose from 17 to 1,118.³⁴ In restaurants, the invention of the smokeless grill (*muen rōsutā*), a device that would draw smoke away from customers, was a revolutionary innovation. It would transform *yakiniku* restaurants from smoke-filled dens to places where the whole family could eat. Customers, especially women, would now be able to leave without smelling of smoke, paving the way to the wider acceptance of *yakiniku*.³⁵ At home, consumers also began to consume grilled meat, purchasing an increasing amount of *Zainichi* Korean branded *yakiniku* sauce.³⁶ Most importantly, *yakiniku* would encourage the practice of preparing and eating food around the same table — something common in Korea but not practiced as widely in Japan.³⁷

Today, *yakiniku* has become one of the most popular meat dishes in Japan. In the early days of the colonization of Korea, Korean beef was a central component of Japan's imperial expansion and a transformative ingredient in the attempt to modernize the Japanese diet at home.³⁸ Meat-eating in Japan was also popularized in great part through Korean owned *yakiniku* restaurants. These restaurants serve small pieces of meat grilled by customers at the table. Grilling your meat at the table became a way to save on labor costs in the kitchen and provided an entertaining activity for patrons. Scholars unanimously agree that *Zainichi* Koreans started these restaurants.³⁹ As few *Zainichi* Koreans could afford more than leftover scraps they developed *horumon yaki* (grilled organ meat), which would later morph into *yakiniku* (grilled meat); a food adapted to Japanese tastes.⁴⁰ Each restaurant developed its blend of dipping sauces that would, if the restaurant became famous enough, be an additional stream of revenue.⁴¹ Originally, these restaurants were classified as cuisine from

³² Chong Wui-Sin. *Yakiniku Doragon* [Yakiniku Dragon], Studio 3, 2018.

³³ Asakura Toshio, *Nihon no yakiniku, Kankoku no sashimi: Shokubunka ga 'naizu' sareru toki* [Japanese Barbecue - Korean Sashimi: When Food Culture is "hybridized"] (Tokyo: Nōsan gyoson bunka kyōkai, 1994), 68-69; Chong, *Yakiniku, Kimuchi to Nihonjin* [Yakiniku, Kimchi and the Japanese], 62-3.

³⁴ Asakura, *Nihon no yakiniku, Kankoku no sashimi* [Japanese Barbecue - Korean Sashimi], 44-46.

³⁵ Nomura Susumu, *Korian Sekai no Tabi* [Koreans' World Journey] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1994), 60-61.

³⁶ Chong, *Yakiniku, Kimuchi to Nihonjin* [Yakiniku, Kimchi and the Japanese], 74-78.

³⁷ Nomura, *Korian Sekai no Tabi* [Koreans' World Journey], 62.

³⁸ Cwiertka, *Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War*, 28-30.

³⁹ Miyatsuka Toshio, "Yakiniku—Savory Dish with Simple Origins," *Japan Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1999): 31.

⁴⁰ During the 1930s, female factory workers began to collect discarded organ meat from butchers, marinate and grill them. See Kim Chan-jeong, *Chōsenjin jokōno uta: 1930 nen kishiwada bōseki sōgi* [Songs of Korean female factory workers: The 1930 labor dispute in Kishiwada textile industry] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1982).

⁴¹ Nomura, *Korian Sekai no Tabi* [Koreans' World Journey], 74-75.

the Korean Peninsula (*chōsen ryōri*).⁴² To distance themselves from the negative connotation, *Zainichi* Korean restaurants changed the name of their cuisine to *yakiniku*, which literally means grilled meat in Japanese.⁴³ The drawback of this permutation is that it concealed its Korean origins. The erasure of Korean culinary contributions to Japan operates in a similar way to *Zainichi* Koreans adopting Japanese names to avoid discrimination.



Figure 5. Zainichi Korean Barbecue organ meat (horumon yakī). Author photo.

Today, *yakiniku* is celebrated as part of a growing fascination with popular Japanese eateries (*b-kyū gurume*). Although some consumers will recognize its Korean roots, *yakiniku* has been adopted and transformed in Japan becoming one of its most beloved dishes.⁴⁴ Although Korean ethnic neighborhoods still rely on *yakiniku* restaurants to make a living, an increasing amount of *yakiniku* restaurants outside these enclaves are Japanese owned. Remaining traces of Koreanness are slowly erased from menus with few restaurants classifying themselves as foreign cuisine any longer. Moreover, *yakiniku* restaurants are becoming increasingly popular outside of Japan. Abroad, *yakiniku* restaurants are classified as Japanese-style barbecue with no mention of their Korean origins.⁴⁵ The strategic deletion of Korean influence allows the restaurants to add value to its food thanks to a global hierarchy of cuisine where Japan reigns supreme. This tactic allows the restaurants to charge

⁴² The term is fraught with negative meaning as it was the colonial name for the Korean peninsula, is still used in Japan to refer to North Korean and is a common slur directed towards *Zainichi* Koreans.

⁴³ Cwiertka, "Culinary Culture and the Making of a National Cuisine," 415-428; Ryang, *Eating Korean in America*, 56-83; Miyatsuka, "Yakiniku-Savory Dish with Simple Origins," 31.

⁴⁴ Asakura, *Nihon no yakiniku, kankoku no sashimi*, [Japanese Barbecue - Korean Sashimi], 18-39.

⁴⁵ For example, the popular chain "Gyu-Kaku" across North America <https://www.gyu-kaku.com/>

more than what it would as Korean barbecue. With the Japanization of *yakiniku* two different yet interrelated processes take place. Economically, Japanese chain restaurants like Gyu-Kaku have tapped into this lucrative market taking away an essential resource from a group with few opportunities in Japan. Culturally, it erases the contribution and the presence of *Zainichi* Koreans validating the narrative that Koreans have not contributed to Japanese culture.

Discussion: The Dynamics of Appropriation

The cuisine of *Zainichi* Koreans is part of a larger system of cultural exploitation. Yet, how does culture fit into global patterns of economic marginalization, erasure of disenfranchised communities and social hierarchies? Food entrepreneurship is one of the few resources excluded groups can exploit, explaining why these communities are sources of tremendous culinary creativity. However, in order not to undo the myth of national homogeneity, the dominant group must expropriate these contributions to make them part of the nation. This process of erasure and plagiarism, often presented as cultural borrowing, is not an accident as it follows similar patterns of dominance and power in societies that continue to internally exploit minority groups. The Japanization of the cuisine of Korean residents in Japan operates similar dynamics to the Britishization of the cuisine of South Asian residents in the United Kingdom.⁴⁶ Although marginalized communities developed these dishes, they have become so familiar to those countries that some consider them native. This process of domestication would not be problematic if the communities that developed this food were not concurrently marginalized.

This process of culinary appropriation follows similar patterns in former colonial societies that prevent minorities from capitalizing on their cultural production and erasing their contributions to the national culture. Systemic racism and discrimination not only affect social welfare and economic opportunities, but also shape culinary production. The discussion over culinary appropriation, and more generally cultural appropriation, is one that is gaining traction but has garnered far less attention than other forms of discrimination. As we closely examine who champions the concept of appropriation and who undermines it, one notices that the marginalized are often very much aware of this problem while the more privileged defend the status quo. Critics of culinary appropriation, which often happen to be part of the dominant group, argue that one cannot prevent culinary exchange from happening. That culinary poaching is simply homage to a cultural group and that it increases acceptance of marginalized minorities. However, few ask themselves why the dominant group is systematically benefiting from this transaction. In many cases, the process of domestication of outside elements is so seamless that few in the dominant group are cognizant of its existence.⁴⁷ In Japan, younger generations of consumers are not readily

⁴⁶ See Elizabeth Buettner, "'Going for an Indian': South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain," *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 4 (2008): 866.

⁴⁷ For the naturalization of curry in England see Susan Zlotnick, "Domesticating Imperialism: Curry and Cookbooks in Victorian England," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 16, no. 2 (1996): 52. For ramen as a native Japanese food see

aware that some of their favorite foods were developed in marginalized communities. For example, few ramen aficionados know of the Chinese immigrant laborer that toiled to introduce the noodle soup to Japan.⁴⁸

It is worth recognizing that culinary appropriation does not apply to every form of culinary exchange. Power, more precisely the imbalance of power, between two groups is essential to contextualize what constitutes culinary appropriation. The adoption of *Zainichi* Korean food in Japan certainly constitutes a success story for this disenfranchised minority. Yet, as their food becomes mainstream, *Zainichi* Koreans remain excluded from Japanese society. When a group has the power to exploit, discriminate, belittle and prevent upward mobility, taking the food culture of a marginalized group and making it the food of the dominant, this amounts to more than mere cultural borrowing. Culinary appropriation is a system that transforms the foreign into the native, contributes to the economic marginalization of disenfranchised groups and erases minority contributions from the so-called national culture. This system is embedded within a pre-existing framework of ethnic and racial oppression that operates within the confines of most nation-states. Food culture does not evade this framework as it is subject to similar dynamics of exclusion, discrimination and racism. The forces that push people to the margins, that maintain racial hierarchies in place and present minorities as a burden on society need to be examined to understand the overarching framework that enables culinary appropriation. Thus, appropriation can be better apprehended as an integral part of this broader system of oppression that maneuvers on different axes. Other dimensions of this system like racial discrimination or economic marginalization are well studied and documented. However, few have articulated how culinary culture is subjected to the same power struggle than the ones that determine opportunities and inclusiveness. Food, a salient marker of national culture, is a battleground between various neighboring states where ownership is at stake.⁴⁹ As disenfranchised minorities are not supported by a state, it is easier to lay claim to their culinary heritage. Societies like Japan that strive to remain homogenous are particularly prone to erase, assimilate and appropriate internal cultural diversity.⁵⁰

Conclusion: The Significance of Cultural Erasure

This essay sets out to reframe *Zainichi* Korean cuisine in the social and historical context in which it emerged. Although *Zainichi* Koreans speak fluent Japanese, understand Japanese cultural norms and are physically indistinguishable from their Japanese counterparts, they still do not hold the same rights as Japanese citizens. As a minority that came to Japan

Aoki Tamotsu, "The Domestication of Chinese Foodways in Contemporary Japan: Ramen and Peking Duck," in *Changing Chinese Foodways in Asia*, ed. David Y. H. Wu and Chee Beng Tan (Chinese University Press, 2001), 224.

⁴⁸ Kushner, *Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen*, 155-156.

⁴⁹ See Ari Ariel, "The Hummus Wars," *Gastronomica* 12, no. 1 (2012): 34-42, for an example of confrontation over food ownership.

⁵⁰ Tai Eika, "Korean Japanese: A New Identity Option for Korean Residents in Japan," *Critical Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2004): 356-358.

during the colonial occupation of Korea, they continue to suffer from prejudice and systemic discrimination in a society that seeks to erase or exclude them. When one considers these elements, the Japanization of *Zainichi* Korean cuisine appears problematic. The transformation of this cuisine into something Japanese exists within a system of oppression that predates the invention of dishes like *yakiniku* and is in continuity with historical trends of making food of marginalized communities part of the national repertoire. Patterns of subjugation that were devised during colonial times persist today in Japanese society erasing the presence of Koreans and pushing them to the margins. *Zainichi* Koreans have been far from passive in response to this oppression, forging grass-roots resistance movements to better their condition in society and militating for Japan to recognize their existence. As members of the Korean community are increasingly visible in the public sphere, one can hope that Japan will have no choice but to acknowledge their presence and contributions.

The patterns of cultural erasure and economic marginalization described in this essay are not unique to Japan. They operate using similar mechanisms in postcolonial societies. Different marginalized groups can experience similar forms of oppression in societies that are structured under racial hierarchies devised during colonialism. Korean barbecue constitutes a poignant example of how food developed by marginalized groups becomes celebrated as the cuisine of the dominant group. Culinary appropriation is often presented as benign borrowing, homage or a way to provide visibility for the marginalized but this would be ignoring the structure of power that exists in society. When the dominant group has the power to erase the culinary presence and contribution of a minority group, one must consider a more critical approach to culinary diffusion. This approach acknowledges that although food culture is fluid, adapting to various settings, it remains a resource that can be monopolized by the most powerful in society. Members of the dominant group make a fortune with resources developed by marginalized groups, while the same group struggles to make a living from these same resources. When examining cases of culinary appropriation, one must take into account the relative status of each group to grasp the larger implications of this one-way exchange.

Zainichi Koreans I spoke with were proud of the popularity of their cuisine in Japan not so much because it confirms their acceptance in Japanese society but because it is a story of resilience and innovation. *Zainichi* Koreans managed to make a living turning unwanted organ meat into a taste Japanese consumers desire. Still, the Japanization of *Zainichi* Korean cuisine remains a process that needs to be critically examined. This ongoing process is more than name substitution of, for example, *yakiniku* for *bulgogi* or *kimuchi* for *kimchi*. It is a slow process of transformation of the foreign into the native. The power that one group or one person holds in relation to the other party becomes a reliable arbiter, or at least a good benchmark, to distinguish between what is culinary appropriation and what is not. Following this standard, *Zainichi* Koreans adopting Japanese elements in their cuisine was a necessity of survival. Whereas, claiming that *yakiniku* is Japanese barbecue fits squarely within the dynamics of appropriation. Members of the group profiting from culinary appropriation have attempted to undermine the concept, their voices amplified by the status they occupy in society. This is no accident as it is part of the overarching framework of a system that

excludes, exploits and erases. Culture, more specifically food culture, does not transcend this system. The cuisine of *Zainichi* Koreans is subject to the same social dynamics turning food that is the product of creativity and survival into an instrument of Japanese cultural nationalism.

Author Bio

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PHOTO ESSAY: Contemporary Filipino Foodways: Views from the Street, Household, and Local Dining, "How Filipino Food is Becoming the Next Great American Cuisine."

By Ty Matejowsky, University of Central Florida

Abstract

As a rich *mélange* of outside culinary influences variously integrated within the enduring fabric of indigenous food culture, contemporary Filipino foodways exhibit an overarching character that is at once decidedly idiosyncratic and yet uncannily familiar to those non-Filipinos either visiting the islands for the first time or vicariously experiencing its meal/snack offerings through today's all but omnipresent digital technology. Food spaces in the Philippines incorporate a wide range of venues and activities that increasingly transcend social class and public/domestic contexts as the photos in this essay showcase in profound and subtle ways. The pictures contained herein reveal as much about globalization's multiscalar impact as they do Filipinos' longstanding ability to adapt and assimilate externalities into more traditional modes of dietary practice.

Keywords: Philippines, foodways, globalization

For various historical and geopolitical reasons, the Philippines remains largely distinct in the Asia Pacific and, indeed, around the world when it comes to the uniqueness of its culinary heritage and the practices and traditions surrounding local food production and consumption. While the cuisines of neighboring countries (e.g. Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and China) have enjoyed an elevated status on the global stage for quite some time, Filipino cooking and its attendant foodways has pretty much gone under the radar relatively speaking



Figure 1. Vegetable sellers, Galvan Street Market, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2005). Author photo.

Only within the last two decades or so has this kind of benign disregard from non-Filipino audiences slowly given way to a more engaged global focus of what the Philippines has to offer in terms of its viable food culture. Such considerations, tentative though as they might be, reveal a variegated foodscape suffused with myriad complexities and contradictions.

Photos in this essay — taken from 2005 onwards — speak to processes of indigenization that transform and tweak global products to fit the distinct parameters of traditional Filipino palates wherein the sweet and succulent enjoy a privileged position above zesty or dry tastes. Snapped in and around Dagupan City, Pangasinan, as a part of my ongoing ethnographic fieldwork there, these images vividly illustrate the sorts of processed foods and convenience cuisine now equally situated alongside inexpensive street snacks and marketplace fare that collectively comprised ordinary Filipino diets during the 21st century's first two decades. If any identifiable narrative thread runs through this series of pictures, it probably relates to the variety of snack/mealtime choices available to those living in provincial Philippine cities and surrounding areas.



Figure 2. Fruit sellers, Galvan Street Market, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2015). Author photo.



Figure 3. Street food vendors, City Plaza, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2015). Author photo.

As a rich *mélange* of outside culinary influences variously integrated within the enduring fabric of indigenous food culture, contemporary Filipino foodways exhibit an overarching

character that is at once decidedly idiosyncratic and yet uncannily familiar to those non-Filipinos either visiting the islands for the first time or vicariously experiencing its meal/snack offerings through today's all but omnipresent digital technology. Food spaces in the Philippines incorporate a wide range of venues and activities that increasingly transcend social class and public/domestic contexts as the photos in this essay showcase in profound and subtle ways. If anything, the pictures contained herein reveal as much about globalization's multiscalar impact as they do Filipinos' long standing ability to adapt and assimilate externalities into more traditional modes of dietary practice.

Effectively transcending whatever overseas origins that characterized their initial penetration of the archipelago years back, these once novel introductions to local life currently occupy an all but equivalent status with their more traditional counterparts. In this way, Filipino foodways represent more than just the sum of their constituent parts. If anything, they stand as a successful melding of indigenous palates with global ingredients, cooking styles, restaurant formats, dining customs, consumer expectations, and aesthetic sensibilities, into something new and highly evocative of local experiences. It is not for nothing that Filipino cuisine is now widely touted among U.S. tastemakers as the "next big thing", given its so-called status as the "original fusion" fare within the Asia Pacific and wider sphere of regional influence (McNeilly 2017).

How aware or concerned ordinary Filipinos are about such developments remains an open question. In truth, I suspect few really give such matters much consideration. Throughout this essay and, indeed, among many of the daily encounters underpinning Philippine modernity, global/local juxtapositions emerge with such abiding frequency that any novelty they once possessed has long since been honed down into a sort of understated ubiquity that continues to inform myriad aspects of workaday life including those related to local food procurement, preparation, and consumption. Global food conglomerates and their various subsidiaries have doubtless done much to shift local perspectives about what constitutes viable food practices, just as they have significantly transformed established Filipino foodscapes into milieus where street vendors, *sari-sari* store operators, and *carinderia* owners ostensibly cede ground within increasingly corporatized food spaces.

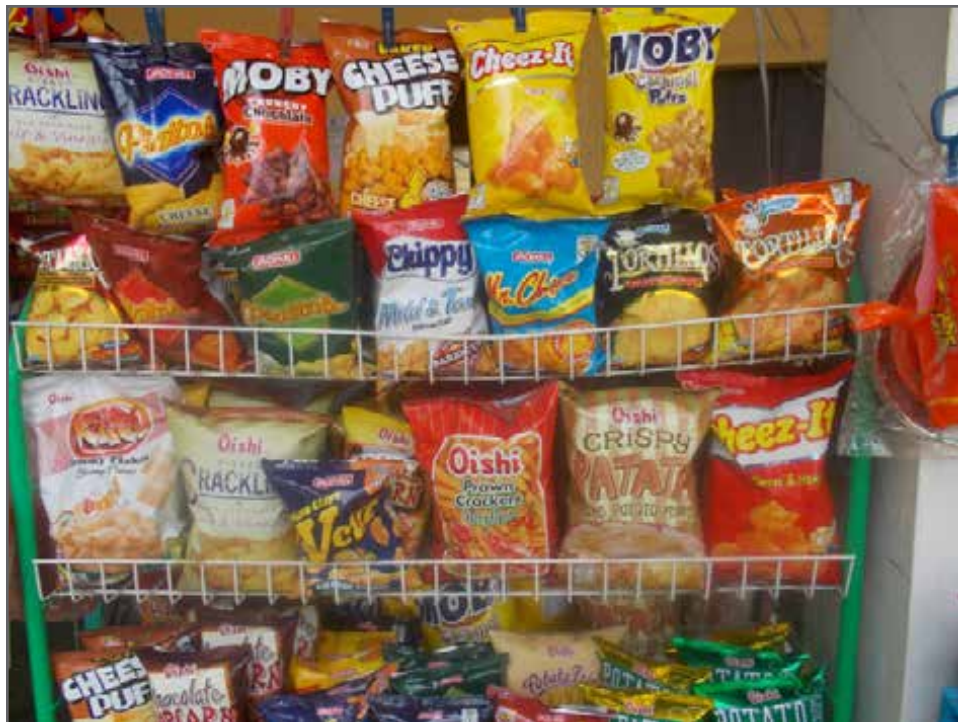


Figure 4. Processed snack food, Carinderia (street canteen), Lingayen, Pangasinan (2019). Author photo.



Figure 5. Sari-sari (variety) store, Kennon Road, Mountain Province (2005). Author photo.

Like other Asia Pacific countries, the transnational food industry wields considerable sway across the Philippines' political economy, especially over the nation's decidedly syncretic food traditions that extend back to Spanish colonization (1521-1898) and beyond

(Cordero-Fernando 1992). In the Philippines as elsewhere in the Global South, the cultural and socioeconomic practices related to food production/consumption are increasingly informed by the seemingly all-pervasive schema of hyperdrive global capitalism. So much so, in fact, that prospects of divorcing contemporary Filipino foodways from the profound influence of this hallmark feature of 21st century global modernity become less and less viable as its branded and mass-produced products — not to mention the contexts these goods/commodities create — indelibly shape the lived realities of millions nationwide.

In this and other ways, the everyday foods of today's Philippines remain emblematic of the formative historical experiences and aspirational promises of a society continually striving to (re-)formulate a national identity widely recognized as occupying a sociocultural terrain somewhere between East and West. Abiding predispositions towards outside culinary influences assume real material character in the kinds of food and practices that hold meaning for Filipinos across all social strata. Such preferences resonate beyond matters of simple utilitarian eating or experiencing novel flavors or tastes. They also engage Filipino sensibilities in ways rife with symbolic meaning. Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the processed and convenience fare that is widely consumed in local households and among various peer groups.

Manufactured fare coming from abroad has long captured local imaginations. Early 20th century canned goods imported from the U.S. are deeply evocative of the sort of cosmopolitanism that shaped local perceptions about America's colonial patronage over the archipelago in the decades both leading up and subsequent to World War II (Elias 2014).



Figure 6. SPAM supermarket display, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2011). Author photo.

More recently *pasalubong*-laden *balikbayan* boxes (Patzner 2018) – replete with all variety of consumables including canned SPAM, Marlboro Reds, Toblerone chocolates, and tubed Pringle cannisters – have been globally deployed to the Philippines from the 10.2 million overseas Filipinos and serve as resonant symbols for all the inherent complexities/ambivalences of today's highly mobile global Pinoy. No less resonant are the multiplicity of fast food restaurants that invariably punctuate the street-level fabric of towns and cities across the Visayas, Mindanao, and Luzon in the years after McDonald's came to the Philippines in 1981.



Figure 7. Palabok (popular Filipino noodle dish) and ube cake, Red Ribbon Bake-shop, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2006). Author photo.

For many middle class/working poor (sub-)urbanites, when it comes to meeting simple dining needs, the corporatized contexts of American-style fast food eateries hold just as much viability as public food spaces located along city sidewalks or municipal marketplaces.



Figure 8. Street food vendors, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2006). Author photo.

The unmatched success of local quick-service brand Jollibee represents a source of genuine national pride for Filipinos across the islands seeing as it has continually bested the Golden Arches in terms of popularity and profitability.

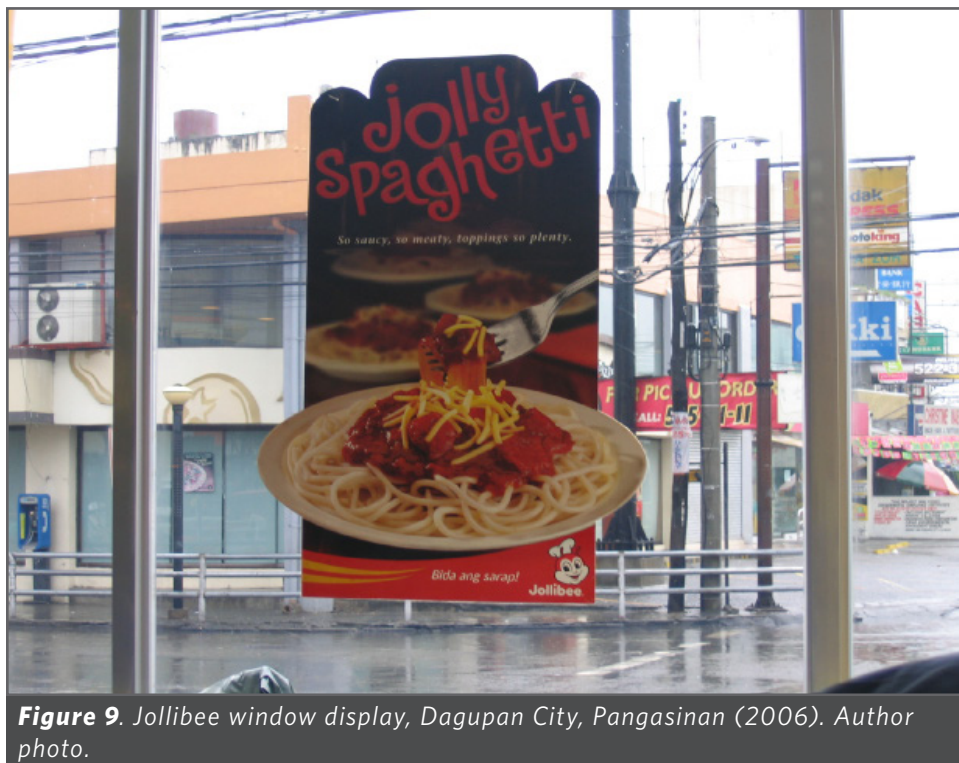


Figure 9. Jollibee window display, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2006). Author photo.

At the household level, kitchen pantries and refrigerators are stocked with brands familiar to millions worldwide (e.g. SPAM) just as family dining tables serve as convergence points for traditional home-cooked meals or increasingly fast food takeaway.



Figure 10. SPAM and banana ketchup, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2006). Author photo.



Figure 11. Jollibee delivery meal, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2005). Author photo.



Figure 12. KFC delivery bikes, Dagupan City, Pangasinan (2011). Author photo.

When these individual photos are considered altogether, inclinations to view contemporary Filipino foodways as entirely subsumed within the hegemonic schema of today's global food industry become quite compelling. While not discounting transnational brands/companies' prevailing influence over local life, such reductive perspectives fall short in accounting for Filipinos' longstanding and seemingly effortless ability to indigenize outside influences to create something new and largely representative of Philippine culture. The active participation of Filipino interests and local capital have demonstrated a considerable amount of agency in articulating a viable food culture increasingly validated beyond the archipelago and Asia Pacific (Matejowsky 2018).

Author Bio

Ty Matejowsky is a Professor with the Department of Anthropology at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. His primary research area is food and foodways, particularly the globalization of fast food and the indigenization of Western food practices and products in local contexts. He explored such themes in his 2018 ethnographic monograph *Fast Food Globalization in the Provincial Philippines* (Lexington Books). In 2014, he was awarded the Association for the Study of Food and Society's Belasco Prize for Scholarly Excellence for his publication "The Incredible, Edible *Balut*: Ethnographic Perspectives on the Philippines' Favorite Liminal Food."

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GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER: Blurred Boundaries between Food and Medicine: Traditional Chinese Medicine and Its Impact on Contemporary Chinese Self-Care

By Xiaoyu (Jennifer) Zhang, MA in Asia Pacific Studies, University of San Francisco

Abstract

Although globalization has allowed science and technology to reach every corner of the world, many contemporary Chinese people still tend to follow Traditional Chinese Medicine's (TCM) principles of self-care in their daily lives. This traditional discipline, as a foundational worldview for its people, has existed in China for more than 2,000 years and still seems to continually influence contemporary society. This paper will examine the impact of TCM on young Chinese people's understandings of self-care by examining their preferences and eating habits, especially among those who have lived and studied abroad for a significant period of time. This research mainly adopts the exploratory qualitative method, including interviews with three TCM physicians who practice in hospitals in China and fifteen interviews with Chinese graduate students who have overseas study

experience. The findings reveal the indispensable role TCM plays in the contemporary Chinese diet. Young people apply TCM standards to their dietary practices and prefer TCM food-based treatments over biomedical solutions when dealing with illness. The feedback from participants also presents how Chinese traditions are constantly being absorbed and reinvented today.

Keywords: Food, medicine, self-care, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), health-promoting lifestyle, Chinese society, cultural practice

Introduction

When Chinese children ask their mothers “Why do I have to eat this? I want something else!” A typical response is, “You have to eat this because it’s good for your body and health!” Mothers (and caregivers) teach their children that good health comes from good eating habits, an idea that is deeply rooted in Chinese people’s minds. Moreover, although globalization and westernization has led to an abundance of nutritional supplements on the market, modern Chinese people still prefer to obtain nutrition from whole foods rather than vitamin pills.¹ This preference can be attributed to Traditional Chinese Medicine’s (hereafter referred to as “TCM”) influence on the cultural and social heritage of China.

Based on the theoretical structure of TCM, the boundaries between food and medicine are difficult to define. This makes it tough to separate the act of eating from the act of healing by way of knowing and practicing TCM. A focal point of the blurred boundaries is how they influence Chinese people’s self-care behavior, especially regarding food consumption. According to the World Health Organization, self-care is “the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider.”² This ability is not universal but is subject to the cultural and social shared within specific communities.³ Knowledge about diseases and remedies differs based on the cultural heritage in certain regions. In anthropologist Gilbert Lewis’ words, “[i]deas about illness and what to do when ill vary with culture.”⁴ As a well-accepted cultural code in Chinese society, TCM exerts an invisible but formative influence on people’s understanding of self-care.

On one hand, while biomedicine is acknowledged, the common daily eating habits

¹ Nancy Chen, *Food, Medicine, and the Quest for Good Health* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 5.

² World Health Organization, *Health Education in Self-care: Possibilities and Limitations* (1984), <http://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/70092?locale1/4en>

³ Habitus, the Latin word for habit, represents a concept from the field of Sociology proposed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In his book, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, habitus refers to “a subjective but non-individual system of internalized structures, common schemes of perception, conception and action, common to all members of the same group or class, and constituting the precondition of all objectification and apperception.” See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 86.

⁴ Gilbert Lewis, “Cultural Influences on Illness Behavior: A Medical Anthropological Approach,” in *The Relevance of Social Science for Medicine, Culture, Illness, and Healing*, ed. Arthur Kleinman et al. (Leon Eisenberg and Arthur Kleinman. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1981), 151.

of Chinese people reflect the imperceptible influence of TCM. The way people combine ingredients when cooking and the tendency to choose certain types of food according to season (*jieqi* 节气) in the lunar calendar reflect TCM's deep infiltration into China's everyday eating practices. On the other hand, the information prevalent in advertisements, news, and articles on social media (such as WeChat⁵) constantly reinforce TCM concepts and the significance of this discipline in promoting a healthy lifestyle among the Chinese masses. Thus, in order to understand the cross-cultural differences in perceptions of self-care, this research is guided by the following questions: (1) How do common Chinese people learn about TCM since this subject is only taught at vocational colleges specializing in TCM teachings? (2) If ordinary Chinese understand the basic principles of TCM, do they follow TCM's teachings for their everyday intake of foods? (3) How does TCM shape Chinese understanding and practice of self-care?

This study attempts to fill this gap by incorporating interviews with young Chinese people, specifically graduate students who have lived and studied abroad for a significant period of time, and exploring their unique understanding and practice of self-care under the influence of TCM. The rest of the paper is organized into three sections. After a summary of TCM in part one, part two presents a brief overview of the basic principles and existing literature on the discourse of TCM, foods, and medicines that have been published in both English and Chinese. Part three incorporates the results of my research fieldwork, which reveals participant's reflections on health-related questions. The paper will conclude with a summary that integrates these findings and offers an analysis of the importance of TCM on eating practices in China today.

Topic Overview

TCM is one of the oldest medical systems in the world, with a history of at least 2,200 years. The implicit acceptance of TCM among Chinese people and its essential role in the shaping of self-care behaviors in society can be observed through many aspects. TCM contains so much knowledge on living and healing that when considering how to practice it in modern times, we first need to ask where we want to start.⁶ Intending to explore its significance in contemporary Chinese people's interpretations of self-care, this paper begins with TCM principles of dietetics and nutrition. The terms, "dietetics" and "nutrition" are Western-centric concepts. In TCM they are combined together and described by the term, *yangsheng* 养生. It is difficult to find one English word to use to translate the exact meaning of *yangsheng*, which refers to a lifestyle, an ideology, and a practice of nurturing physical health and mental well-being, all at the same time. According to TCM's theories, foods, as "an important and inexpensive source of therapy for sustaining health and treating disease," are regarded as one vital type of healing medicines in the process of pursuing *yangsheng*.⁷

⁵ The most popular social media application on mobile phones in the Chinese market.

⁶ Trina Ward, "Multiple Enactments of Chinese Medicine" in *Integrating East Asian Medicine*, ed. by Volker Scheid and Hugh MacPherson (Edinburgh, Scotland: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, 2012), 55.

⁷ Joerg Kastner, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)* (Stuttgart, Germany: Georg

Renshen 人參 shown in Figure 1 is one of the most expensive TCM herbal medicines. Even people who are not sick use it to make soup, tea, wine, and other types of dishes for the purpose of *yangsheng*. Figure 2 and 3 present a range of common TCM herbs that are used by Chinese people to cook soup, which is also believed to have a positive effect on maintaining one's health.



Figure 1. *Renshen* [人參]. <https://pixabay.com/photos/ginseng-product-yellow-grass-1848305/>



Figure 2. Common TCM Herbs for Soup. <https://pixabay.com/photos/traditional-chinese-chinese-medicine-898567/>



Figure 3. Easily Accessible Herbs in the TCM Shop. <https://pixabay.com/photos/hong-kong-herbs-chinese-food-4771899/>

Although it appears that both TCM and nutritional science agree on the importance of foods for self-care, the Chinese holistic classification system is fundamentally different from western theory. The latter categorizes foods by the contents of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, while in TCM, foods are classified into categories based on their different innate qualities, including thermal nature (*xing* 性, consisting of hot, warm, neutral, cool, cold),

flavor [wei 味, including sweet, acrid, sour, bitter, salty), and other medical properties.⁸ For example, according to *the Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*, apples belong to the categories of “cool” and “sour” while watermelons belong to the categories of “cold” and “sweet”.⁹ The determination of these innate qualities is not based on an individual’s tastes but the orthodox rules that originated thousands years ago and have remained unchanged since. Meanwhile, TCM also holds the view that different people have divergent body properties. For example, people who have diabetes possess a “hot” body type (*tire* 体热), while those who are obese possess a “cold” body type (*tihan* 体寒). For different body properties, the way of *yangsheng* and the advice on recommended food intake vary accordingly. Hence, the self-care method suitable for each individual differs from person to person in TCM’s system of health and wellness.

TCM asserts that what and how you eat in everyday life relates directly to the condition of your health. China’s “King of Medicine”, Sun Simiao, wrote in his notable *Qian Jin Fang* about 1400 years ago that “for the body to retain its balance and harmony requires only following a proper diet.”¹⁰ It implies the significance of the right choices on the intake of foods in every meal based on individuals’ health conditions. For instance, eating ginger is good if you have symptoms of a “cool stomach” (*weihan* 胃寒) since ginger, as one type of significant and functional herb in TCM, is “warm” and “acrid”.¹¹ This holistic ideology has been implicitly, if not explicitly, passed down from generation to generation in China and still dominates the conventional sense and the mainstream practice within the society and its people.

For example, my previous research, “Modernized Traditions: ‘Foxi Yangsheng,’ Decoding the Phenomenon in Contemporary China,” described Foxi Yangsheng 佛系养生 (Buddhist Nurturing Lifestyle), a contemporary cultural practice of TCM in China among young adults. Large numbers of young practitioners combine their modern lifestyle with TCM theories, when they add different herbs to drinks, mix and match various types of foods based on their properties, as if every follower knows the appropriate diet advocated in TCM. Moreover, this observation is not limited to this cultural phenomenon. Numerous advertisements, newspaper articles, and internet blogs provide information on how to maintain one’s health using jargon from TCM without explanation, assuming that their audiences have already grasped the terminology. The slogan of one of the most popular tea drinks in China is “*Pa shanghuo he* Wanglaoji 怕上火喝王老吉” (Afraid of flaming fire, drink *Wanglaoji* (the brand of the drink)).¹² Flaming fire (*shanghuo* 上火) describes a type of illness determined by TCM, but with no explanation of the illness or the meaning of the term in the slogan. It implies that the manufacturer of this type of tea assumes that their audiences understand illnesses according

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *The Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*, 2nd ed. (Shanghai Scientific and Technical Publishers, 2006).

¹⁰ Sun Simiao, *Qian Jin Fang* 千金方 [Valuable Prescriptions Worth a Thousand Gold Pieces for Emergencies], reprint (Beijing, 1992).

¹¹ *The Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*. “Cool stomach” refers to a certain type of illness in TCM. Its symptoms include nausea, pale tongue with white coating, slow pulse, and more.

¹² “Wong Lo Kat,” Wikipedia, accessed December 6, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wong_Lo_Kat

to TCM. As one of the most popular soft drinks in China, *Wanglaoji* achieved more than 20 billion RMB in annual sales according to Li Chuyuan, the chairman of manufacturing.¹³ Its popularity proves that Chinese consumers not only understand but also accept this TCM terminology without need of clarification.

Practitioners of TCM are not limited to Chinese people. Numerous academic works have presented the significance of incorporating TCM into mainstream healthcare when discussing public health in many Asian countries. For example, Tat-Leang Lee addressed the common usage of TCM in Singapore and its indispensable role in the country's medical system. He believes that any discourse on public health in Singapore cannot overlook the significance of TCM. Asserting that, "[i]gnoring CAM (complementary-alternative medicine), in particular TCM, is not an option." Lee advocates for doctors to learn more about other medical systems besides conventional western medicine, in order to "understand their patients better and to guide them effectively in their healthcare choices."¹⁴ His discussion concurs with Gilbert Lewis' work, with both arguing that cultural understandings of illness are significant in introducing treatments in different societies. Through case studies in New Guinea, Lewis illustrated that the mainstream classification of illness in western medicine is not working but rather hindering the process of healthcare and treatment, and therefore of self-care, in various culturally distinctive localities.¹⁵

More specifically, other literature emphasizes the continuum between food and medicine in, but not limited to, TCM. In several of her publications, Nancy Chen articulates that "[r]ecognizing the innate quality of foods and matching these to the needs of the patient whose body was out of balance was integral to all three systems (Chinese, Ayurvedic, and Greco-Islamic medicine)."¹⁶ Unlike common western views, food is considered to be "a critical component of maintaining well-being."¹⁷ Together with Kwang-Chih Chang, their detailed discourses on this topic contribute the theoretical basis to my research that decodes food through "a cultural, rather than chemical, process."¹⁸ Chang clearly expresses how Chinese people attribute special beliefs to food, that what and how one eats directly relates to one's health. When "[f]ood not only affects health as a matter of general principle, the selection of the right food at any particular time must also be dependent upon one's health condition at that time. Food, therefore, is also medicine."¹⁹

Two teams of researchers, led by Helen Chan and Rong Nie respectively, have contributed qualitative research on Chinese cancer patients in Hong Kong and type 2 diabetes patients in Wuhan, China. Chan finds that "the philosophy of TCM had been deeply integrated by Chinese cancer patients into their self-care. While Western medicine is the mainstream cancer treatment, Chinese cancer patients also practiced various TCM-supported self-care activities."²⁰ This supports my argument on the prevalent acceptance of TCM among Chinese people and its essential role in the shaping of self-care behaviors in society. On the other hand, Nie emphasizes the cross-cultural perception of illness and its relationship to self-care behaviors, suggesting the significance of integrating different

²⁰ Helen Chan et al., "Exploring the Influence of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Self-Care among Chinese Cancer Patients," *European Journal of Oncology Nursing* 18 (2014): 445. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ejon.2014.05.005>.

cultural perceptions into illness prevention programs.²¹

While presenting interesting results, neither Chang nor Chen has provided Chinese individuals' articulations on the topic of food and medicine, let alone the discourse on self-care. Besides, Chang limits her major arguments within the field of food without expanding to TCM. The respective research projects of Chan and Nie mainly focused on Chinese patients' health-promoting behaviors. The laypersons' reflections upon self-care behaviors and the influence of Chinese medicine are missing in the existing literature.

Ethnographic Research

Voices from people who have not systematically studied TCM present the most explicit responses to my research questions. The parallels and differences within responses contribute to the thesis with great significance. First, their feedback is largely missing in the existing literature, but they provide valuable information about the cultural interpretation of self-care from ordinary Chinese people. Second, compared to a physician's expert knowledge, the reflections of lay people bring "[t]he dual awareness of members and outside audiences"²² to the research topic.

Herein lies the motivation for choosing Chinese students who have studied overseas as my target research group. My initial plan only incorporated interviews with TCM physicians with questions centered on the emphasis on self-care through everyday diet. When asked "What do you think of the relationship between food and medicine in our daily lives?" Yang responded by asking me, "How can you separate these two?"²³ His in-depth understanding of TCM has already shaped his mindset on self-care and any other health-related topics. Hence, I decided to use college students as my interviewees. First, they have been well educated on the subjects related to western medicine, science and biology, and also have been exposed to western cultures during their time studying abroad. Therefore, their interpretations and preferences on self-care are more persuasive compared to those of older generations and other students who are limited to Chinese traditions and cultures. Second, since they hold diverse family backgrounds, common ground within students' answers to similar questions would also achieve more objective results to the research questions.

Participants

The sample group consists of fifteen Chinese overseas students (eight women and seven men) and three TCM physicians (one woman and two men). The physicians are located in three different cities in mainland China, namely, Beijing, Shenzhen, and Xupu. They all passed the National Qualification Examination for Medical Practitioners, which is a requirement

²¹Rong Nie et al., "Illness Perception, Risk Perception and Health Promotion Self-Care Behaviors among Chinese Patient with Type 2 Diabetes: A Cross-Sectional Survey," *Applied Nursing Research* 39 (2018): 95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2017.11.010>

²²Robert Emerson et al., *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 169.

²³Physician Yang, interview with author, October 30th, 2019.

for TCM physicians and biomedicine doctors to legally practice in China, and hold at least a Bachelor's degree in TCM. Half of the students are currently studying in graduate schools outside China, while the rest have graduated from institutions in the U.S., U.K., Germany, and other foreign countries. All of them hold at least a Bachelor's degree from various disciplines. The participants include my classmates at the University of San Francisco, the University of Durham, and the City University of Hong Kong, in addition to others who were introduced to me by classmates as snowball sampling. Every participant was interviewed using multiple questions chosen from the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). Questions for each individual differ slightly, but those in bold font were answered by every interviewee. Students located in San Francisco completed the interview in person with the author, while others who reside in China did the interview through online video meetings and voice calls. Four of them participated in focus group interviews, and the remainder were done through one-on-one interviews. All informants were aware of the purpose of the research and gave consent for their responses to be used in this paper or in my future research. All questions and responses were provided in Chinese and translated into English by the author.

Findings

All informants recollected that they had first been taught about TCM practices at an early age by their mothers or other immediate family members. Their replies confirm my hypothesis regarding the transmission of TCM from mothers to their children, and its social heritage in China. What student Wang shared further supports the fundamental impact of TCM:

My mom is a biomedical doctor. But she took me to see a TCM physician when I had the measles (*zhenzi* 疹子) when I was a child. I asked her why we couldn't go to her hospital. She said that "Western medicines were not helping with these symptoms, and some illnesses could only be treated by Chinese medicines." I've remembered her words until today. That's why I always seek TCM help first if I feel sick.²⁴

Student Wang's narratives provide a great example of a typical reaction of Chinese parents to their unwell child. They tend to choose herbal tea treatments in TCM more than medications or intravenous drips/injections because they believe the former has fewer side effects. Student Niu described a similar situation when he was young, where instead of taking him to the doctor for his constantly recurring bellyache, his parents gave him Chinese medicine because "our body has the capability of healing itself with natural foods."²⁵

The interviewees provided rich and controversial responses to the same questions: "What do you think of TCM?" and "How does it influence your life?" All of them immediately

²⁴ Student Wang, interview with author, December 6th, 2019.

²⁵ Student Niu, interview with author, November 17th, 2019.

began to tell me their thoughts *without* asking for any further explanations on the definition of TCM. Through in-depth conversations that normally lasted about one hour, each participant's understanding of TCM appeared to be very similar to that of other interviewees. Some started with specific examples of behaviors that they consider to be manifestations of the impact of this traditional medical discipline. For example, student Xiao told me, "Since I've known and believed in TCM I quit eating ice cubes. You have to know that's my favorite food!"²⁶ Student Mi recalled "I don't remember the last time I had iced alcohol in a nightclub. Nowadays I only order room temperature drinks there [laughs out loud]."²⁷ Their descriptions are in accord with a foundational TCM principle, which claims that in general "warm" foods are better for human bodies. In contrast, "coldness", as one type of the innate qualities of foods, is considered harmful to one's internal organs, no matter their body type.

More importantly, the interviewees showed an increasing awareness of self-care through their daily practices. Student Xin articulated her life-changing experience with the help of TCM:

A year ago, I felt terrible when I followed my German friends' habit of drinking cold beer every day and eating fast food. Both my body and mind were in bad shape. I lost my energy and always had dark circles under my eyes every day. My complexion was dark and yellow [*qi se fa hei fa huang* 气色发黑发黄]. My body was cold [*tihan* 体寒]. I caught the flu easily compared to them [German friends]. I felt like I was dying. According to Western medical standards, there was nothing wrong with me. Doctors would advise me to do more exercise. But that's not enough, you know? We have all grown up with TCM. One day I woke up and just decided to change my way of eating. I guess everyone has a different body type. What works for them might not work for me. I think TCM makes a lot of sense, so I'd like to follow what it says and suggests. I bought a slow cooker and began making five cereal congee [*wu he zhou* 五谷粥] as TCM advocates. I quit drinking cold beer and other cold drinks... And now I feel awesome every day. My body felt better, and my energy came back. I don't care whether my German friends no longer want to hang out with me anymore. Now, I have a healthy body to do the things I want to do.²⁸

Xin's statement received support from student Mi and student Jia when the three of them had the focus group interview together. They all attended the same graduate school in Germany. Student Jia further emphasized that "foods are very important in our lives. 'We are what we eat,' I read this somewhere and I think it's absolutely right. Since then I have always paid attention to what and how I eat."²⁹ When questioned about which standard he follows for health maintaining eating habits, Jia said, "*Yangsheng* 养生 (nurturing lifestyle) in Chinese medicine is the diet we Chinese people should follow. I agree with Xin's view that everyone has a different body type. It's stupid to discard our ancestors' intelligence on this and to

²⁶ Student Xiao, interview with author, November 12th, 2019.

²⁷ Student Mi, interview with author, November 16th, 2019.

²⁸ Student Xin, interview with author, November 16th, 2019.

²⁹ Student Jia, interview with author, November 16th, 2019.

follow western people who have limited ideas of us [Chinese].”³⁰ Although he was radically supporting TCM’s classification of the body type and speaking in a general way against the western medicine, Jia’s responses explicitly show that TCM theories are deeply rooted in many Chinese people’s minds and instruct their daily eating habits. As he implies, TCM philosophy believes that everyone has a different body from others, not in the sense of the biological structure but in the holistic way of knowing. *Xiang Qi* 相气, one of the diagnostic methods in TCM, refers to the determination of one’s health condition and disease by examining one’s *qi*, which is an abstract concept that has not been observed or understood by Western medicine.³¹

Both students Xin and Jia used many TCM terms in their narrations, such as *qise* 气色 (a broader type of complexion), *tihan* 体寒 (a type of body property), *yangxu* 阳虚 (the imbalance of yin and yang within body resulting from yang vacuity), a subconscious behavior that appears in every participant’s interview. These interviews show that all the student participants have a good understanding of the discipline and its philosophy. When asked about certain symptoms (see the questionnaires in the appendix), each participant related mouth ulcers and skin acne to a TCM-defined illness, *shanghuo* 上火 (flaming fire), and the majority of them would adjust their choices of daily food intake in order to alleviate the condition. Student An would stop eating spicy and strong-flavored foods and instead try to consume more “cool” and “cold” types of foods according to TCM standards in his meals. Some informants mentioned that they would actively search for more TCM-recommended solutions, including herbal medicines to cure themselves of the *shanghuo* symptoms and further enhance their health conditions. “I start drinking chrysanthemum and goji berry tea (both are TCM herbs) at the beginning of fall every year. England is very dry, especially with the heater on inside the room. So, I drink the tea to prevent *shanghuo*,” said student Liu, a female graduate from the University of Durham who currently works in London.³²

Another notable common response from the women in the interview group is the impact of TCM on their behaviors during menstruation. Each reported that they would eat certain foods, such as Chinese dates and goji berry, and practice certain routines. “I f** hate jujube (Chinese dates), but I eat them and drink the tea made from it during menstruation because my mom told me it’s good for my body,”³³ said Student Li with a frown during the focus group interview, to which Student Hu nodded in agreement. They shared details on their unique eating practices during menstruation and how it would differ occasionally. Student Hu is on a special weight-loss diet, following an American blogger and being very restrictive in her daily nutrition and calorie intake. However, while menstruating, she would abandon all of the diet’s rules and drink hot *hongtang shui* 红糖水 (water mixed with a traditional type of brown sugar). “I think it helps with my period pain. If I don’t drink it, I will suffer.”³⁴ I asked her whether

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Xuemei Zhou et. al., “Overview of Traditional Chinese Medicine of ‘Xiang Qi’ Theory of Origins,” *Zhonghua Yishi Zazhi* 48, no.3 (2018), 153-154. doi: 10.3760/cma.j.issn.0255-7053.2018.03.004.

³² Student Liu, interview with author, December 5th, 2019.

³³ Student Li, interview with author, November 20th, 2019.

³⁴ Student Hu, interview with author, November 20th, 2019.

she has tried not drinking it during her period, because Hu really wants to lose weight. She shook her head and said, “No, and I won’t. I do want to be slimmer but being healthy is more important. *Hongtang shui* is very good for us women; that’s what TCM says and also what my mom says. I’m willing to accept the consequence of eating extra sugar.”³⁵ Her answers to my question represent many young Chinese women’s mentality at present. They believe in TCM when practicing self-care behaviors in their daily lives even if they are following other trends or practices. For instance, Student Du told me that “I take vitamin pills from time to time, but the priority is to balance my diet. As TCM suggests, five grains nurture people (*wu he yangren* 五谷养人), hence I try to eat some grains every day. I think that’s more important.”³⁶

The reflections from students show the significant influence of TCM upon their daily eating choices related to healthcare and their reactions to illness. All female participants confirm that they change their usual eating behaviors during menstruation except for one person, Student Wang. Her explanation is that “I know everything other girls said about how to take care of myself during my period and hands down agree with them on the significance of *yangsheng* (nurturing lifestyle), but I’m just too lazy to make any changes.” She laughed and continued, “However if I have painful periods, to the point where I’m considering taking painkillers, I’d definitely choose to change my eating habits rather than take medication.”³⁷ Her preference for treating her symptoms with food rather than Western medicine gained support from the majority of the group. More than half of them explicitly expressed concern about the side effects of Western medication and approved of TCM’s philosophy that foods are natural medicines that help us in achieving the goal of self-care.

This result also corresponds with the three physicians’ feedback. They all confirm that the majority of their patients have at least a basic understanding of TCM and its theories, and that this understanding is beneficial to both diagnoses and treatments. For instance, Physician Qin explained, “many Chinese herbal medicines require the patient to avoid eating certain foods during the treatment period. Because patients understand and believe the principles behind this requirement, it’s easier for them to follow my instructions.”³⁸ Besides, all three physicians claimed that patients prefer Chinese medicine over biomedicine when treating the same illness.³⁹ As Physician Yang described, “the majority of my patients would ask me to prescribe them some Chinese herbal medicine, even though I didn’t think it was necessary at the beginning of the consultation. For example, my advice for patients with the common flu is to rest at home and drink as much water as possible. No need to take any medicine; the flu will disappear after a week. However, they [patients] would ask for herbal medicines for the purpose of *yangsheng* or improving immunity in the long-term.”⁴⁰

Moreover, the physicians themselves follow the self-care suggestions in TCM, especially in their daily diets. “What our ancestors said a thousand years ago is very incisive and well-

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Student Du, interview with author, December 5th, 2019.

³⁷ Student Wang, interview with author, December 6th, 2019.

³⁸ Physician Qin, interview with author, November 8th, 2019.

³⁹ In China, TCM physicians have the right to prescribe western medication.

⁴⁰ Physician Yang, interview with author, October 30th, 2019.

founded. We should follow their advice on how to eat and live. Do the right thing; eat the right food at the right time. That's the secret of longevity." Physician Feng, who is 65 years old and still sees ten patients on average each weekday, continued, "Young lady, you should learn more about TCM, and you will thank me in the future."⁴¹

Discussion and Conclusion

As one of the most important elements of the cultural and social heritage in China, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has a reputation for having researched and influenced every aspect of Chinese people's daily lives. Even though the discipline and its theories have been established and developed more than 2000 years ago, they still function well in modern society through creative adaptations and inventions. Many restaurants create and promote new dishes that feature herbal medicines during certain seasons. For example, goat and Chinese angelica (*danggui* 当归) soup is popular in the winter, because TCM says that both goat and angelica are "warm" and able to nourish health during the cold season. Mung bean and lily bulb (*baihe* 百合) soup is very trendy in the summer since the two ingredients belong to the category of "cool" and help to balance the *yin* and *yang* in the body. Meanwhile, with support from the Chinese government, TCM has been well integrated with biomedicine within almost every hospital in mainland China. Polyclinics that adopt and integrate treatments from both TCM and biomedicine are common and accepted in Chinese society. Furthermore, through the promotion of various media channels and oral teachings from senior family members—not just mothers but also other caregivers and relatives—Chinese people are able to preserve the traditional knowledge of TCM and form the *habitus* around it for generations.

This paper examined the role of TCM in the making of health-promoting self-care behaviors, especially concerning eating habits, by conducting personal interviews with 15 graduate students who have experience studying overseas and three TCM physicians who currently practice within different public hospitals in three Chinese cities, Beijing, Shenzhen, and Xupu. The findings reveal the indispensable role TCM plays in the interviewees' everyday self-care behaviors, when they consciously apply its standard to their daily eating and prefer TCM treatments to biomedical solutions when dealing with illness. The feedback from participants also reinforces how Chinese traditions are constantly absorbed and reinvented in the present social and cultural environment. It is also important to point out that, during the current COVID-19 outbreak in China, TCM has been used in every Chinese hospital, to fight against the virus together with other potential biomedical vaccines and remedies. The government is actively promoting the usage of TCM for the treatment of coronavirus. According to Yu Yanhong, who is the deputy head of China's National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the recovery rate of people who received combined treatments [TCM and Western medicine] is 33% higher than that of people who

⁴¹ Physician Feng, interview with author, December 8th, 2019.

only received Western medicine in a clinical trial in Wuhan, China.⁴²

Through the lens of cultural analysis and by utilizing the ethnographic method in Anthropological research, the articulation of TCM, an intangible and traditional worldview, can be constructed and delivered to audiences with little or no knowledge of it. The findings reveal the essential role TCM plays in the contemporary Chinese diet. Without receiving formal or structured instruction in TCM, the informants follow certain rules and adopt many self-care eating habits from this system of medicine. Young people apply TCM standards to their dietary practices and prefer TCM food-based treatments over biomedical solutions when dealing with illness. The feedback from participants also presents how Chinese traditions are constantly being absorbed and reinvented today.

Based on the participants' narratives, this paper argues that young Chinese people not only understand the basic principles of TCM but also follow TCM's standards for their everyday intake of foods despite the fact that no one seems to be able to explain where exactly they acquired knowledge of TCM. Although my research group only consisted of eighteen people, three physicians helped to incorporate a broader picture of Chinese people's everyday eating, since their responses contained synthesized observations of their patients who have visited and shared different ways of practicing TCM. The well-embedded practices of TCM in the young people's self-care behaviors shed light on the cultural centered perspective of wellbeing and illness. This broader perspective will also provide more relevant directions for future studies.

Author Bio

Xiaoyu (Jennifer) Zhang graduated in May 2020 from the University of San Francisco where she received her second master's degree in Asia Pacific Studies with honors for "Distinguished Academic Achievement". During her studies at USF, Jennifer received multiple scholarships, including the Barbara K. Bundy Merit Fellowship. She completed three years of apprenticeship in the philosophies and practices of "Traditional Chinese Medicine" at the Chinese Medicine Hospital in Hunan, China, and her first master's degree in Finance at Durham University in the U.K. Her primary area of research is the significance of integrating Complementary and Integrative Healthcare (CIH) on the prevention, healing, and maintenance of mental illness and chronic pain. Broadly, she is interested in the discourse of the mind, the body, and the well being. Currently, Jennifer works as a research project coordinator at UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, mainly facilitating two studies exploring the relationship between human brains and meditation practice.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. Do you consider yourself mentally and physically healthy?

⁴²Nectar Gan and Yong Xiong, "Beijing is Promoting Traditional Medicine as a 'Chinese Solution' to Coronavirus. Not Everyone is on Board," *CNN*, March 16, 2020. Accessed March 16, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/14/asia/coronavirus-traditional-chinese-medicine-intl-hnk/index.html>.

- 你觉得自己健康吗? (心理? 生理?)
2. Do you have any chronic diseases or uncomfortable symptoms?
你有什么慢性病或者是不舒服的症状吗?
 3. What remedies have you tried to decrease the symptoms?
你尝试过用什么解决方法去缓解症状吗?
 4. If suddenly you have symptoms of mouth ulcer, sore throat, skin acne, what do you think is the cause of that?
如果你突然长口腔溃疡, 咽喉肿痛, 或者皮肤长痘, 你觉得是因为什么原因?
 5. What do you think of TCM?
你对中医的看法是什么?
 6. How does it influence your life?
你觉得中医对你生活有什么影响?
 7. When did you know that you should start practicing TCM?
你从什么时候接触然后实践中医理论的? 一点点都算。
 8. Do you have any daily healthy habits or routines?
有什么跟中医有关的生活习惯是你每天都做的?
 9. (Only for women) Do you follow any unique practices only during menstruation?
(只问女性) 有什么事是只有经期你才会做的?
 10. (Only for women) Are you willing to take painkillers for dysmenorrhea?
(只问女性) 你痛经的话愿意吃止痛药吗?
 11. (Only for men) Do you know anything that is unique to women's menstruation?
(只问男性) 你知道女性经期的时候有哪些事能做哪些不能做吗?

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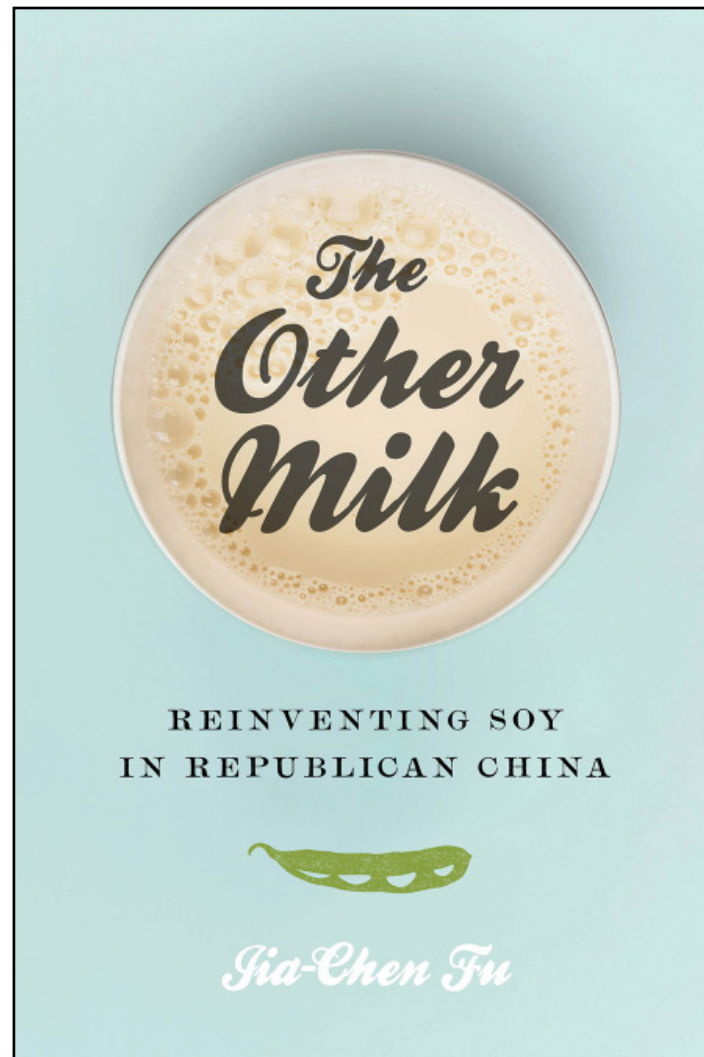
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***The Other Milk: Reinventing Soy in Republican China*, by Jia-Chen Fu**

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During China's Republican Era (1912-1949), soy milk was reformulated from a commonplace locally-made drink to a factory-made, scientifically fortified—and therefore modern—dietary choice. In arguing this, Jia-Chen Fu explores far beyond national boundaries and

discourses.¹ Fu assembles a comprehensive historical record of the scientific, commercial, and government discourse on soy milk from the 1920s-40s. It includes personal accounts of a New York born-and-raised Chinese food security activist, commercial advertisements from a Canadian-Chinese doctor marketing his soy-based baby formula, excerpts from an agricultural journal translated from Japanese and disseminated across China's district offices, as well as photographs from local newspapers. These sources illustrate China's rising hopes for nation-building and modernization through a dietary lens.

As Western nutrition science grew beyond caloric minimums toward a nuanced view of vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, it became possible to compare diets across cultures. Many Chinese nutrition scientists educated at foreign institutions condemned the "Chinese diet" for its limited protein, arguing that it explained China's national weakness. This played into the trope that China was the "sick man of Asia." By the 1930s, Chinese nutrition scientists had accepted cow's milk as "nature's perfect food." Fu suggests that the popularization of dairy arose from its Western allure (associations with national wealth and power) as well as its now quantifiable nutritional benefits (particularly protein and healthy fats). In Republican China, war and incursion caused deep-seated instability, nutritional and otherwise. Growing tensions after Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931 peaked with a refugee crisis in 1937. Displaced people were hungry, and a healthy source of protein was needed, but water and resource-intensive dairy from cows was both uncommon and impractical.

Enter China's "nutritional activists": scientists, foreign-born Chinese returnees, and other citizens who contributed to famine relief by advancing soy-enriched diets. In doing so, they carried out efforts both humanitarian and colonial in nature. Fu enlivens history by shining the spotlight on some of these fascinating individuals who shaped Republican China's answer to their nation's "dietary dilemma." These activists were influenced by transnationally flowing ideas about "modern" nutrition science, and each contributed to the scientific, commercial, and social discourses that promoted soy milk as China's unique national superfood. Fu shows how fortified soy milk products were marketed as a key to longevity, a tool for nation-building by feeding strong young citizens, and in darker times, a quick-fix to child malnutrition. Fu's centering of activist voices makes this book a great read for historians of modern China and anyone who is curious about how diets are shaped by historical actors.

The earliest group of nutritional activists are the scientists responsible for creating culturally appropriate and practical solutions to China's protein problem. The central figure of chapter one is Li Shizeng, a Pasteur-Institute-educated Chinese food scientist. As early as 1910, he experimented with, and argued for, soy milk as an alternative to dairy. Presented in chapter two, Boxer fellow and US-educated biochemist Wu Xian contributed to research on the "optimal" Chinese diet, or one with sufficient protein. Chapter three shows a number of these Chinese scientists—Wu Xian, Luo Dengyi, and Zheng Ji—all of whom supported research and development in providing protein via plants. Pediatric physician Ernest Tso is

¹Jia-Chen Fu. *The Other Milk: Reinventing Soy in Republican China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 101.

the star of chapter four. He challenged the idea that dairy was a uniquely optimal milk by engineering a soy-based baby formula. Through a culmination of these scientists' efforts, the modern technology of nutritional supplements combined with China's homegrown protein source, soybeans, culminating in an indigenous solution to perceived or actual nutritional deficiencies.

Fu then shifts from the voices of technology-focused scientists to the communication-oriented nutritional activists responsible for spreading the "gospel of soy" across China. Most of these were social workers and businesspeople. Their efforts fell on a spectrum of appropriation and localization. This is illustrated in chapter five, when Fu calls attention to the "hybrid modernity"² of commercial soy milk advertising. For example, companies used the familiar nutritional logic of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), to promote soy as a food with medicinal qualities that contribute to longevity and well-being. This appeal to tradition occurred in conjunction with modern and hygienic packaging, and essentially rebranded these newly-engineered soy milk options as simultaneously traditional and modern. Chapters six and seven share the story of Nellie Lee, an American-born and educated ethnic Chinese activist, to illuminate how aid organizations aimed to bring the nutritional boon of fortified soy milk to refugee camps in Shanghai and other regions of China, with varying success. Promoting the importance of the new soy milk to the masses proved challenging and context-dependent. Overall, the practical roadblocks to making scientifically-fortified soy milk a part of everyday life overcame the hopeful nation-building and nutrition-building agenda of China's nutritional activists.

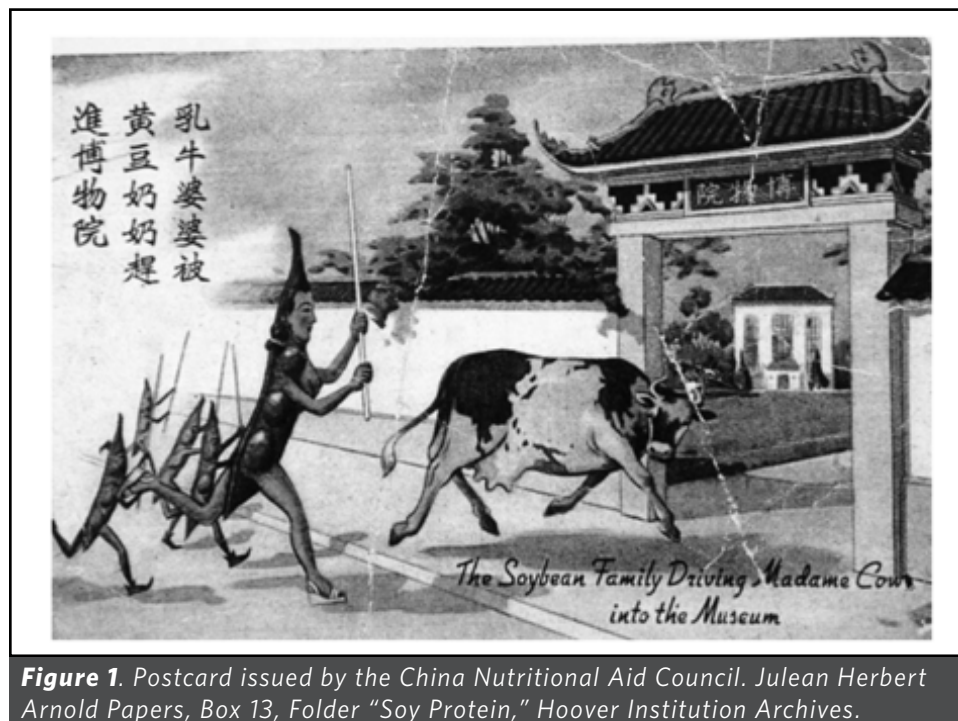


Figure 1. Postcard issued by the China Nutritional Aid Council. Julean Herbert Arnold Papers, Box 13, Folder "Soy Protein," Hoover Institution Archives.

²Fu, *The Other Milk*, 109

In her use of evidence, Fu is meticulous, candid, cautious, and even humorous. One hundred and sixty-two of this two hundred and seventy-six page book is spent on notes and citations alone. Fu concisely yet completely explains the nuance within her sources with impeccable attention to detail. Her selection of sources reveals a keen analytical eye and, at times, a zeal for entertainment value.³ Giving readers pause to point out a question of which the answer does not have an apparent solution, Fu also rightfully abstains from making unsubstantiated claims.⁴ Altogether, these mark a high-caliber of scholarship.

The book is a generous contribution to the fields of Asian Studies and Food Studies, sharing the previously underexamined history of soy milk as an attempt to elevate Chinese nationhood via nutrition. It subtly brings to light the ways that Chinese scientists and activists with Western educations rallied toward a colonially-shaped dietary shift which they hoped would combat the “shamefully poor” national diet. Now, by contrast, the people of China are among the world’s most affluent. And, as the country joined the ranks of developed nations, the “Chinese diet” has shifted toward meat and dairy. Animal agriculture is a powerful contributor to our shared global crisis: climate change. Renewed advocacy for dietary change and “vegetal solution(s)”⁵ in all of the world’s wealthiest nations might be just the sort of discourse shift that we need.

³See figure 1: “The Soybean Family Driving Madame Cow Into the Museum.” Fu, *The Other Milk*, 178.

⁴“Greater female participation in the burgeoning...workforce may have decreased breastfeeding rates, although further research needs to be done to substantiate this point.” Fu, *The Other Milk*, 103.

⁵Fu, *The Other Milk*, 98.