Université de Montréal

# Makkoto Umai Zeyo, This is Truly Delicious:
## The Social Construction of Taste in the Region of Kōchi, Japan

par Christopher Laurent

Département d’anthropologie
Faculté des arts et des sciences

Thèse présentée
en vue de l’obtention du grade de Ph.D
en anthropologie

Octobre, 2018

© Christopher Laurent, 2018

# Résumé

La cuisine de Kōchi est bien plus qu'un moyen de subvenir à des besoins alimentaires, car c'est à la fois une manière de diviser le monde social et un atout économique. Basée sur un terrain ethnographique dans cette région rurale du Japon, cette recherche examine comment l'incorporation de croyances et les considérations pragmatiques participent à la construction sociale du goût dans la région de Kōchi. D'une part, cette recherche révèle comment l'incorporation d'éléments culturels qui sont appris, physiquement internalisés et transmis structure le monde culinaire dans cette région. L'habitus, la culture et l'identité sont quelques-uns des outils conceptuels disponibles pour analyser comment les standards gustatifs sont incorporés dans la vie quotidienne des individus. Nous goûtons littéralement le monde social au travers de nos préférences alimentaires. D'autre part, cette recherche étudie comment des considérations pragmatiques qui découlent de préoccupations matérielles immédiates contribuent à façonner la culture culinaire. Considérant que Kōchi et l'une des préfectures les plus pauvres du Japon, le besoin urgent de revitalisation incite les habitants à transformer leur cuisine en une ressource marchande. Les opportunités économiques, la planification stratégique du gouvernement et les forces du capitalisme contribuent à la création de nouveaux plats de même qu'à la promotion de saveurs traditionnelles. Ainsi, les représentations donnant un sens à l'alimentaire et les régimes de valeur attribuant un capital monétaire à l'alimentaire façonnent le palais des résidents de Kōchi. Enfin, une telle analyse doit reconnaitre que les préférences de goût (les choix que nous faisons) et la perception du goût (notre expérience sensorielle) sont fortement liées. La construction sociale du goût fait partie d'un système qui influence à la fois les choix culinaires et les sens. Un modèle analytique combinant ces deux dimensions du goût peut contribuer à une meilleure compréhension de la nature contextuelle de ce qui est jugé délicieux.

**Mots-clés** : Anthropologie de l'alimentation, construction sociale du goût, cuisine régional, revitalisation rurale, Japon

# Abstract

The food of Kōchi is more than mere sustenance to the inhabitants of the region as it is both a way to divide the social world and an economic asset. Based on fieldwork in this region of rural Japan, this research examines how incorporated beliefs and pragmatic considerations participate in the social construction of taste for emblematic foods in Kōchi. On one hand, this research seeks to uncover how incorporated beliefs, values that are learnt, embodied, performed and transmitted, structure taste in the region. Habitus, culture and identity are some of the tools at our disposal to analyze how standards of taste are incorporated into people's daily lives. Literally speaking, we taste the social world through the food we eat. On the other hand, this research investigates how pragmatic considerations and immediate concerns brought on by material conditions help fashion taste in Kōchi. In one of the poorest prefectures of Japan, the urgent need for revitalization makes the cuisine of the region a valuable resource for the residents of the region. Economic opportunities, government strategic planning and the forces of capitalism fuel the creation of new dishes and the promotion of traditional flavors. Thus, embedded representations that give meaning to food and regimes of values that ascribe worth to food shape residents palates. Finally, such an analysis needs to recognize that both taste preferences (i.e. the choices we make) and taste perceptions (i.e. how we experience flavor) are closely bound together. The social construction of taste is part of an integrated system that frames culinary choices as well as the sense of taste. A comprehensive model that combines complementary facets of what constitutes taste can further contribute to a better understanding of the contextual nature of deliciousness.

**Keywords**: Anthropology of food, social construction of taste, regional cuisine, rural revitalization, Japan

## Table of Contents

**Résumé** .......... i

**Abstract** .......... ii

**List of Tables** .......... viii

**List of Figures** .......... ix

**List of Acronyms** .......... xii

**Introduction: A Starting Point for an Investigation of Taste** .......... 1

**I. Ethnographic Background** .......... 2

1. Singular Geography .......... 2
2. Economic Decline .......... 5
3. Historic Relevance .......... 6

**II. Theoretical Framework** .......... 9

1. Towards a Unified Theory of Taste .......... 9
2. Physical and Social Worlds Collide .......... 11
3. Looking at Layers of Taste .......... 13

**III. Methodology** .......... 16

1. Reflexive Fieldwork .......... 16
2. Collecting and Analyzing Data .......... 18
3. Structure and Style .......... 20

**Conclusion** .......... 22

**First Part. Embodied Taste: Sustaining Individual Preferences** .......... 24

**Chapter 1. In Search of Authenticity: Continuity and Fracture in Local Tastes** .......... 24

**I. Transmitting Taste** .......... 26

1. Cooking Practices .......... 26
2. Educating palates .......... 32
3. Preserving Tradition .......... 38

**II. Transforming Taste** .......... 43

1. Process of Innovation .......... 43

2. Economic Revitalization ........ 47
3. Performing Taste ........ 54
**III. Tradition and Change ........ 59**
1. Evolving Traditions ........ 59
2. Continuity in Change ........ 63
3. Authentic Taste ........ 69
**Conclusion ........ 72**
**Chapter 2. Tasting Nostalgia: Lost Memories from the Ancestral Village ........ 75**
**I. Taste and Memory ........ 76**
1. Food Recollections ........ 76
2. Place and Time ........ 83
3. Collective Memory ........ 87
**II. The Power of Nostalgia ........ 91**
1. Talking about the Past ........ 91
2. Selling Nostalgia ........ 94
3. Nostalgia Travel ........ 97
**III. Fear of Loss ........ 101**
1. The Ancestral Village ........ 101
2. Memory Gatekeepers ........ 104
3. Loss of Identity ........ 107
**Conclusion ........ 111**
**Second Part. Flavors of Kōchi: Constructing Common Taste Preferences ........ 113**
**Chapter 3. Between Myth and History: The Role of Narratives in the Construction of Regional Taste ........ 113**
**I. Tasty Narratives ........ 114**
1. Constructing Typicality ........ 114
2. Historic Narratives ........ 116
3. Commodified Narratives ........ 118

**II. The Art of Storytelling** .......... **120**
1. Myth of Origin .......... 120
2. Anchoring Taste .......... 124
3. Life Stories .......... 126
**III. *Tataki*: A Regional Myth** .......... **127**
1. Scholars .......... 129
2. Residents .......... 134
3. Mass Media .......... 137
**Conclusion** .......... **140**
**Chapter 4. The Taste of Community: Commensality and Regional Cuisine in Rural Japan** .......... **142**
**I. Eating Together** .......... **144**
1. Social Significance .......... 144
2. Community Feasting .......... 147
3. Community Cooking .......... 154
**II. Culture of Sharing** .......... **160**
1. A Market Like No Other .......... 160
2. Part of the Community .......... 163
3. Drinking Culture .......... 167
**III. Tasting the Community** .......... **172**
1. Incorporating Regional Practice .......... 172
2. Regional Character .......... 173
3. Community as a Resource .......... 176
**Conclusion** .......... **181**
**Chapter 5. Regional Food Allegiances: Identity and Taste in Rural Japan** .......... **183**
**I. Cuisine, Region and Identity** .......... **184**
1. Incorporating the Region .......... 184
2. The Politics of Taste .......... 185
3. Regional Allegiances .......... 187
**II. Elements of Regional Taste** .......... **189**

1. Unique Set of Techniques ... 189
2. Blessed by Nature ... 193
3. Regional Flavoring Principle ... 198
**III. Local Taste Diversity ... 200**
1. Diversity within the Region ... 201
2. Localized Diversity ... 202
3. The Diversity of an Emblematic Dish ... 205
**Conclusion ... 209**
**Third Part. Tasting the Nation: Building the Japanese Palate ... 211**
**Chapter 6. Crossing Boundaries: Scales of Taste in Japan and Beyond ... 211**
**I. From Region to Nation ... 212**
1. Feeding Japan ... 212
2. Diversity within a Homogenous Nation ... 217
3. The Making of *Washoku* ... 221
**II. How Offal Cuisine Became Japanese ... 225**
1. Disenfranchised Minority ... 226
2. Acquired Tastes ... 228
3. Regional Adoption ... 232
**III. Going Global ... 234**
1. Food Diaspora ... 234
2. Japanese Soft Power ... 237
3. Global Market of Taste ... 240
**Conclusion ... 244**
**Chapter 7. Finding *Umami*: The Scientific Construction of Deliciousness ... 246**
**I. The Construction of Sensory Categories ... 247**
1. Language and Color ... 247
2. Language and Taste ... 250
3. Deconstructing Taste ... 253
**II. Construction of Deliciousness through Science ... 256**

1. Regional Health Research ........ 257
2. Palatability Science ........ 259
3. Corporate Funded Research ........ 262
III. Building *Umami* ........ 265
1. Building a New Taste ........ 266
2. Harnessing *Umami* ........ 273
3. From Japan to the World ........ 277
Conclusion ........ 281
Concluding Remarks on Taste: Model Summary, Theoretical Implications and Future Outlooks ........ 283
1. Bridging Layers of Taste ........ 285
2. A Theoretical Understanding of Taste ........ 288
3. Beyond Taste in Kōchi ........ 290
Bibliography ........ 294
Appendix A ........ i
Food Glossary ........ i
People ........ ii
Places ........ iv
Appendix B ........ v
Tables and Figures ........ v

# List of Tables

Table I. What is your favorite cuisine survey ..... v
Table II. Kōchi city June 2015 school lunch menu ..... v
Table III. List of Tosa Traditional Cooks dishes ..... vi
Table IV. Kōchi food festivals (non-exhaustive) ..... viii
Table V. Kōchi mountain vegetables (non-exhaustive) ..... x

# List of Figures


Figure 1. The four prefectures of Shikoku island ... 3
Figure 2. Organizational structure of the dissertation ... 21
Figure 3. Making *katsuo tataki* burger ... 25
Figure 4. RKC Graduation fair *sawachi* ... 31
Figure 5. Typical school lunch meal ... 36
Figure 6. Middle school *sawachi* class ... 37
Figure 7. Tosa Traditional Cooks map ... 39
Figure 8. Making *mushi yōkan* (center cutting board) ... 42
Figure 9. *Nobiru* wild ramps with miso dipping sauce at spring festival ... 43
Figure 10. Kōchi delicious vegetable map ... 49
Figure 11. *Nira* garlic chive greenhouse in Sakawa town ... 52
Figure 12. Umaji village *yuzu* harvest ... 53
Figure 13. Making *ehōmaki* for *setsubun* ... 58
Figure 14. Boar butchering with Matsumoto ... 64
Figure 15. *Nabeyaki ramen* in Susaki city ... 67
Figure 16. Soft served topped with dried fish ... 69
Figure 17. *Sansai*: *warabi*, *zenmai*, *takenoko* and *itadori* ... 78
Figure 18. Sanuki handmade *udon* in Kagawa prefecture ... 81
Figure 19. Kōchi *satoyama* landscape ... 85
Figure 20. *Nichiyōichi* Sunday market ... 86
Figure 21. Homemade *Hagedango* dumpling ... 91
Figure 22. *Inaka zushi* ... 94
Figure 23. Gokkun bottle on a summer day ... 96
Figure 24. *Taishō Ichiba* market sashimi ... 99
Figure 25. *Mushidai* steam snapper ... 105
Figure 26. *Wagashi* student display at RKC ... 109
Figure 27. Tofu *umesu zuke* ... 111
Figure 28. Hirooka radish ... 117

Figure 29. Ryōma and his wife Oryō greet you upon arrival at Kōchi station .................. 119
Figure 30. *Shamo nabe* Ryōma promotional poster.......................................................... 123
Figure 31. *Katsuo no tataki* from the Hirome market...................................................... 128
Figure 32. Local history evening tales illustration............................................................ 130
Figure 33. Oishinbo manga *katsuo no tataki* origin.......................................................... 132
Figure 34. "When I tried Kōchi's *katsuo no tataki* for the first time, the taste was like an explosion" 138
Figure 35. Mitani Hamlet *okyaku* banquet........................................................................ 143
Figure 36. Kōchi commensality makes food taste all the better ........................................ 147
Figure 37. Aki *okyaku* celebration .................................................................................... 148
Figure 38. *Tosa no okyaku* poster ...................................................................................... 153
Figure 39. *Sawachi* in Tosa Bushi magazine ..................................................................... 154
Figure 40. *Nama* raw *sawachi* ............................................................................................ 155
Figure 41. Middle school *sawachi* class ............................................................................. 160
Figure 42. Hirome dining room .......................................................................................... 161
Figure 43. Making friends in Hirome ................................................................................. 165
Figure 44. A Kōchi drinking party...................................................................................... 170
Figure 45. A honesty market in Kōchi city........................................................................ 176
Figure 46. *Kōchike* table illustration.................................................................................. 179
Figure 47. Moray eel waiting to be prepared...................................................................... 190
Figure 48. Kōchi vegetable mascots ................................................................................... 194
Figure 49. Sample of Kōchi citrus (*yuzu* bottom left) ....................................................... 196
Figure 50. Learning how to process mountain vegetables................................................. 198
Figure 51. RKC cookbook seasonal school menus............................................................ 204
Figure 52. Salt *katsuo no tataki* .......................................................................................... 206
Figure 53. The bounty of Kōchi.......................................................................................... 213
Figure 54. Top twenty Kōchi products .............................................................................. 216
Figure 55. Ryōma drinking buddy izakaya........................................................................ 217
Figure 56. Chicken ovary on instagram ............................................................................. 231
Figure 57. Cleaning the boar before butchering ................................................................ 233
Figure 58. Whale *sashimi* at the Hirome market ............................................................... 242

Figure 59. Wine aroma wheel ........ 253
Figure 60. The Human Brain Flavor System ........ 255
Figure 61. *Sujiaonori* drying near the Shimanto river ........ 258
Figure 62. Ajinomoto table shaker ........ 269
Figure 63. *Kashikiri* with *nuta* on the side ........ 284
Figure 64. An integrative approach on taste ........ 290
Figure 65. Mori Family Diary Menu (first mention of *sawachi*) ........ ix

# List of Acronyms

GI: Geographical Indication

ICH: Intangible Cultural Heritage

JA: Japan Agricultural Cooperative

JETRO: Japan Export Trade Research Organization

KIA: Kōchi International Association

MAFF: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

METI: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

MEXT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

MSG: Monosodium Glutamate

NHK: Japan Broadcasting Corporation (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōsai*)

RKC: Radio Kōchi Company (Culinary School)

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# DEDICATION

To the women of my life, my mother and my partner, who never stopped believing in me.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and Foremost, I wish to thank my advisor Bernard Bernier for being intellectually, emotionally and financially supportive throughout the Ph.D. process. Without your enduring mentorship none of this would have been possible.

Thank you to the three other Ph.D. committee members: Guy Lanoue, Merry White and Christine Jourdan. Your advice and your expertise made an important contribution to my work. I am also grateful for the guidance of Ingrid Hall who provided much input along the way. To the University of Montréal, I am grateful to the Department of Anthropology. Professors, graduate students and administrators of the department helped make me feel part of an intellectual and collegial community.

This research would have not been possible without the generous grants from the Japan Foundation. Also, I wish to thank Motoki Akitsu of Kyoto University for providing me with an academic affiliation away from Montreal.

Thank you to all the Kōchi residents that dedicated their time, passion and energy in helping me advance in my research. In particular, I am grateful to Hideko Mitani, my Kōchi mother, and Atsuko Matsuzaki, my Kōchi grandmother, for sharing their expertise, contacts and, most of all, introducing me to the most delicious food in Japan. To Hideki Kawamura and Yasu Hamada, my Kōchi friends, thank you for sharing laughs, drinks and food with me. Thanks to all the strong willed *hachikin* of the region. Tales of food will endure in my mind and in my writing for many years to come. In particular, I appreciate Ruriko Sumida and the *suzuran* group for taking me in and making me part of the *obasan* crew.

Lastly, thank you to my life partner Sally Harada for taking the time to read every page of this dissertation. Without your support, I would never have considered going back to finish my Ph.D. I appreciate your efforts and your patience from the bottom of my heart.

# Introduction: A Starting Point for an Investigation of Taste

The writer T.S. Eliot once mused: "In my end is my beginning." The verse was meant as more than an allegory for the cyclicality of life, it also alludes to the end being in itself the starting point. As beginnings are always difficult, let me start with the end. Two years after my dissertation fieldwork in Kōchi, I came back to the region for a short pilgrimage. Much had changed. Some of my informants have gotten all the more old using all shapes of canes and walking frames to get around. The prefectural government devised new schemes to promote vegetarian sushi (*inaka zushi*) abroad. I am happy to learn that friends have opened up new restaurants but sad that old favorites have also closed down. At the same time, most has stayed the same. Outside the city, the landscape has not changed. The rolling green mountains, clear rivers and jagged coastline are just as I remember. Kōchi's famed seared bonito tuna (*katsuo no tataki*) still tastes like no other place. Above all, the "food culture" of the region has remained largely intact since I left. People still share food, drinks and laughs around large communal tables. They still generously exchange gifts of homemade and homegrown food. They still swap stories about the origin of ingredients or the best way to prepare a dish. As my journey comes to an end, I begin with this simple postulate: The food of Kōchi matters a great deal to its inhabitants. This is why they love it so much. This is why it taste so good to them.

The cuisine of Kōchi is of paramount importance for the people of the region because it is more than mere sustenance. Kōchi regional cuisine—the regional ingredients, preparations techniques and cultural rules that govern its consumption—is at the same time an economic asset, a source of pride and a way to divide the social world. Taste in both sense of the word (i.e. as a preference and as an experience) is socially constructed by embedded representations and regimes of values distinct to the region. Although taste is very much an individual affair, it is informed by a host of social and cultural dynamics that exist at the regional, national and transnational levels. The aim of this introduction is to provide the reader with a general roadmap to examine the social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi, Japan. The

information provided in this introduction does not aim to be an in-depth exploration of each matter but rather an overview that will enable the reader to better contextualize and conceptualize the regional cuisine of Kōchi. Hence, detailed theoretical and contextual precisions will be made available in each individual chapter when they are most relevant. The introduction consists of three sections: (1) the ethnographic background of the region of Kōchi, (2) the guiding overall theoretical framework and (3) a discussion of the methodology used in this research.

# I. Ethnographic Background

## 1. Singular Geography

In order to better understand the cuisine of Kōchi, one must first grasp its peculiar geography. The prefecture of Kōchi is located in the southern half of the island, Shikoku, which is the fourth largest and least populated of the major islands in the Japanese archipelago. Its position is relatively isolated as it is bordered to the north by a chain of mountains and to the south by the Pacific Ocean. Still today, it takes half a day by car or train to reach a major city like Osaka. Geographical seclusion has facilitated the maintenance of a different dialect and cultural practices among which food culture features prominently. Cultural diffusion in the forms of fashion and practices radiating from the main urban center in Japan take much longer to reach Kōchi. These geographical boundaries have set Kōchi at the periphery of Japan. In short, Kōchi is perceived as Japan's backcountry. Kōchi climate is humid subtropical which provides it with abundant rainfalls and warm sunny days. This climate is particularly suited for growing of fruits and vegetables. With the development of new greenhouse technologies, Kōchi farmers are able to harvest fruits and vegetables for most of the year. The food culture of Kōchi is further split following geographical and topographical axes. Recipe and ingredients are often divided between eastern (*higashi*), central (*chūshin*) and western (*nishi*)

areas of the prefecture.[1] This is further exacerbated by the historical, language and cultural differences that prevail in both parts of the prefecture. For example, the chayote gourd is called *chatte* in the east and *indori* in the west. The cuisine of Kōchi is also divided between mountain, sea and river each giving rise to distinguishable types of cuisine. Although regional variations have developed around the availability of local ingredients, regional homogenization, that is creating uniformity at the scale of the region, continues to shape the expression of the local cuisine.

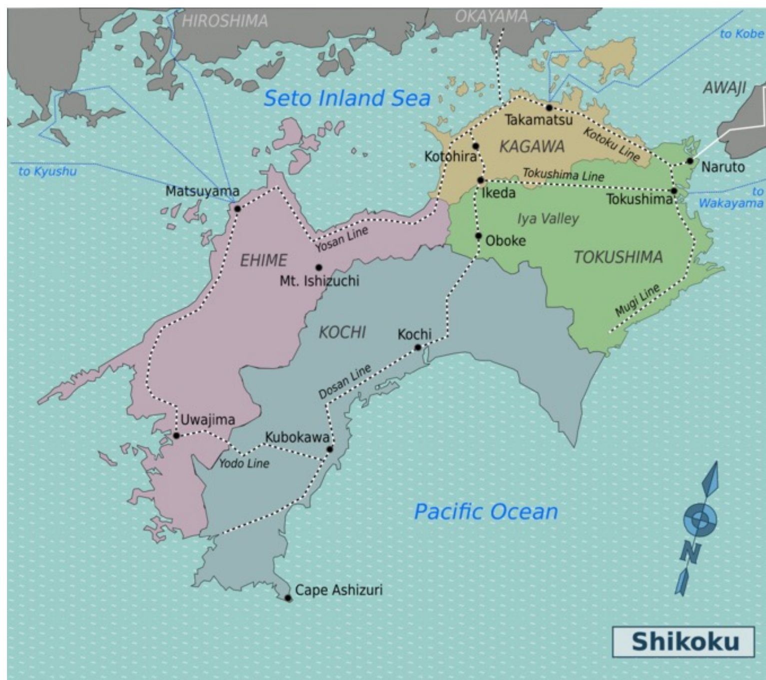



Figure 1. The four prefectures of Shikoku island

Throughout Japan, rural regions suffer from major depopulation. The demographic crisis affecting Japan is particularly conspicuous in the region of Kōchi. A rapidly aging population coupled with an important rural exodus means that the population of the prefecture is dramatically dropping. This phenomenon is palpable in rural villages across the prefecture

[1] The farthest west part of Kōchi is known as the Hata area. It is considered culturally different from the rest of Kōchi with a different dialect (*hata ben*) and a different cuisine (sweet soy sauce).

where houses are left abandoned and businesses are shuttered down. While Kōchi prefecture is located at the periphery of Japan, rural villages sit themselves at the social and economic margins. For instance, almost half of the 760,000 residents of the prefecture live in Kōchi city. Although the capital city continues to grow at the expense of these rural villages, most of the migration is outbound towards large cities like Osaka or Tokyo. Outbound migration is so widespread that Kōchi migrant communities can be found in most large cities in Japan. In term of food, population aging and displacement of people make the transmission of culinary culture a poignant reminder of the impeding crisis. As remote villages lose their inhabitants, they also lose their culinary culture. The need for preservation and transmission of food culture remains an imperative for the region. Yet, the various traditional food culture programs hardly constitute a dam that can stop the rising tide of demographic decline.

For this research, I choose to focus on the prefecture of Kōchi as my unit of analysis. Residents of Kōchi see themselves as culturally different from the rest of Japan. This cultural distinctiveness of the region is fuelled by beliefs in regional character (*kenminsei*), the emphasis on local dialect (*tosa ben*) and of course, the place of regional cuisine (*tosa ryōri*). While these differences might appear crafted or exaggerated for the outside observer, they are a constitutive part of the inhabitants identity, how they choose to define themselves and perform their difference. This is not to say that the cuisine of Kōchi is homogenous throughout the prefecture. In conjuncture with this shared regional culinary identity, most inhabitants will in certain circumstances emphasize internal diversity from east to west or mountain to sea. In fact, close inspection of the food culture of areas that border other prefecture show similarities with culinary culture of neighboring areas. Although the region is porous when it comes to its food culture, it remains an inescapable administrative, cultural and geographical division. Kōchi cuisine only exists in that inhabitants of the region believe in, and thus perform, a common regional taste consensus and culinary repertoire. Recognizing that Kōchi prefecture is a social construct rather than a homogenous finite unit is precisely why it constitutes a salient category of analysis.

## 2. Economic Decline

The prefecture of Kōchi is among the poorest in Japan with low incomes (Cabinet office 2018) and high unemployment rates (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2016). As the prefectural government is keenly aware of these problems, it has made economic revitalization one of its major priorities. Economic hardship is not unique to Kōchi and is widespread throughout rural regions of Japan. However, it appears that this problem is particularly exacerbated in places like Kōchi with few resources at their disposal. The economic crisis of the 90s coupled with the adoption of flexible hiring practices have made work precarious for young people throughout Japan (Bernier 2009). In rural region with fewer work opportunities, it is the norm for young people to move out of the prefecture or work several low-salary part-time jobs. For example, one of my informants in Kōchi, Yasu Hamada, works as a car mechanic, a chauffeur/translator, a life insurance salesman and a restaurant waiter. Women in Kōchi are in a particularly vulnerable position with average salaries seldom covering the cost of living in the region. Many young women continue to live at home until they are married or opt for night employment in one of the many hostess bars of Kōchi city. To sum up, the region is poor with few good jobs leaving residents obliged to make do with the opportunities at their disposal.

As explained earlier, the climate and geography have made the region propitious for agriculture and fishery. The prefecture relies heavily on its primary sector with over two times more farmers and four times more fisherman than that of the national averages (Matanle and Rausch 2011:126). Kōchi is one of the breadbaskets of urban Japan with most of the local production exported to large cities like Osaka and Tokyo. Vegetables, fruits and fish contribute to a large influx of capital back into the region. The extensive reliance on greenhouse and farm fisheries have made it possible to produce high grade quality fruits, vegetables and fish to respond to the steady demand of consumers within a capitalist economy. The production does not anymore depend on weather or catch size but is instead available year-round and within the standards set by the industry. Still, greenhouses and fish farms require a considerable initial investment that requires capital and risk. This scarcity of

opportunities is coupled/reinforced by low education levels in the prefecture and limited access to universities. Most inhabitants in search of a higher education must leave the prefecture. Kōchi University, the most reputed institution of higher learning in the prefecture, is in fact an agriculture college. At Kōchi University curriculum, research and training are focused on the needs of the region. For instance, Kōchi University's faculty of regional collaboration (*chiiki kyōdo gakubu*) aims to develop new strategies to revitalize the region using its agriculture and fishing resources.

The food culture of Kōchi, which encompasses regional products, dishes, techniques and social patterns of sharing and consumption, is perhaps the most important economic resource of the region. For one, as explained above, Kōchi is a food-producing region that exports most of its production. Second, Kōchi inhabitants take tremendous pride in their food and see it as part of the region's core identity. As most inhabitants believe that it is a treasured resource with tremendous potential, this is reflected economically in individual decision-making and in the prefecture's economic planning. Kōchi food culture is used as a resource to promote exports towards urban areas. It also serves to attract tourists to the region, a major source of revenue for Kōchi. Finally, as opportunities are scarce and education is low, food-related occupations like restaurants, catering and other food services become essential sources of revenue. When few options are available, food business, in Kōchi and elsewhere, seems to be a default option. A sizeable number of residents are in some way deriving part of their income from activities relating to the food culture of the region. Although Kōchi residents are notorious for spending the major part of their income on food and drinks, the sheer number of restaurants comes across as unsustainable. In Kōchi, competition in the restaurant business is fierce and few remain in business for long. Restaurateurs must deploy various strategies like duplicating authentic taste, innovating new dishes and building personal relationships with customers, if they are to conserve a competitive edge.

## 3. Historic Relevance

Resident of the prefecture put much importance on the history of their region. Like most prefectures in Japan, the borders of the region roughly delimitates the margins of the former feudal domains (*tosa han*). The word Tosa conjures up imagined recollections of the tradition and the past. When it comes to food, the term is strongly associated with the region's culinary heritage. Tosa cuisine (*tosa ryōri*), Tosa sake (*tosa no jizake*) and Tosa vinegary marinade (*tosasu*) are but a few of the examples of the widespread use of the term. Tosa is also extensively used for branding purposes with famous sake brand like Tosa crane (*tosazuru*). It also serves as a geographical indicator for various products like Kōchi grown pomelo (*tosa buntan*) and breeds of poultry developed in the region (*tosa jiro*). This is of course not unique to Kōchi as most prefectures will use their former domain name to reference ancestral ways of food making.[2] Within the prefecture few refer to the Kōchi cuisine as Tosa cuisine calling it instead regional cuisine (*kyōdo ryōri*) or simply regular cuisine. However, when this food is presented to people outside the prefecture it takes on the Tosa name. Thus, the term is used primarily to sell a product to tourists visiting the region, in restaurants outside the prefecture and in the promotion and preservation of local food heritage.

The historical figures of Kōchi occupy a significant place in the imaginary of the region. Sakamoto Ryōma, considered Tosa's "most famous son," is an enduring symbol of the character of Kōchi inhabitants. Ryōma started as a low ranking samurai of the Tosa domain during the years leading to the end of the Shogunate military rule in 1867. A man of "high principles," Ryōma became an activist for social and political change. He united two powerful domains instrumental in toppling the military rule that led to the modernization of Japan. Ryōma was assassinated at the age of thirty-three which turned him into a martyr for the cause. His myth extends beyond the region as he is considered one of the forefathers of Japanese democracy. Ryōma's image is today a tool of promotion for the region. Once a year, Kōchi residents organize a festival commemorating his birthday, an opportunity to attract tourists and generate income for local food entrepreneurs. As his image is associated with a particular time

---

[2] In Kagawa, traditional *udon* making is referred to Sanuki *udon*. In Kagoshima, traditional *shochu* distilled alcohol is referred to as Satsuma *shochu*.

and place, consumers connect his image to regional products. Images of Ryōma are used to sell food souvenirs (*omiyage*), emblematic dishes (*shamo nabe*) and even burgers (*ryōma baga*). The images of Ryōma are freely used to convey authenticity of all sorts of production, some typical others made up. Pictures, painting and cartoon renditions are stamped on products, literally turning his image into a symbolic resource. While Ryōma is celebrated in Kōchi, he left because "Tosa was too small for him" something many contemporary young residents can empathize with.

Ryōma's quest for democracy nourishes the region's enduring myth that Kōchi is the country of freedom (*jiyū no kuni*). When I first arrived to Kōchi, I was told that what distinguishes Kōchi people from the rest of Japan is their desire for freedom. Tosa residents played a central role in spreading political ideas of freedom. John Manjiro was the first Japanese person to be educated in the United States. In 1841, as a young fisherman from the Tosa domain, he was shipwrecked, rescued by American whalers and brought to the United States. Manjiro's writings on American democracy were instrumental in shaping Ryōma's political views. After Ryōma's demise, Itagaki Taisuke, a samurai from Tosa, would establish the Freedom and People's Right movement, which evolved into the first democratic political party in Japan in 1881. The saying that "freedom comes from the Tosa mountains" endures in how Kōchi residents choose to represent themselves today (Miyata 2009). Beyond the lofty ideals of democracy, residents that are proud of this heritage often justify their choice and their lifestyle according to this belief. This need for freedom is expressed on multiple levels with creative freedom in residents' cooking practices, mobility freedom to make their fortunes elsewhere and social freedom from the constraining rules of Japanese society.

Finally, generosity and hospitality are dominant features of the region that I discuss throughout this research. Kōchi has historically been an important destination for Buddhist pilgrims. The 88 temples pilgrimage (*hachijū hakkasho meguri*) that circle around the island of Shikoku is an important feature of the culture landscape. At the turn of the 9th century, the monk Kukai that played a central role in spreading esoteric Buddhism in Japan is said to have started the pilgrimage. To this day, easily recognizable pilgrims (*ohenro san*) can be seen on foot in Kōchi travelling from one temple to another. These travelers are treated with the

upmost respect being given food and drinks by local residents on their journey. Kōchi residents often leave bottles of tea and snacks on the side of the most travelled roads to provide sustenance for tired pilgrims. This generosity and hospitality endures in the region in the form of *omotenashi*, which translates as the art of hospitality. In fact, the long history of the pilgrimage is given as an explanation for the residents' generosity and hospitality (Mitani personal communication 11/29/14). *Omotenashi* distinguishes itself from other networks of exchanges that exist within the community as it is directed towards outsiders with no intent on reciprocity. Although the concept of *omotenashi* is widespread throughout Japan, Kōchi residents have incorporated this belief and made it part of how they define themselves.

# II. Theoretical Framework

## 1. Towards a Unified Theory of Taste

The goal of this theoretical section is to provide a broad framework that will guide the reader in understanding the theoretical positioning of this research. The two definitions of taste—taste as perception and taste as a preference—are not mutually exclusive. First, taste is defined as a flavor sensation that is triggered by the consumption of food. Taste as a sensory experience is perceived through a series of chemical and biological mechanisms. Moreover, the human sense of taste is shaped by evolutionary pressures that have selected our ability to discern and perceive certain flavor in nature (Krebs 2009; Breslin 2013). In this scheme, humans have evolved to detect sweet foods because they are dense in calories (Breslin 2013) and bitter foods because they may contain harmful toxins (Fischer et al. 2005). As our taste has evolved to help us thrive and survive, we have acquired certain affinities for certain tastes and abilities to discern these tastes. While it is clear that the biological nature of taste can hardly be dissociated from our ancestors' food choice, questions still remain about why some people today dislike sweet foods and enjoy bitter ones. Desire (i.e. how much we want to eat it) and detection (i.e. how intense the flavor is) for these supposedly essential nutriments vary a great deal in intensity between people revealing that the sensory experience of taste might not be entirely uniform.

This brings us to the second point: taste is also defined as a preference. Likes and dislikes (e.g. find a dish to one's taste), affinities (e.g. have a taste for French wines) and the ability to discern between good and bad (e.g. have an awful taste in restaurants) are in large part the product of our social environment. Preferences, although often presented as an objective scale of taste, are socially constructed within individuals and in society at large. Taste preference and perception are part of a larger system of symbols, behaviors and beliefs that structure society. In the region of Kōchi, the taste of traditional dishes carry considerable meaning to elderly residents. Nutritional studies are divided on if taste is a key factor (Furst et al. 1996; Clark 1998) or the determining factor (Glanz et al. 1998) in food choice and acceptance. However, this research is not about consumer behavior. It is about the social construction of regional taste. This distinction is important because this research aims not to uncover *what* people eat but rather what they *like* to eat. Undoubtedly, people make food choices based on other factors like convenience and price. However, those foods are not the one's they love to eat, to talk about or to think of.

An analysis of the social construction of taste must take into account that preference and perception are closely bound together. It is no accident that taste is the sense that has historically served to discriminate and distinguish what is agreeable and disagreeable where physical ingestion was bound to judgment (Howes and Lalonde 1991). In "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste," Pierre Bourdieu (1984:1) argues that "elaborated taste for the most refined objects is reconnected with the elementary taste for the flavours of the food." For Bourdieu, the structuring action of the habitus shapes our dispositions as well as our perceptions. He argues that our "socially informed body" shapes our senses through the "structuring action of social determinisms" (Bourdieu 1977:125). Others like Marc Lalonde (1992) have argued that the sense of taste acts as a concrete base upon which rests the social meaning we ascribe to it. The senses are in fact constructed upon the richness of subjective human sensibly the product of the sum total of our social history (Marx 2012:108). The notion that the senses are socially constructed extends beyond the social science. According to certain neuroscientists, taste is a mental construction that involves all five senses plus language, memory and emotions (Shepherd 2006). I propose to conceive of taste as a bridge between

preference and perception, psychology and physiology and the social and the biological. The dual nature of taste is not accidental as it reveals something deeper within the larger nature vs. nurture dichotomy.

Lastly, the concept of deliciousness helps connect taste perception and preference. Some researchers have argued that deliciousness lies in physical, chemical and biological mechanisms (Mouritsen et al. 2013), while most have advanced that it is socially constructed (Walmsley 2005; Claus 2017; Le Breton 2016). An analysis of the social construction of taste will reveal that deliciousness is relative. What tastes good to someone can in some cases taste awful to someone else. Likes and dislikes are mitigated by constructed boundaries that can be social (Ochs, Pontecorvo, and Fasulo 1996) or cultural (Sobal 1998). While food preferences are not neutral, we still experience deliciousness as a system of meaning that is interpreted by a living body. For the purpose of this research, I examine how taste preference and taste perception are socially constructed. To be clear, humans experience taste through their body and thus are deeply influenced by physiological limitations as our diet choices and sensory capabilities certainly have limits. I postulate that taste is socially constructed upon the common biological base we share. This research is not meant to be a control experience revealing the inner workings of this common base but rather an investigation of how society and culture is constructed upon it.

## 2. Physical and Social Worlds Collide

My research question thus follows: **How do incorporated beliefs and pragmatic considerations shape the social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi?**

First, the starting premise of this research is that taste is in some part socially constructed. Taste is not a universal objective reality but is constructed within a particular, historical, social and cultural context. Although social constructions are not tangible, they have a lasting impact on the material world precisely because they are social constructions. Critics of social constructionism have argued that the "construction" metaphor has been over-stretched to the

point it does not mean much, obfuscating what is actually being socially constructed (Hacking 1999). Indeed, the concept of social construction is itself a social construction, yet one that remains useful as an analytical tool. Second, this research question posits that the social world does not operate in isolation from the material world. On one hand, taste is socially constructed through social structures amongst which identity, discourse and nationalism figure prominently. These social structures are learnt and incorporated in one's body and mind until they become part of the self. On the other hand, taste is also constructed through the material reality we live in. Regional and national politics, the market and agricultural production all play their bit in shaping food choices and exposures. Social constructionism draws heavily on idealism, the importance of the mind in constructing the reality that surrounds us, while also recognizing that the mind and society at large rest on material conditions.

What are incorporated beliefs? They are sets of values socially inscribed in the food we eat. Notions of authenticity, healthiness and locality are but a few examples of values that shape our palate. These ingrained values are learnt, embodied, performed and transmitted. Thus, activities like remembering, cooking, talking about food structure the mind and shape our behavior. Habitus, culture and identity are some of the tools at our disposal to analyze how these beliefs affect taste. Incorporated beliefs are punctual and change according to the social situation. For instance, Yoshinori Nishimura, a chef in Kōchi, once brought me to his favorite noodle shop. The owners, an elderly couple, had been making hand-made *udon* for years. When the informant exclaimed that the *udon* today was delicious, he concluded that the old couple must be getting along. He explained that when the owners fight their noodles taste terrible, which he calls fighting *udon* (*kenka udon*). In this manner, food captures the mood of the moment. Moreover, food also incorporates a host of social ties. In Japan, it is quite customary for people to exclaim a dish is delicious before thoroughly tasting it. This is because in Japan people know full well that deliciousness is not strictly an objective criteria, it is a function of social relationship. Incorporated beliefs ranging from the motherly love contained in the Sunday roast to nationalist allegiance to Japanese grown rice are factors worth considering in the social construction of taste. Literally speaking, we taste the social world through the food we eat.

Material concerns also participate in the social construction of taste. In the region of Kōchi where revitalization is the primary concern, these material factors are mostly related to economic considerations. Rural revitalization is by far one of the largest concerns for residents where most political-economy decisions are mitigated by this all-encompassing concern. Issues of identity, discourse, nostalgia all converge in one hard reality: people of the region are struggling economically. Individuals and the prefecture as a whole engage in various strategies to generate income from the regional food. As these commodities circulate in various regimes of values, they are imbued with a social life of their own, one that is bounded by culture as a localized system of meaning (Appadurai 2009:14-17). Within the social context of Kōchi, symbolic references to the past and to the community carry significant economic value. Some of the incorporated beliefs discussed earlier are used as resources to sell a product thereby reinforcing identity or nostalgia. To put it another way, by using these beliefs as a tool of marketing, local actors are reinforcing these same beliefs. The commodification of Kōchi cuisine is achieved through the commodification of tradition, identity and other beliefs incorporated in the cuisine.

## 3. Looking at Layers of Taste

Theoretically speaking this dissertation is organized into three parts: the individual, the regional and the national. The production of analytical scales like these should be conceived as a conceptual tool as this research does not take for granted labels of scale but rather acknowledges their social construction (Cidell 2006). The choice of three scales is primarily organizational as some measure of micro and macro levels of analysis is deployed in each chapter. Each scale of analysis contains themed chapters, which I call "layers," dedicated to exploring a different facet of the social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi. My theoretical approach is integrative meaning that it seeks to unify different theoretical approaches. In examining the social construction of taste, each chapter will apply a different "layer" of analysis in ways that are complementary and not mutually exclusive. The nature of taste, as a preference and a perception, and the intricacies of the social construction of taste, as social beliefs operating within material constraints, requires the implementation of a vast

theoretical body. The aim is for each chapter to peel away layers of incorporated meaning while taking care to recognize that these meanings do not escape the material condition that gave them rise. Although each chapter is crafted to stand on its own with a careful presentation of the theoretical concept applied, it is when all chapters are compounded as a whole that this approach has the most value. Each chapter thus represents a facet of a whole. It is their combination that encompasses the social construction of taste in Kōchi.

The first level of analysis of this research focuses on the individual. In the first chapter, the body provides us with a privilege site to examine taste in regional cuisine as a living cultural phenomenon that is transmitted and transformed. Using the theoretical concepts of embodiment (Csordas 1990), ideological state apparatus (Althusser 2009) and habitus (Bourdieu 1977), it examines how regional taste is internalized through the practice of proper forms (*kata*). This analysis will culminate in a discussion of how authenticity is socially constructed through "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992) while new regional practices are adopted precisely because they inscribe themselves in the continuity of local practices. The second chapter explores taste as a medium that allows the recollection of a different time and place that is in part fuelled by the sentiment of nostalgia (Proust 1919). Theoretically, it draws on phenomenology as a tool to examine taste experience as it is understood and perceived through our senses and emotions rather than as independent from human consciousness (Desjarlais and Throop 2011). Food memories sit at the intersection of individual and collective recollections of the past that can be best theorized using historical consciousness (Sutton 2001). Nostalgia fuelled by Japan's deep anxiety over the imminent loss of their shared past is often put to pragmatic use by agents that seek to harness it (Ivy 1995). The preservation and revival of these disappearing flavors through heirloom vegetables and traditional cuisine are in fact efforts to reconnect with a particular time and place that helps build what some authors have coined an imagined community (cf. Anderson 2006).

The second level of analysis in this research focuses on the region. The third chapter examines how cuisine and taste live through narratives packaged in the form of life stories, myths of origin and local history. These stories can be on one hand analyzed as discourses of power that symbolically enhance the value and typicality of the food by giving it temporal, spatial and

social context (Ceccarelli, Grandi, and Magagnoli 2010:16). On the other hand, these temporal testimonies can be analyzed and interpreted as texts that convey culturally coded messages (Geertz 1973:1-3) giving meaning to the food people consume. The fourth chapter investigates how multiple levels of belonging participate in the social construction of the sense of taste. When we consume food from the region, we biologically as well as symbolically incorporate a part of the region within ourselves (Fischler 1988). Notions of right taste, proper seasoning and appropriate technique help build complex taste allegiances that can be further broken down as localized performance of identity (Brown 1984). In the fifth chapter, I examine how commensality is central to local residents' self-definition as regional cuisine is designed around conviviality and sharing. Generalized reciprocity or the gift of food is a "total social fact" that helps build social relationships (Mauss 2011:76-77). Commensality is also a gesture that is performed as a complex dance between social relations and symbols: by consuming the same food together one literally and symbolically becomes part of the community (Fischler 2011). Thus, commensality can be a source of social order easily harnessed for economic gain.

The third level of analysis of this research focuses on the national and the transnational. The goal of the sixth chapter is to examine how localized eating practices cross boundaries becoming in the process representations of the nation. In this manner, the codification and legitimization of Japanese cuisine serves as a tool of nationalism. Theoretically, it seeks to uncover how cultural nationalism help cement ideas of Japanese homogeneity and uniqueness (Befu 2001). Within the boundaries of Japan, nationalism serves to transform regional diversity into a shared heritage while also appropriates culinary elements from disenfranchised minorities. Outside of Japan, nationalism turns Japanese cuisine into a tool of diplomacy and soft power (Nye 1990). At the same time when crossing boundaries, regional products must become Japanese in order to appeal to foreign customers. In the seventh chapter, I look at how scientific discourse participates in the social construction of the fifth basic taste of *umami*. Building on linguistic relativism, I argue that language and culture plays a significant role in sensory cognition. Taste in particular can be conceived as a brain construction that involves multiple senses and higher cognitive mechanisms that include memory, emotion and language (Shepherd 2006). The discourses emanating from scientific research on taste is far from objective as it is motivated by precise outcomes. I examine how the *umami* category operates

as a scientific “fact”, a criterion of deliciousness and an element of cultural nationalism and corporate profit.

# III. Methodology

## 1. Reflexive Fieldwork

Few anthropologists admit the chaos and instability of doing fieldwork instead presenting an image of their research as neatly packaged conclusions (Ward 2004). As ethnographers, one encounters trying situations, sometimes personal and emotional, sometimes structural and systemic, that are essential to disclose. As human beings placed in a different environment, we experience culture shock (Irwin 2007), the political implications of our presence (Hammersley 2006) and health issues that color our understanding of what is going on around us (Lecocq 2002). At the other end of the spectrum, the ethnographer’s perspective can also be impacted by sentiments of friendship, empathy and belonging. This is not to say that a thorough ethnography must include every experience the researcher underwent but it is important to clarify these events when they are relevant to the analysis. My ethnographic fieldwork took place in the prefecture of Kōchi from July 2014 to July 2015. My foray into Kōchi was not based on a meticulous survey of where to do fieldwork on regional cuisine but instead like many other anthropologists of Japan was serendipitous (Hendry 2003; Reader 2003). Simply put, Hideki Kawamura, a long time college friend, invited me several times before suggesting I do research in his region. In retrospect, the rural region later revealed itself to be a treasure trove for research on food culture. Ironically, for half of the year I was living in Kōchi, Hideki was gone on business trips and was unable to provide much support. This fact is of significance because establishing a new network of informants on my own was formative in introducing a fresh way to see the region.

Although it does not appear in writing, my mood frequently shifted from irritation to despair during fieldwork. The first few months were particularly grueling with moments of intense cultural shock and frustration brought on by a new environment. In the first month, I had no

place to stay, stuck in a bureaucratic loop of not being able to rent an apartment because I did not have a permanent address on my residence card. The frequency of natural disasters did not help as my apartment was flooded shortly after moving in. I fell ill an unusual number of times seeking the help of a specialized healthcare practitioner. In the first few months, my research made little progress, I had few contacts and felt isolated. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) warn of the potential alienation and isolation of doing fieldwork on the edge of a culture. Culture shock, sickness and alienation should not be brushed away as a necessary condition of ethnographic work but should provide the tools for a reflexive analysis of the data. In my fieldnotes, I took great care to record health, mood and other events to provide context to the information I was gathering. A close reading of my notes revealed that cynicism, anxiety and frustration had permeated my understanding of what was happening around me in the first few months. Thus, disclosing that we are not neutral observers while providing personal details when appropriate is essential to give context and positioning to ethnographic work.

My sampling method was based on the snowball sampling method which provided me with access to knowledgeable informants but had the disadvantage of not being statistically representative (Bernard 2006:192-194). Four months into my fieldwork, I was introduced to Hideko Mitani, principal of the RKC Culinary School (RKC) in Kōchi. She is well connected with the prefectural government, the various food research groups and the local farmers and restaurateurs. Mitani introduced me to one of my main informants, Atsuko Matsuzaki, a retired professor of Kōchi University and a renowned expert on Kōchi cuisine. For many of my informants, my presence awarded a certain measure of prestige because they could show me off as a foreign food researcher but it was a small sacrifice to give back to a community upon which I tremendously benefited. In addition to introducing me to key informants, Mitani allowed me to participate in cooking classes at the RKC. As I became acquainted with the region and my network of informants expanded, I was gradually granted access to more field sites. The Hirome market was one such privilege site for ethnographic inquiry. The market is a popular night market with collective tables to share food and drinks. Not every one goes to Hirome but everyone knows about it as it represents a microcosm of Kōchi taste and culture. People and places are presented in detailed when they become most relevant in the text and are also easily consulted at the end of this research (Appendix A).

Finally, how can ethnographers be certain they comprehend what unfolds in front of them? As a foreign researcher, I have not mastered all the subtle cultural cues and language intricacies (e.g. regional dialect) that are self-evident for someone born in the region. Yet, beyond the otherness still lies the possibility of a foundational intersubjectivity (Jackson 1998). For Husserl, the father of phenomenology, the possibility of intersubjectivity is far more than mutual understanding, it is the possibility of being in someone else's place (Duranti 2010). I do not believe I can speak for my informants but maintain that after eating, cooking, socializing together for extend periods of time, I have developed some level of understanding and empathy. In the process, I have incorporated many of the local values and taste in food. How informants feel, think and taste is not an obscure mystery but something that can be understood following this approach. Adopting my informants' perspective presents certain challenges as it becomes difficult to maintain an objective distance necessary for ethnographic reflection. However as an ethnographer, I do not seek to unveil a universal objective truth but rather the truth of my informants. Therefore, a positivist approach, one that attempts to demonstrate an objective truth through the testing of a hypothesis, is ill suited for research that seeks to understand taste.

## 2. Collecting and Analyzing Data

The vast majority of my data is qualitative: participant observation, semi-guided interviews, surveys and textual analysis. The type of data collected includes fieldnotes, photographs, recording and text documents. Participant observation is the bedrock of cultural anthropology and a strategic method of data collection (Bernard 2006:342) and was my main source of information. In my fieldwork, I strived, to the limit of my abilities and the opportunities offered to me, to actively participate in the process observed. While in the field, I jotted down key words that served as a mnemonic devices upon which I would expand every night in my fieldnotes. These notes are varied in content with summary of daily tasks, names of people, paraphrasing of what was said, resources references, thick descriptions, personal reflections and so on. Although this approach makes live note taking difficult, it opens the door to several

useful avenues. First, participating in a task enables trust and rapport with informants (Bernard 2006). I can hardly imagine being able to gain the confidence of my informants, if I refused to cook, eat and clean with them. Second, much useful information that would otherwise not be disclosed ordinarily can be gleaned while “hanging-out” (Bernard 2006:368-369). Third, the process of participating in a set task provides insight that would not have been glimpsed with observation only. The endless repetition of picking plum in the humid spring or experiencing the steep learning curve of being a student in cooking school are embodied and sensory experiences that changes one’s perspective (Okely 2007).

In addition to participant observation, I carried out 17 semi-directed interviews of my most important informants. The interviews followed a set of themed questions while encouraging discussion on topics informants felt confortable about. I did not fully transcribe each interview, instead opting for an easily searchable topical summary so that important data could later be fully transcribed and translated. As much of my research on regional food incorporates visual components, I have taken many pictures of ingredients, dishes and preparations. These pictures are used throughout the text to serve as illustrations of what is being discussed. Other collected documents came in diverse formats with books on regional cuisine, newspaper clippings, student surveys, regional statistic book, magazines, maps, TV shows recordings, pamphlets and fliers. In order to facilitate the analysis of this vast quantity of data, I used the organizational tool called Evernote. The application links notes on any devices automatically syncing pictures, texts, scans, recording and hyperlink. The most useful feature of Evernote is the “tag” system where each note can be coded with key words that constitute an easily searchable database. These “tags” can be ranked by frequency, combined in searches or affixed to any type document (visual, audio, text…).

My data set is focused on all things pertaining to taste and cuisine in the region of Kōchi: tourism, promotion, recipes, menus, events, preservation and school curriculum. In order to analyze this vast amount of data, I adopt a strategy of thematic analysis locating patterns within these data sets (Bernard 2006:406). Thematic analysis enables the same analytical approach to be applied to very diverse sets of data, which include thick descriptions and interviews. As patterns are identified thematic classification through coding of data can be

refined and reorganized. Thus, a thematic analysis requires constant back and forth between data and the construction of the thematic categories. This highly inductive method of analysis is reflected in my overarching reasoning. The purpose of this research is not to test a hypothesis using a linear demonstration, instead opting to answer a research question through the unpacking of relevant data around various themes. Applying deductive reasoning to inductive qualitative research limits research insights and constrains theory building (Tracy 2012). No researcher starts any kind of research with an empty mind. We all have at least a basic theoretical grid that shapes our questions. However, this grid should not be rigid and must be general enough to accommodate changes during fieldwork through the back and forth movement of data and thematic construction described above. Grounded research provides an analytical means to draw new theoretical aspects out of an inductive analysis. A grounded method is a generative means to theory, which instead of applying and testing theory involves the use of theory through methodical data collection and sorting. This research sets out to analyze thematic bodies of data using existing theories, which are integrated to provide a new understanding of the phenomenon at hand.

## 3. Structure and Style

This dissertation is structured somewhat differently than a traditional dissertation. It does not have separate chapters for the ethnographic background, the theory and the methodology. As each chapter examines different ethnographic themes using different theoretical approaches, it was essential to present background information and theory when they were most relevant. The introduction is meant to give an outline of the research's context, theory and methods. As my analysis relies heavily on thematic analysis, the structure of this dissertation is non-linear. This means that instead of being structured as a logical demonstration that follows a preset order, it is organized in a series of interlocked themes (see diagram). Ethnography is not so much the attempt to eliminate variables by decontextualizing the subject studied but is rather the search for connections. A holistic perspective is the foundation of anthropological inquiry and is a nonlinear dynamic system (Agar 2004). Far from ground breaking, this approach is typically how ethnography is done. In each chapter, evidence is presented in support of an

analysis rather than to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Theory and the relevant literature are therefore introduced when it's most needed as a malleable building block in support of the data. This means that the structure of each chapter follows a structure of reasoning that is inductive rather than being an imposed one that is deductive (Tracy 2012).

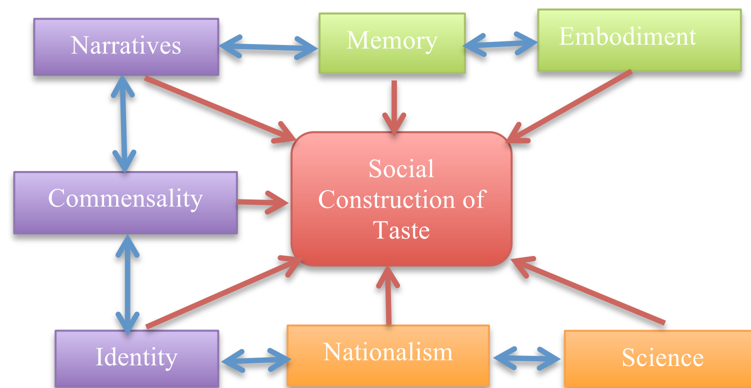



Figure 2. Organizational structure of the dissertation

A central element to this ethnographic study is the presence of descriptive/narrative vignettes. These paragraph-long vignettes are conceived as snapshots of moments that capture sensory, emotional and human context. They are framed and strategically placed to not disrupt the flow and to provide richness to the analysis. These commonly used narratives offer the opportunity to venture away from typical modes of analysis into evocative prose that remains rooted in fieldwork data (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2013). I wanted the reader to understand what it was like to share food in a night market, travel to an isolated mountain village or learn how to prepare traditional dishes. What these vignettes aim to do is take the reader along on a journey humanizing an experience so that it matters. Too often, researchers transform people and phenomenon into objects that can be studied (Gardner 1994). These people, places and moments carry meanings that are anchored in rich descriptive details. These vignettes seek to transmit sensorial as well as emotional content hard to convey through other mediums (Sharman 2007). Here I draw on the phenomenological approach that seeks to uncover not so much how things are but instead how things feel for people experiencing them. These narrative interludes strive to convert sensorial and emotional moments into transmittable

experiences. Alternatively, they enable me to be reflexive and position myself not as an outsider observer but as somebody that contributes to the construction of the social interactions surrounding me. Narratives force the ethnographer into a reflexive stance that demand greater self-consciousness into the production of data (Reck 1983).

Furthermore, vignettes condense an abundance of information that can not be neatly broken down analytically (Maanen 2011). Breaking down such data into digestible bits requires the omission of details that provide a more thorough picture that say a lot about the present social interaction and sensorial context. Vignettes also provide a depth of detail enabling the reader to make up their own mind rather than being imposed a point of view. When theory and analysis goes out of style, only descriptions stand the test of time. More than mere contextualizing anecdotes, they give meaning to a particular social context. These accounts are not mechanical description of the behavior of people at a given moment but seek to actively interpret a host of cultural symbols. They act as "thick descriptions," construction of other people's constructions of what is happening (Geertz 1973). These vignettes provide "a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures" that help make sense of the present behavior (Geertz 1973:7). They are pieces of data, key moments where it all seems to come together, that help shape a deeper understanding of the culinary culture of Kōchi. These snippets of "thick description" are used as evidence in support of the argument developed. But "thick descriptions" are more than texts awaiting to be interpreted as they constitute analysis in themselves. They are interpretations that do not seek to present an objective truth but strive to recreate an experience that further the understanding of both the researcher and his or her audience.

## Conclusion

The goal of this introduction is to provide an overarching framework in order to examine the social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi. First, it assesses the general ethnographic background of the region and defines the parameter of this research. The relative isolation, ideal growing climate and declining population continue to shape the cuisine of the region.

The urgent need for revitalization makes the food of the region valuable resources for the residents of the region. Second, it presents the general theoretical premise guiding this research. An analysis of the social construction of taste must treat both taste preference and perception as two sides of the same coin. Although taste is socially constructed, it lives both in the social and material world. Therefore, an analysis of regional taste must take into account socially constructed beliefs as well as economic considerations. Each chapter adopts various theoretical approaches that can be "layered" into an analysis that relates as a whole. Third, it takes a critical gaze at the research process and the methods selected. Fieldwork is fraught with emotional, cultural and health challenges. Reflexivity on the why, where, who and how emerges as a dominant paradigm of my research methodology. The non-linear structure within the dissertation as a whole and within each chapter is predicated on an inductive and holistic ethnographic approach, while the presence of narrative vignettes illustrate an approach that is humanistic and favors interpretation based on "thick descriptions."

# First Part. Embodied Taste: Sustaining Individual Preferences

## Chapter 1. In Search of Authenticity: Continuity and Fracture in Local Tastes

Kuroshio, or black current, is a sleepy fishing town that sits on the pacific coast of the region of Kōchi. The town is famous for fishing bonitos, a type of tuna, and *katsuo no tataki*, a seared bonito dish. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I received a strange email message from Aya Sakamoto, a restaurant owner from the town of Kuroshio. She explained that in an effort to revitalize the local economy, high school students had developed a new regional specialty: the *katsuo tataki* burger. Sakamoto had heard I was studying regional cuisine and she suggested a meeting in order to introduce the dish. The *katsuo tataki* burger was certainly not on the list of regional dish I was planning on investigating but I went along with it. Imagine my surprise when Sakamoto greeted me with a full TV crew and a writer from the Kōchi newspaper. Two female Kuroshio high school students had also came along to teach me how to prepare the dish. We lined up a dozen, locally baked buns flavored with dried bonito flakes (*katsuobushi*), smeared tartar sauce with locally grown Japanese ginger bulb (*myōga*), carefully placed a leaf of lettuce and a section of tomato and finally stacked slices of seared bonito which had been fished the same morning by the Kuroshio fishing fleet. Sakamoto oversaw every step of the process, telling us to smear more sauce on the buns and instructed us on the proper thickness of the fish slices. As I prepared to bite in the burger, the cameraman, intent on pleasing his audience, focused on my reaction. I looked in the direction of the two high school students, their eyes full of hope, thought about Sakamoto's restaurant and the community of Kuroshio town. "Delicious," I said with my mouth still full and, just like that, I had inadvertently endorsed a new regional dish.

Figure 3. Making *katsuo tataki* burger

The preservation and innovation of culinary practices is a central theme in food-related research (Bessière and Tibère 2011; Stierand, Dörfler, and MacBryde 2014; Lamine 2006; Bessière 1998). Numerous researchers have tackled the question of continuity versus change in food habits (Bhowmik 1984; Kibayashi et al. 1999; Kuhnlein and Receveur 1996; Macbeth 2007). Few scholars have examined regional cuisine, and the taste for this cuisine, as a living cultural phenomenon that is at the same time transmitted/continuous and transformed/changing. In this chapter, I will first examine how regional cuisine is subject to both preservation through the regional cooking school, public school lunches and traditional cuisine groups, and innovation through local entrepreneurs and regional festivals. The body provides us with privilege sites through which we can better examine the tension that exists between the social reproduction of taste and innovation. The concepts of embodiment, incorporated ideologies and habitus provide fertile grounds for the analysis of how cooking and eating practices are tied to taste. In the region of Kōchi, cuisine and taste in food is a dynamic cultural endeavor that is transmitted and transformed with the passage of time. Although some authors in the past have argued that traditions are often invented (Handler 1984; Vlastos 1998), traditional foodways are neither old nor new. As in the case of most cultural elements, traditional cuisine must evolve if it is to remain relevant to the people who consume it. At the same time, new regional dishes are adopted precisely because they inscribe

themselves in the continuity of local practices. I argue that whether a dish or a taste is considered traditional or new depends in large part on the construction of authenticity.

# I. Transmitting Taste

## 1. Cooking Practices

> [Cooking] is good for the body. Here's an example. I do not practice it anymore but I used to do Tai Chi. When I traveled to Beijing, grandmothers would practice in the park at the crack of dawn. This made me realize that it was an exceptional health practice […] One day, I asked my teacher what was the secret of Tai Chi. He answered that it was a similar state of mind than a mother doing her daily cooking. That's it! I went back to my house and silently observed my mother cooking from behind. My mother used to cook a lot. Therefore, she had the full process in mind. She knew exactly when it would be completed when people came back. The practice of cooking provides us with a feeling of balance where stability is achieved through breathing. Now that I understood the process, I was filled with joy. However, because I am now an elderly person, I do not want to do it anymore […] You can even [cook] without thinking. In addition to breathing, Tai Chi views the body as the universe. Breathing in and out and the movement of the body, that's how the body balances itself. (Matsuzaki interview 03/24/15)

The point that Atsuko Matsuzaki, a Kōchi food researcher, was trying to convey was that cooking is for many a daily ritual that brings balance to the body. The comparison between Tai Chi and cooking is not fortuitous as cooking practices help bridge the gap between the spiritual and the corporeal (Sered 1988). Daily cooking is a set of embodied practices, movements that are routinely repeated so that they become an unconscious part of our being. This meditative state that is achieved through steady breathing and learnt body movements is one that most cooks can apprehend. While cooking, the body becomes an extension of the mind in a state where it is impossible to differentiate when one starts and the other ends. The

body as an extension of the mind (and the mind being embodied) offers a new way to look at the practice of cooking. For instance, embodied practices suggest that we live and experience the world though our body which is the site of perception and movement though space and time (Tiwari 2010). Advances in the cognitive sciences have also revealed that the mind must be understood in the broader context of the body's interactions with the world (Wilson 2002). With this premise in mind, the process of cooking becomes much more that a mere act of production, it is a way to experience food, its preparation, and taste through the body. The embodiment of cooking practices provides a vantage point from which one can better observe continuity and change in food and taste.

During my fieldwork, I learned how to cook regional cuisine with other aspiring students at the RKC Culinary School (RKC). RKC is the only professional cooking school in the region of Kōchi and was founded in 1973. The school offers a one-year program where mornings are dedicated to classroom learning (cooking theory, restaurant management) and afternoon to applied kitchen skills. The cooking program is divided into Japanese, Western and Chinese components, which is the typical way cuisines are categorized in Japan. The school helps shape the contemporary expression of the regional cuisine of Kōchi personified by Hideko Mitani, the principal of the school and daughter of the founder. The school is an important site of transmission of local cuisine with a curriculum that emphasizes regional cuisine and with many students that will disseminate its teachings throughout the prefecture, the country and abroad.[3] The school collaborates in numerous regional cuisine promotional events like cookbooks, regional cuisine research groups and traditional cuisine festivals. Mitani has literally dedicated her life to this task. In Japan, school principals do not manage the day-to-day activities of the school but are responsible to promote the image and the message of the school. The role that Mitani plays can hardly be overstated, as she is an ambassador of the regional cuisine in Japan and abroad, a reference that is often consulted by the media and experts alike, and a godmother as most will seek her blessing when opening a new restaurant.

---

[3] Kunitoraya Udon shop in Paris (http://www.kunitoraya.com) and the Taro's Fish in Toronto (http://www.tarosfish.com/home.html) are two examples of RKC trained chefs living abroad.

In short, RKC and Hideko Mitani are located at the nexus of all things pertaining to Kōchi regional cuisine.

The typical cooking class at the RKC Culinary School takes place as follows. The room is a large commercial kitchen with white floor tiles and stainless steel workstations. The instructor formally greets the students where they all stand and bow to their teacher. After briefly introducing the dish and the technique of the day, the instructor begins with a demonstration. For the first minutes of the class, the students quietly listen to the instructor. His voice is amplified by a microphone pinned to his white coat and a camera operated by an assistant retransmits on TV screens a close-up of the process. Once the demonstration is over, each student group receives a portioned tray of all the necessary ingredients and with little supervision proceeds at copying what the instructor did. Much of the communication is non-verbal and the hierarchy seems to have already been established. Some students take over the cooking getting most of the practice in while others shy away or stare in space with a yawn. The students try their best to emulate what they just saw. Fish is sliced with precise strokes, vegetables are carved at the corners to avoid crumbling when cooking and cutlery is treated with great care, wiped down after every use and sharpened after every class. *Kodawari*, the uncompromising and relentless devotion to perfect one's craft, is a central tenant of this kitchen's learning environment. Although instructors are lenient, as they understand no student can exactly duplicate their demonstration, they guide even the most gifted students to perfect their form. At the end of the class, students partake in the communal consumption of their work.

The Japanese notion of *kata* helps better illustrate the importance of the repetition of appropriate bodily movements necessary to perfect mundane task. These proper movements were initially developed to give thanks to the gods and rapidly evolved in codified gestures that varied according to class, place and time. *Kata* are essential to the practice of Japanese forms of arts such as the tea ceremony (*sadō*), flower arrangement (*ikebana*) and martial arts, all taught in the same patterns of observation, imitation and repetition (Yano 2005). Creativity, deviation from the proscribed forms, can only happen after years of practice. Execution of the

proper *kata* demonstrates respect for one's teacher, implicitly acknowledging hierarchy (Yano 2005). This cultural logic can be applied to the RKC classroom where proper forms must be repeated in order to reach the right taste in food. The students learn early on that form is tied to taste. Dishes that are better executed are praised by classmate with words like "*oishisō*" (looks delicious) while students who stumbled through the forms often have to either discard or pack up the remainder of their dish after the degustation. Furthermore, the practice of cooking involves the body and the senses in a way that permanently changes the tasting experience. Working with ingredients, touching them, smelling them and ultimately transforming them into a cultural object creates a bond, like a sculptor with a mound of clay that is evident when one realizes what it takes to make food. With the repetition of proscribed forms learned at RKC, students including myself come to experience the transformative power that practice has over taste.

Cuisine in Japan, as we saw, is divided into three fundamental categories: Japanese, Western and Chinese cuisine. These categories might appear as arbitrary as Western dishes like omelet and rice (*omuraisu*) have clear Japanese influences and Japanese dishes like tempura have clear foreign influences. Nevertheless, this classification system is one that makes sense to most Japanese people as each dish is clearly categorized in one of the three cuisines. The RKC cooking program is equally divided among the three cuisines with the Japanese portion featuring many regional dishes like seared bonito tuna (*katsuo no tataki*), moray eel (*utsubo*) and *sawachi* cuisine.[4] However, the distinction between regional food and national food is not as clear for most Kōchi inhabitants as some food are deemed regional when they exist elsewhere (e.g. *nore sore*, *itadori*[5]) and other dishes might be considered Japanese when few people eat them outside Kōchi (ex*: katsuo no tataki* with sliced raw garlic). A survey asking RKC students their favorite cuisine/dish three months into the program revealed that preferences do not always neatly line up with the school curriculum (Appendix B, Table I).

---

[4] *Sawachi* is a large serving plate that features several traditional dishes of the Kōchi region. For more see chapter 4.

[5] *Nore sore* or conger eel whitebait is also a popular dish in Aichi prefecture. *Itadori* or Japanese knotweed is also popular in Mie prefecture.

Over half of the respondent (53%) preferred Japanese food, about a third (29%) preferred Western food and a fraction (8%) chose Chinese food.[6] Out of Japanese cuisine, only a quarter of the students preferred typically regional dishes. I posit that the school sees its role as not only responding to the need of a clientele but also as an institution that has a responsibility in introducing the fundamental of cooking, as it sees fit, to the students. This formative experience and the long hours of grueling practice in each cuisine will shape these future food ambassadors for years to come.

The practice of cooking breeds familiarity with techniques and tastes enabling students to assess the quality of a dish. Understanding the correct forms and the ensuing taste, that is, possessing the benchmarks to evaluate a dish, creates an affinity with this type of cuisine. Simply put, the great majority of people like the food they are familiar with as they cannot evaluate the food that is alien to them. Studies on the impact of familiarity on perceived taste seem to indicate in experimental settings that most people cannot as precisely evaluate the taste of food they are not familiar with (Labbe et al. 2006). For a cook, the proper forms and taste are essential skills to master in order to reproduce a dish. At RKC, graduating students must create a themed menu that will be displayed at the yearly open school fair. In order to examine the transmission of regional taste, I asked the students that had prepared typically regional dishes why they had made these choices. Students found this question difficult to answer as they had not previously reflected on their choice. Hideko Mitani pragmatically remarked that students chose regional cuisine not so much because they felt an allegiance to the regional cuisine but more because this was the food they were used to, one they could understand and readily evaluate. According to Mitani, they had simply chosen the easiest route making food that they were familiar with. Familiarity with regional techniques and products is reinforced through the repetitive practice and tasting of food in the school. As students increasingly become versed in the preparation and consumption of this food, they develop a taste—as a preference and as an appreciation—for it.

[6] Fish cuisine (4%) and meat cuisine (6%) were set aside. However, fish cuisine is usually assumed to be Japanese and meat cuisine usually Western.

Figure 4. RKC Graduation fair *sawachi*

The RKC Culinary School is an institution that establishes rules that constrain the reproduction of culinary culture and taste. A renewed appreciation of cooking is vital if we are to understand how tastes are transmitted. Cooking and eating can be best understood as *techniques du corps* that are transmitted and vary from one cultural context to the other (Mauss 1936:19). The body acts as a conduit through which the mind, how we understand and perceive the world, plays a significant role in the transmission of taste (Sutton 2006). In the context of RKC, cultural transmission, in particular of taste, can be better understood through the repetition of prescribed forms. The practice of cooking, whether at the cooking school, in a restaurant or at home, helps nurture a taste for regional cuisine.

The concept of habitus allows us to better examine how embodied practices help forge taste. Habitus is the shared mode of perception and behavior disposition of a group of people in a particular class in a particular place (Bourdieu 1984:6). It includes embodied knowledge, for example the skills needed to box (Wacquant 2006), in a process that mediate between group dispositions, habits and individual taste. This system of durable and transposable dispositions, that are structured and structuring, are activated without conscious aiming in an infinite, yet, strictly limited generative capacity (Bourdieu 1990:55). At RKC, the emulation and countless

repetitions of *kata* contributes to the formation of a habitus that is informed by transmitted regional embodied dispositions.

## 2. Educating palates

The school bell chimes. It is lunchtime for the first graders at the Mikazuki primary school in Kōchi city. The young students shuffle around the class in a coordinated effort to accomplish their routine lunchtime responsibilities. Desks are grouped in fours, the students responsible for serving lunch dawn light green aprons and protective hats and a food cart with hot food is rolled into class. Although I am not wearing any protective gear, I am put in charge of dishing out the soup. The teacher instructs me to ladle small amounts as the students will be able to get second helpings. The students are not difficult, accepting everything given to them and not complaining about today's offering: Japanese knotweed and pork stir-fry, *wakame* rice, *udon* noodles in broth, sliced tomatoes and fresh milk. Once everyone is served, we all sit down, put our hands together in the form of a prayer and say out loud in unison "*itadakimasu*" (I humbly receive). In Japan, meals are supposed to be silent and the teacher has to constantly remind students to stop talking and eat. A student's voice resonates on the school speakers: *Japanese knotweed is a mountain vegetable that can be picked in spring and is much eaten in Kōchi prefecture. However, it appears that other prefectures do not observe this eating practice. When raw, it is astringent and although it is very sour, it can be soaked in water in order to cook. Today's Japanese knotweed comes from Kōchi city's Kagami district. The Kōchi agriculture cooperative people have harvested it in spring, salted it and preserved it by freezing it. Today, this dish was stir-fried with pork and seasoned. Let's savor together Kōchi's mountain vegetables*. The meal is balanced, fresh and offers a variety of flavors. Students seem to enjoy it with some of the bigger eaters already lining up for seconds. I discreetly ask my three young tablemates their favorite food. The first little girl tells me she likes vegetables (*yasai*) while slurping her noodles. The second, a shy looking girl, tells me she likes rice best. The third, a boy, says he loves tuna (*maguro*) adding with a sad expression that there are less and less of them in the seas.

In Japan, and elsewhere in the world, public schools have been used as a tool of socialization that reinforces the state's dominant ideology. In the case of Japan, mandatory communal school lunch (*kyūshoku*) has been used as an apparatus of the state in order to centralize and homogenize Japanese culture. According to Michel de Certeau (1994), devices like maps and recipes are strategies created by institution or structure of power to produce rules that shape the transmission of culture (Certeau, Giard, and Mayol 1994). In his investigation of routine practices, embodied behaviors like walking and cooking, he conceives of these strategies as organs of control (Certeau, Giard, and Mayol 1994). One learns to be Japanese through language, morals and history—subjects that are all taught in school—but also through other internalized forms of behavior: professor greetings, school uniforms, mandatory school cleaning and of course school lunches. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT 2012) sets forth 4 major goals for school lunches:

1. To foster proper understanding of food and desirable eating habits.
2. To foster pleasant social habits and contribute to the enjoyment of school life,
3. To improve physical health and nutrition.
4. To foster and guide a correct knowledge of production, consumption and distribution of food.

In response to these goals, school nutritionists work in collaboration with each school district to create meals that are healthy and culturally appropriate. Since the 1990s, the "Locally Produced, Locally Consumed" movement has played an increasing role shaping the government's food policy (Sanborn 2013). Meals are, when resources allow it, made from scratch, with an emphasis on local products prepared in the Kōchi fashion. This local sourcing of ingredients serves the local economy and exposes the children, future consumers, to locally grown product.

Lunch is a tool of enculturation where children learn how to eat and what to eat. In Japan, school lunches not only aim at feeding children a balanced diet, they are also a means to foster government approved ideology (Sanborn 2013). Food preference and taste change throughout life but exposure to flavors and ingredients at an early age can last a lifetime. Anne Allison (1991) argues that this process begins as early as nursery school with lunch box (*obentō*) made

by Japanese mothers. These meals carry tremendous symbolic meaning—children must finish the content of the box and the mother who must make the food esthetically and gustatively pleasing—are being judged in the context of this state-run institution. Thus, lunch boxes act as an ideological state apparatus indoctrinating people in accepting certain identities (Allison 1991). School lunches in Japan are a highly regimented affair with, among other, ritualized blessings and student responsibilities. It is for this precise reason that in Japanese schools, the principal, acting as organ of the state and arbiter of Japanese culture, must first taste test the daily meal before it can be served to the student body.

School lunch is composed with the goals of efficient nourishment and an efficient tool to promote a homogenized national identity (Cwiertka 2007:161-163). As the imperative of the nation state shifted, so did the Japanese school lunch menus. As Japan was slowly recovering from the destruction of the Second World War, school lunches were centered around bread and milk, one of the most radical and still present change enforced by the American occupying forces (Sanborn 2013). However, with the diminution of the consumption of rice in Japan, schools like the ones I have investigated must serve four out of five meals a week with Japanese rice as its main source of calories (Appendix B, Table II). Since 2005, the Japanese government took even more drastic measures instating a food education (*shokuiku*) policy that aims, with the help of teaching materials and nutrition educators, at transforming school lunches into a political tool for cultivating proper attitudes and ideologies towards students relationship with food (Yotova 2016). This program not only inculcates students in issues of sustainability, nutrition and fairness but also in national traditions, moral conduct and regional identities.

School lunches in Kōchi are clearly a product of the national government's Food Education policy. The dominant ideology guiding this policy is overall sound: feeding students' body and mind with nutritious, locally sourced, culturally appropriate and tasty meals. Of particular interest for my research is the place dedicated to regional products and cooking practice in educational materials. The activity book, "So, let's go searching for the most delicious food of the world" published by the Kōchi prefecture education board serves to educate children about the deliciousness of Kōchi food. Using games and cartoon characters, the book takes students

on a journey of discovery across the prefecture in order to instill an understanding and a taste for regional food. For instance, it warns the students that locally produced *konatsu* (*citrus tamurana*) is best eaten when it is pealed like an apple. *Konatsu*, a product essential to the local farming economy, is of course featured on school lunch menus when in season. RKC is also responsible for putting together a cookbook resource for Kōchi school lunches. The cookbook contains a hundred school lunch recipes that sources local ingredients, takes seasons into account and provides a sense of continuity with culinary tradition. Each recipe includes a picture and, when appropriate, a small memo explaining the cultural relevancy of a dish. For example, one can read that Indian taro is called *ryūkyū* in Kōchi dialect or that whitebait is best eaten raw in Kōchi because spawning takes place right in the *Tosa* Bay.[7] These teaching materials are used to spread the state dominant ideology (Althusser 2009; Allison 1991), one that acknowledges regional specificity, to students and school staff alike.

In 2005, the government newly appointed school nutrition educators (*eiyō kyōyu*) in order to promote nutrition education (Kimura 2010). These school food specialists have the dual responsibility of designing appropriate school lunch menus and promoting nutrition education in the classroom. Each school district receives a strategic plan with seasonal ingredients, local produces and regional dishes suggestions for each month. Based on this plan, school nutrition educators in each school design monthly menus that are sent to the student's families. Although the menus vary across the prefecture, these food specialists strive to balance cost, nutrition balance, local availability, taste and regional practices. During the month of June 2015, the school lunch menu of Mikazuki primary school featured locally sourced produce like tomatoes and ginger and locally harvested fish like dolphinfish (*shira*) and silver-stripe round herring (*kibinago*). Although the menus incorporate many foreign dish,[8] it features distinctively regional dish like *Tosa* style Konjak, Kōchi garlic chive dumplings and *yuzu*

---

[7] Tosa bay is a crescent shaped body of water that borders most of Kōchi prefecture southern part.

[8] According to Sanborn (2013), localized foreign dishes offered in school lunch are an adaptation of foreign dishes using local ingredients and cooking techniques to suit a child's palate.

salad (Appendix B, Table II). These items do not randomly appear on the school menu but rather are a concerted effort to implement a set of government-sanctioned food guidelines.

Figure 5. Typical school lunch meal

From an early age, school lunches are used as tools to ensure the reproduction of an endorsed ideology. This ideology is transmitted through the mind as well as the bodies of the students. In a similar way as RKC, the regimented education of Japanese schools, in the form of embodied tasks (school cleaning, dressing, calligraphy…), prepares students to accept an ordained social order. In particular, students are responsible for the cleaning of the school and serving of the lunch food, nurturing strong group feelings (Stevenson 1991). The repetition and embodiment of proper movements (*kata*) like polishing the floors on your hand and knees and dishing out the appropriate amount of rice help foster the acceptance of a collective ideology.

Traditional cooking workshops offered at school epitomize this incorporation of this taste ideology. A woman's cooperative once invited me to help them teach traditional *sawachi* cuisine to middle school students. The students seldom ate this type of food and none had ever prepared it. That day, the students and I learned the proper technique to stuffed bamboo sprouts with sushi rice (*shihōchiku sushi*) and how to pull fish bones out of mackerel in order

to stuff it with rice (*sugata sushi*). When came the time of the meal, students were ecstatic to try the food they had made and seemed to have developed a taste for it. Preparing the food gave students more than an incentive to eat it, it enabled them to better understand and appreciate the taste of this food. Since few people practice this type of cooking now, it was a rare opportunity for students to experience its performance. Therefore, these workshops not only serve to perpetuate a dish, they also sever to develop an embodied relationship with the dish.

Figure 6. Middle school *sawachi* class

It is one thing to promote a specific food ideology in school, it is another to have students fully embrace it. A broad survey of second, fourth and fifth grade students' favorite school lunch food at Mikazuki primary school revealed that their favorite dish was Japanese curry (47%) a choice that seems to resonate with most students this age.[9] Japanese school lunches are formative experiences that all Japanese people can relate to. Take for instance the case of whale meat. After the Second World War, whale meat constituted a cheap protein source

[9] I created a simple survey requiring students (51 $2^{nd}$ graders, 59 $4^{th}$ graders and 64 $5^{th}$ graders) to write down their favorite school lunch food.

frequently served in school lunch (Arch 2016). Futoshi Machido, a chef specialized in Kōchi cuisine, remembers that whale was cheap and therefore was served often in school lunch. When I asked what he thought, he answered, like most people his generation that it smelled and tasted bad. Nevertheless, the introduction of whale meat through the school lunch program normalized the consumption of whale meat in Japan shifting a very regional consumption to a national taste for it (Arch 2016). As young children are subject to certain foods in school lunches, they might not immediately develop a taste for it but being exposed these dishes opens a door for students to appreciate them later on in life. When prompted about their taste in food, informants repeatedly admitted that when they were younger they preferred non-traditional food. Naoko Kawamura, a middle age mother, explains that, like her son who prefers hamburgers over regional cuisine, she used to prefer pasta. Hideko Mitani explains that it is common for children to like sweets and meat when young but acquire a taste for Japanese and regional cuisine later in life. Taste transmission happens over long periods of times and is the product of a constant struggle between forces vying for change and institutions seeking to reproduce a cultural ideology.

## 3. Preserving Tradition

In Kōchi Prefecture, people who have exceptional knowledge and knowhow about regional cuisine and who are engaged in traditional activities can be selected to become "Tosa Traditional Cooks" representative for the food culture in the area. Their aim is to promote local food culture transmission, increase the added value of regional foodstuffs and revitalize the local area ("Tosa Traditional Cooks" recruitment pamphlet).

In the region of Kōchi, the Tosa Traditional Cooks (*Tosa no ryōri denshōbito*) have made it their mission to preserve regional cuisine. The organization began 10 years ago and counts 80 registered member groups (59 active) across the prefecture. Each group claims a least one traditional dish emblematic of their area like seared bonito (*katsuo no tataki*) or country sushi (*inaka zushi*). The Tosa Traditional Cooks are a direct legacy of the "Lifestyle Improvement Movement" (*shokuseikatsu kaizen katsudō*) implemented by the Japanese government in the

1920s. Its official aim was to improve the squalid living condition of rural farmers, however, it served as a tool to impose the urban elite lifestyle ideology upon the disenfranchised population of the periphery (Partner 2001). Today, the "Lifestyle Improvement Movement" still carries these goals of betterment of rural area through rationalization of daily life, exploitation of local resources and economic revitalization. Shiga prefecture was the first prefecture to launch successful traditional food preservation groups. Following in the same footsteps, women groups involved with traditional food in Kōchi drafted a proposal that was shortly after accepted by the prefectural government. According to Atsuko Matsuzaki, other prefectures have similar organizations but few are as active as the one's in Kōchi. Their official mission is to transmit the regional food culture and use local ingredients in new ways to shape the expression of regional food culture (Kōchi Prefecture Agriculture Promotion 2017). This statement seems to suggest that the Tosa Traditional Cooks are well aware that food culture is a dynamic endeavor. In Kōchi, the typical Tosa traditional cook groups are composed of elderly women that get little help from the younger generation. They participate in various activities ranging from festivals, promotional events, specialty stores and workshops. Once a year, the groups gather in Kōchi city during their annual event. In 2015, the event featured thirty-one groups with rare local dishes like sour plum tofu or Japanese pepper rice cake.

Figure 7. Tosa Traditional Cooks map

Although the stated mission of these food ambassadors is to promote traditional food culture, one should not ignore how it is shaped by pragmatic concerns. In Japan, nostalgia for rural areas, deemed as the source of the Japanese identity, are often commodified to busy urbanites in search of their ancestral roots (Creighton 1997). In a prefecture where economic opportunities are scarce and the population is rapidly aging (Matanle and Rausch 2011:123-124), the Tosa Traditional Cooks become a tool to promote local foods for economic purposes. The groups are foremost local entrepreneurs that are often affiliated with food roadside stations[10] or small businesses selling products that are certified authentic. This neo-liberal logic transforms each group into a brand that must be actively promoted and marketed. At the prefectural level, the "Locally produced, Locally consumed" section (*chisan chishō*) coordinates the efforts of the Tosa traditional cook groups. Hisanori Sugimoto, the "Locally produced, Locally consumed" prefectural government section manager, explained that groups must first submit a proposal to the prefectural office which forwards it to a selection committee that decides whether or not to approve the application. Although the groups are relatively autonomous in their activities, they must be certified by the governing authority. The implications are two fold: (1) representation of localized traditions are determined by a selected few, (2) the economic opportunities that derive from the monopoly of a specific tradition are also regulated in a hierarchical way. Furthermore, the 1990s decentralization reforms have given greater autonomy to rural region shifting the burden of rural revitalization from the centralized government to regional actors (Love 2013). Older women, the guardians of past food traditions, embody the ideal of resilience of rural folks. These local actors, like the Tosa Traditional Cooks, are expected with little economic capital at their disposal to become sources of revitalization for the region. In fact, they end up more often than not competing with each other for the little resources available.

[10] Food road side station (*michi no eki*) are direct food sale stops on highways that aim to revitalize rural areas (Rath 2016).

According to Atsuko Matsuzaki, the most pressing challenge for the transmission of a dish is that younger generations do not have a taste for it. For example, many of the Tosa traditional dishes have tastes that are difficult to relate to for younger people as they are born much after the times of necessity and food scarcity (Appendix B, Table III). Dishes like Konjak jelly sashimi with miso dressing (*konnyaku sashimi no misoae*) or soy pulp rice cakes (*kirazu mochi*) have such unusual texture and flavor that they are hard to enjoy without previous cultural context. In Kōchi, the concept of sushi is a relative one as most mountain community had little access to seafood, they created vegetable version of this now world famous Japanese dish. Ruriko Sumida, the leader of a Tosa Traditional Cooks group explained that people of mountain communities seldom ate rice and eating sushi was synonymous with feasting (*gochisō*). Sugar was also a coveted resource and a mark of prestige. Virtually all "Tosa Traditional Cooks" dishes (even fish dishes) are so sweet they could be easily confused with deserts. Today, access to rice and sugar are plentiful across the prefecture and these tastes do not carry the same significance to younger people. At one particular Tosa Traditional Cooks event, I helped prepare steamed mashed taro (*mushi yōkan*), a dish so obscure that few people in Kōchi know of it. Neither sweet enough to be a dessert nor savory enough to be a side dish, the brownish round slices were hardly touched as they did not fit in any contemporary food categories. In this manner, flavors of the past must adapt to new cultural contexts or face extinction.

Figure 8. Making *mushi yōkan* (center cutting board)

Tastes that are difficult to relate to today were not always so as they were firmly anchored in a local cultural context, repeated traditional techniques and a lifetime of memories (Sutton 2014). As less and less people know their preparation and experience their taste, it appears that most of these dishes are bound to disappear. As I was taught to make some of these dishes, I could not help but notice that repeated learned gestures (*kata*) like smashing tuber with a wooden mortar or hand rolling rice cakes are necessary to fully appreciate what goes in to these disappearing delicacy. The loss of these techniques is to be deplored not only because people will not get a chance to get accustomed to the taste of foods made with them, but also because these techniques are in a way part of the taste. Matsuzaki remarks that if people do not eat these dishes, they will disappear. The demise of these tastes and techniques seems to coincide with the ageing population in the prefecture. The promotion of this traditional food is, however, more than a strategy of economic survival. In a region where over a quarter of the population is above sixty-five[11] (Matanle and Rausch 2011:124), the Tosa Traditional Cooks become an important segment of the population, a way to affirm their economic independence and cultural relevance.[12]

The preparation of these dishes is anchored in activities that used to be an essential part of local daily life. Losing these tastes, which are tied to learned and repeated techniques, is akin to losing a way of life. In fact, these dishes are often in jeopardy when traditional livelihoods are lost to time. Numerous accounts attest of how these flavors are intrinsically connected to habits that used to define entire lives. Sixty-two year old farmer, Sumie Nishitani, remembers: "Ever since I was a child, we have been drying boiled fiddleheads (*zenmai*) in our backyard" (Kōchi Newspaper 2003). Seventy three year old Yoshiyo Kadowaki remembers: "When it got close to Tanabata festival, my grandmother would prepare without fail this same dish of noodles with simmered eggplant or pumpkin stalks" (Kōchi Newspaper 2005). The diversity

---

[11] This number might not appear shockingly high but it includes also cities that manage to retain some younger inhabitants. From past experience, the number of people over 65 is much higher outside cities.

[12] The term "life wisdom" (*seikatsu no chie*) is frequently invoked when referring to pragmatic rural knowledge.

of Kōchi is represented in these daily life activities and tastes that vary across seasons and local areas. The fear of losing this core component of Japanese regional identity is omnipresent in contemporary Japanese society. In “Discourse of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan” (1995), Anthropologist Marilyn Ivy articulates these same anxieties of losing ancestral practices in the face of modernity. In the mountain of Kōchi, the Gotoku town spring festival is an example of the many attempts to conserve traditional dishes. The festival enabled organizers to reconnect with techniques of the past which they admitted would not have been possible without the help of RKC’s “Tosa table” cookbook (Tosa Traditional Cuisine Research Group 2007). It also enabled participants to taste forgotten flavors and, for a suspended moment, to experience the continuity of time.

Figure 9. *Nobiru* wild ramps with miso dipping sauce at spring festival

# II. Transforming Taste

## 1. Process of Innovation

The truism that the necessary condition for the transformation of cuisine is innovation might be worth restating, as it is not as self-evident as it appears. Restaurants in Kōchi face a saturated market where innovation is essential for entrepreneurs to stand out. This highly competitive food scene mirrors the cutthroat restaurant industry as a whole where innovation is necessary when competing over limited resources. Much academic interest on this subject has been focused on uncovering the process of innovation among trend setters in *haute gastronomie* (Opazo 2016; Vega and Ubbink 2008; Albors-Garrigos et al. 2013; Stierand, Dörfler, and MacBryde 2014). Restaurants, especially famous restaurants, help establish major trends that are reflected in cuisine at large (Stierand, Dörfler, and MacBryde 2014; Albors-Garrigos et al. 2013). Although chefs consider innovation to be a strategic tool, it is worth pointing out that the economic impact of these innovative activities are difficult to assess (Albors-Garrigos et al. 2013). Take for example a restaurant like El Bulli in Catalonia, the mecca for gastronomic innovation, which in its prime spent six months of the year experimenting and recording its food innovation (Opazo 2016). Ironically, what made El Bulli's success was ultimately its undoing as it was closed in 2011 because it was not financially sustainable (Opazo 2016). Gastronomical restaurants are expected to be creative (Stierand, Dörfler, and MacBryde 2014) in large part because their reputation depend on it. In the competitive market of *haute gastronomie* where innovation is rewarded by Michelin stars, transforming cuisine is literally and figuratively a matter of survival.[13] The same market forces that shape innovation in *haute gastronomie* circles also shape the transformation of taste and cuisine in Kōchi.

No culture can perpetuate itself out of a cultural vacuum (Amselle 2000). Culinary transformation usually operates in a combination of local elements (techniques, flavors and ingredients) with outside elements. This process is usually referred to as syncretism (Riley 2013), hybridization (Ceisel 2013) or creolization (Ostendorf 2003). These approaches have in common that they articulate changes in food culture as a fusion process inherent to all society

[13] The rumors of downgrading the Michelin ranking of his restaurant for lack of innovation were enough for Chef Bernard Loiseau to commit suicide.

(Jourdan and Riley 2013). This process takes place in Kōchi by borrowing elements that are then incorporated into the repertoire of the chefs. At Hamacho, a Kōchi establishment, chef Takuda explains that although he uses local and seasonal ingredients, his cuisine is shaped by regional as well as Western and Chinese techniques. Another restaurant "Sama sama" organizes monthly local product meetings. The meeting takes the form of a set course meal that is populated by entrepreneur supporting their products and academics interested in food revitalization. The dishes served at the meeting, like Susaki bay sea bream Carpaccio, reflect culinary innovation by blending local ingredients with foreign techniques. As foreign food becomes more widespread in the region, foreign dishes are shaped by local ingredients, local techniques and local taste preferences. The French restaurant Bénir in Kōchi city offers a set course menu, which includes among others tempura fried snails and *aka ushi* filet mignon in onion sauce.[14] The food was presented with a particular attention to Japanese esthetics (e.g. bite size) and Japanese flavor preference (e.g. delicate seasoning). Another example is Bar Amistad, which incorporates local ingredients using Spanish cooking in his tapas menu (e.g. *hachikin* local poultry breed done *al ajillo*).

Over the *longue durée*, global food elements become transformed, accepted and can in many cases themselves become symbolic representation of the local food culture. The influence of foreign elements in the cuisine of Kōchi demonstrates that the forces of globalization are at work even in remote regions of Japan. Scholars, skeptical of the indomitable process of globalization, maintain that one cannot separate global from local (Wilson and Dissanayake 1996). In the same manner, international foods that penetrated the culinary repertoire of Kōchi are transformed by the local context. Globalization must adapt to local conditions, thus, it should be reexamined as a phenomenon of glocalization (Robertson 1995). For example, as standardized food chains disseminate around the world, they must adapt their practices to specific local context. Big Macs are now served without cheese in kosher restaurants, hamburgers are taken off the menus in India and Muslim clerics must inspect restaurants in order to certify them as a halal in Malaysia (Watson 2006). Glocalization takes place in Kōchi

[14] *Aka ushi*, or Japanese Brown cattle, is a breed of cow first developed in Kōchi and still raised in the region.

where outside food has been assimilated and transformed over time to fit the local context. For example, *aissu kurin* is a type of old fashioned ice cream unique to Kōchi. Its crunchier texture is held in high esteem being considered a regional specialty (*meibutsu*). Another regional specialty, the hat bread (*bōshi pan*), a round bread with custard ball on top, was first created in 1955 and has become since a convenient souvenir (*omiyage*) for tourists. According to the Kōchi Japanese External Trade Organization brochure (2015), these products have a "rustic taste created by the culture of Tosa." Thus, food technical knowhow like ice cream and bread making is incorporated and transformed to fit the Kōchi palate.

Large scale food adoption is often tied to social changes that take place in a given society (Valagao 1997). Major political and economic shifts that bring about instability in the food supply can prompt transformation of eating habits. For example, war and its aftermath was both a contributing factor to the adoption of potato in Europe (Messer 1997) and bread in Japan (Yotova 2016). In times of scarcity, population must often resort to less desirable foods like wild plants (Huss-Ashmore and Johnston 1997). In Japan, mountain vegetables (*sansai*) have been exploited in times of famine to supplement the diet (Cobbi 1978). In the mountain of Kōchi famine is almost forgotten from the collective memory, yet, taste preference and flavor memories established at an early age (Huss-Ashmore and Johnston 1997) contribute to their enduring popularity. However, food adoption does not only operate on the scale of large social economic pressure. Human taste in food oscillates between the two extremes of neophobia (fear of novelty, resistance to change) and neophilia (search for variety, desire for change) (Fischler 1988). In the region of Kōchi, deviation from established cooking norms is frowned upon. For example, cooking school students are taught that each knife serves a different purpose.[15] Nonetheless, the search for novelty is a constant endeavor for the Japanese palate (Grinshpun 2012). From experience, Japanese people, including children, show far less resistance to trying new food than their western counterparts. In order to reconcile innovation with rejection, novelty must be introduced into a system of established cooking practices and

---

[15] I was reprimanded by one of the RKC Culinary School instructors for using the wrong knife to cut sashimi on a TV news segment.

flavor principles (Rozin 1973). In Kōchi, rendition of *ramen* or hamburger[16] must be adapted to the local palate in order to be adopted by the local residents.

Embodiment, or how perception of the world is shaped by our heavily enculturated bodies, serves to explain how taste is more than the sum of the food's organoleptic proprieties as it is also informed by symbolic meaning and lived experience. In particular, bodily experience, forms of knowledge and practice serve as a privilege locus to examine changes in taste (Harbottle 1997). Innovation is more than an intellectual process. It is an embodied one where sensory knowing is often achieved during activities that have become incorporated as routine, like, for example deboning meat (Stierand, Dörfler, and MacBryde 2014). According to Gomez et al. (2003), the habitus of a great chef is a mixture of personal predisposition, knowledge acquired through tough training and repetitive practice, internalized rules of esthetic and knowledge acquired through reflexive thinking about practice. More generally, habitus is a generative circuit that takes place between the social structure and the individual, in which production, reproduction and change occurs through regulated improvisation (Bourdieu 1977). For De Certeau (De Certeau, Giard, and Mayol 1994), although everyday practices like cooking are guided by structures of power that dictates the rules that already exist in culture (strategies), individuals possess spaces of agency which he calls "tactics". Chefs and home cooks alike actively negotiate between, on one hand, the dominant structure's cultural values and culinary rules that are expressed through one's body, and on the other hand, tactics and regulated improvisations which enable them to innovate.

## 2. Economic Revitalization

Entire towns populated by the elderly, schools forced to shut down because they only have a handful of children, young people moving in droves to distant cities because their hometown

[16] The Ryōma burger named after the historical hero, which squeezes all manner of local ingredients (*katsuo* flakes, local eggplant, *jiro dori* egg…) in between two buns.

cannot offer employment. Across Japan, rural regions are suffering the most from the economic crisis afflicting the country as a whole. With little economic opportunity and an aging population, regions like Kōchi are suffering from rural decline (Matanle and Rausch 2011:123-132). The prefecture relies heavily on its agriculture, fishing and food industry. The region sits at the distant periphery of the economic, political and administrative urban centers. Few career opportunities exist for younger residents and interviews with the prefectural government workers revealed that the most pressing issue was one of economic revitalization. Food entrepreneurship is often one of the few viable options for the economic disenfranchised (Wahlbeck 2007). Owning a farm, a food processing plant, or an eating or drinking establishment is a risky endeavor that requires an important initial investment with no guarantee of breaking even. Many of my friends in Kōchi opted to open restaurants, which, unlike agriculture, are not subsidized by the government and face much competition. In addition to the many responsibilities of running a business, restaurant owners in Kōchi must organize special events, participate in local festivals and cater on the side to round up their inconsistent monthly income. As the food sector in Kōchi is intensely competitive, how does a region with a dwindling economy manage to support so many restaurants? The answer is it does not. Restaurants that attract customers through innovation or mobilization of tradition are the only ones that remain in business. The best way to do business in the Kōchi food industry is to innovate within the confines of what is regionally acceptable.

On a larger scale, rural revitalization movement plays a decisive role in shaping the expression of the changing local food. Although the rural revitalization movement has been expressed in many forms, the fundamental premise is one of self-reliance drawing on local resources to face large scale economic decline (Knight 1994a). This strategic model is certainly empowering as it gives agency to local actors in order to reverse the decline of their community (Mese 1998). However, it is symptomatic of a political shift of devolving responsibility from the central government to the local inhabitants of the struggling rural communities (Love 2013; Love 2007). The late 1970s “one village-one product” project is an example of how rural revitalization affects the foodscape of a rural prefecture. In principle, each struggling village would become branded with one emblematic product becoming the tomato village or the cow village (Knight 1994a). Today, it might appear as a relic of the past,

yet, its legacy still endures in Kōchi's regional agriculture (see map bellow). A more contemporary expression of this movement can be found in the locality studies (*jimotogaku*) which seeks to map local economic resources, more often than not food, and how to channel and brand them (Love 2013). Across Kōchi, entire communities have specialized in the production of specific foods and the cuisine that ties into it. Attempts to revitalize a decaying rural community by specializing in a local product show a mitigated success report (Love 2007). As rural communities across Japan resort to similar strategies, they must devise innovative ways to establish themselves ahead of the competition. In the mountains of Kōchi, the public development corporation (*kaihatsu kōsha*) Tosa Yama is an example of creative ways of using limited resources. The corporation in tandem with local agricultural cooperatives aims to revitalize the area introducing new ways to practice organic farming. Tosa Yama is famous for producing among others a spicy ginger ale sold as a local specialty in places as distant as Tokyo.[17] The drink's emblematic status is in fact quite recent as it was launched only 6 years ago.

Figure 10. Kōchi delicious vegetable map

[17] The ginger ale is made from bulbs that are imperfect and would not sell on the market otherwise.

The prefectural government is a major player in supporting and developing rural revitalization schemes and local tastes. For example, in the northern part of the island, Kagawa prefecture has successfully promoted *udon* noodles, a local ordinary staple, to the rank of emblematic food that has become an important source of tourism and regional revitalization (Kim and Ellis 2015). In Kōchi, local food features prominently among the scattered resources the prefecture can harness to boost its economy with several prefectural divisions simultaneously involved in food promotion (agriculture, health, tourism…). The prefecture produces large quantities of raw food products (fish, fruits and vegetables), however, these products are then processed in other prefectures (juice, frozen food, premade food) that make a considerable profit on reselling the transformed foods. For this reason, a guiding strategy of the prefectural office is to focus on developing the prefecture's ability to process food (Kōchi Prefectural Government 2015). According to interviewed government workers, this added value to food is lost profit to the region that goes in the pockets of other more entrepreneurial regions.

Toshiro Okabayashi, director of the agricultural district and distribution support division, explains that new food culture starts with farmers and cooperatives not with government. New food trends are far from being orchestrated by the prefectural government, instead, it provides support in the form of promotion and advice to food entrepreneurs.[18] In light of reduced government support, food innovation and branding is seen as a way to revitalize a struggling region (Love 2007). As stated previously, one such prefectural division which supports economic revitalization using local food is the "Locally produced, Locally consumed" (*chisan chishō*). What initially started as a grassroots movement has been refashioned as a producer movement by the government as well as the Japan Agricultural Cooperative[19] (Kimura and Nishiyama 2008). In fact, the main focus appears to encourage local food consumption not so

---

[18] The prefectural government organizes business development and branding workshops for Kōchi food entrepreneurs.

[19] Japan Agricultural Cooperatives is a large national farming cooperative that coordinates production, transportation, packaging and marketing of agricultural products with loose ties to the Japanese government. It is a powerful farm lobby that plays a large role in shaping the course of what food is produced in the region of Kōchi.

much for health or environmental reasons but to keep money circulating within the prefecture. Although new food innovations emerge at the grass roots level, the prefectural government through strategic planning and funding still plays a major role determining the success of certain food products over others.

Gradual changes in regional food production often engender transformation in the way local inhabitants eat. In the region of Kōchi, two important shifts have been taking place that have drastically affected the local food culture. First, greenhouse farming has become widespread in the region's agriculture with all the major products (eggplant, green pepper, cucumber) grown today in greenhouses. Greenhouse farming enables much more control over production (pest, irrigation, temperature) and higher quality fruits and vegetables destined to the markets of large cities in Japan (Stradford 1994). In 2015, the prefectural government organized a guided tour of Kōchi's greenhouses for Osaka and Tokyo vegetable sommeliers.[20] The goal was to learn more about local products and preparation directly from the producers. In the city of Aki, we learned about the *beinasu* (American eggplant) greenhouse farming industry. A group of elderly women that promote local products (*akishi shisetsu engeihin shōhi kakudai iinkai*) prepared for us an eggplant feast from recipes they had developed. The menu ranged from traditional recipes like eggplant *tataki* to novelties like eggplant pizza.

Second, farm raised fisheries are multiplying across the coastal regions of Kōchi representing over a quarter of all fishing production in the region (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2014). Fish are caught when they are small and then raised in large nets tied to floating buoys where they are fed a constant stream of enriched fish feed. While visiting the fishing village of Sukumo, the women of the fishing cooperative introduced us to the dish of sea bream rice (*tai meishi*) a local specialty that they also process and package for sale. The dish can be made from various types of fish (*mejika, katsuo*), yet the abundance of farmed sea bream in the area has made the red snapper version a symbolic representation of the area. The

---

[20] Vegetable sommelier is a term used in Japan to designate a level of expertise of vegetables. These experts are responsible to sell and promote vegetables to urban markets.

dual shifts towards greenhouse farming and farmed fisheries have transformed the landscape with greenhouse cities cropping up and fish farms dotting the coast. More importantly, it has transformed the foodscape of the region with each area developing a typical cuisine around the new local production.

Figure 11. *Nira* garlic chive greenhouse in Sakawa town

In the late fall, I am invited to drive to the secluded mountain village of Umaji. Ancient rice fields and small patches of land next to the windy road are colonized by *yuzu* trees, a sure sign we are getting closer to the village. We park on the side of the mountain road where a small window of sun illuminates half a dozen *yuzu* trees. Two elderly women wearing long sleeves aprons and sun caps are harvesting *yuzu*. They explained how difficult it is to harvest the fruit because of the long thorns on the branches. As a parting gift, they give us a plastic bag full of *yuzu*. We stop at the Umaji Hot Spring, the main tourist attraction, for a meal of *yuzu* marinated chicken, *yuzu soba* noodle, *yuzu* beer and *yuzu* sorbet. Further up the river sits the *Gokkun* factory, our main destination. *Gokkun*, a drink made of *yuzu* juice and honey, is Umaji's most famous product. The state of the art *sugi* wood building is a striking contrast from the rest of the remote village. Inside, a team of employees is busily taking phone orders for drinks that will be shipped the following day. Men in laboratory coats are tinkering with

*yuzu* essential oils in the R & D center. Dozens of iterations of the drink's famous label that look like children drawings hang on the wall. A steady stream of elderly farmers in miniature Japanese pick up trucks deliver crates of *yuzu*. One farmer declares: "I started this afternoon. There will be plenty of *yuzu* to harvest until the end of the season. I am just taking my time." In the plant, only three out of the six lines are crushing skin on *yuzu* at a frantic pace to extract juice and zest. On our way out of the village, we stop to talk to more farmers. An old lady, done harvesting for the day, slowly drives by the narrow path on a mobility scooter. In the adjacent field, an old man greets us with a wave. He explains the many ways he likes to use his fruit: a small middle incision to squeeze it in a glass of *shōchū* or scratching the skin and rubbing the oils on the skin while bathing. He gives us another full bag of *yuzu* and sends us on our way.

Figure 12. Umaji village *yuzu* harvest

Umaji village plays a key role in shaping the local food identity and taste preference in the prefecture of Kōchi. Umaji's successful transition to a "cash crop" appears to be a textbook example of rural revitalization through food (Shinohara 2003; Totani 2007; Huh 2008). Thirty years ago, the village was suffering from demographic decline and a stagnant economy, so the agriculture cooperative decided to shift its production to *yuzu*. Mountain areas are ideal for

*yuzu* production as they do not require irrigated paddies and the warm days and cold night are supposedly good for the fruit. However, Umaji faced an unforeseen obstacle. The fruits require much care as the trees have long thorns that damage the fruit. The older residents were having difficulties to make a profit, as scarred fruit simply does not sell in Japan. The members of the agriculture cooperative got together and invested in a factory to produce a natural drink that would reflect the ideals of the community. Thus was born Umaji village's *Gokkun* drink, a perfect illustration of the resilience of a rural community in the face of economic decline. The story is of course more complicated as Umaji village is more than a story of rural resilience. It is about the shift from a local to a global economy, the potential of added value through marketing (Totani 2007) and the local politics of resources management (Huh 2008). Villages like Umaji have helped put Kōchi on the map as a *yuzu* producing region (Shinohara 2003). It has further promoted the use of *yuzu* in the regional cuisine with *yuzu* dressing, *yuzu* alcohol, *yuzu* cookies readily available in any Kōchi grocery store making the taste of *yuzu* a leitmotif in the cuisine of the region.

## 3. Performing Taste

On the other side of the concrete sea wall, dozens of white tents are drawn up on the grey sandy beach. Shaved ice and *takoyaki* stands compete over the overflow of customers here to attend the *dorome* festival. For 57 years now, the fishing town of Akaoka has been celebrating "white bait" or *dorome* in the Tosa dialect. The fish can be boiled to extract fragrant broth or dried for preservation but it is best raw. When freshly caught, it is served either with *yuzu* soy sauce (*ponzu*) or with miso and garlic leaves paste (*nuta*). Every other stand displays beer commercial, beer being an indispensable item at every Japanese festival that are, more often that not, as much about tradition and religion than about food and drinks. A white-faced *kimono*-clad geisha is trailed after by an entourage of curious bystanders and local press. She waves at me, and I remember her from a night of drinking and entertainment with some important visiting guests. The festival attracts many people from the surrounding area and is a striking commercial venture. Old women, guardians of tradition, are selling traditional *dorome* dishes. Fair tradesmen are hawking grilled and fried favorites that have little to do with the

festival. There is nowhere to hide from the harrying sun, as tent seating is booked in advance for a fee. All eyes turn towards the central stage where a small woman is holding a large lacquered bowl. She brings the bowl to her lips. "Start, gulp, gulp, halfway there, gulp, gulp, one more, one more, hang in there," announces the MC. She drains the final drops of her .9-liter sake container. The crowd cheers their new champion. Hours later, the same women hails me in broken English on the train platform. She is studying rural revitalization at Kōchi University, the festival represents an interesting case study, and I feel sorry for missing an opportunity to partake in this local performance.

Festivals are widespread throughout Japan as they remain today important cultural practices. Food offered at these festivals is part of this broader system that balances tradition with novelty. *Matsuri*, or Japanese festivals, are annual celebrations tied to localized Shinto religious celebrations (Berthon 1989). They often incorporate many traditional elements like portable shrine (*omikoshi*) procession (Takezawa 2012) and food offerings (*naoarai*) (Didierjean 2006). These festivals are legacies of the past, where exchange and worship were essential parts of communal life, that live in the present. In many cases, these traditions are transmitted and transformed with the religious origins all but forgotten (Berthon 1989). More recently new festivals that are not tied to local divinity have also gained popularity in Japan. Although researchers have argued that these new festivals' lack of divinity will prevent them to coalesce as a social practice (Inoue et al. 1979), there exists a continuity of practice and symbols living through these new celebrations (Ashkenazi 1993). Moreover, the purpose of these celebrations go beyond ritual and religion as they are tools of social cohesion and the source of economic opportunity (Foster 2013). Early on, *matsuri* have been a significant economic resource that benefited the local economy (Takezawa 2012). In rural areas, festivals that do not attract people from outside communities and do not generate profit are slowly forgotten. For a festival to grow in popularity, it must innovate and stand out from other festivals. Recent innovations like the Kanamara "penis" festival must play a delicate balancing

act of anchoring novelty in an imagined tradition comprised of stories,[21] practices and symbols that offer some sense of continuity to the celebration. In short, festivals must reinvent themselves if they are to remain relevant and not fade into obscurity.

The saying that goes "at any given moment, there is a festival in Japan" appears to be true in Kōchi. While all festivals in Kōchi offer food and drinks, some are specialized in certain regional food with the food itself being the main point of the festival (Appendix B, Table IV). In the mountains of Kōchi, wild boar and deer population have exploded in recent years creating all sorts of problems ranging from difficulty in forestry maintenance to destruction of farmland (Takatsuki 2009). The prefectural government has funded several initiatives to encourage the hunting and the consumption of wild game among with, for example, the *gibier* festival.[22] The festival is still in its infancy, which could explain why it is ill organized. Recipes are amateurish simply substituting beef or pork with wild game (e.g. boar curry). Thornbjorn Andersen, a Danish expatriate chef, confides that some participants are not even selling wild game. It might be tempting to the cynic reader to interpret *matsuri* simply as invented traditions that have hardly anything to do with practices of the past. However, legacies of bygone eras endure in the expression of these festivals.

One of the most important festivals of the year, the *Tosa no okyaku*,[23] recreates a tradition of a local banquet for the prefecture as a whole. Although the festival is only in its tenth iteration and the religious dimension of the banquet is limited, traditional feasting practices and foods are central to this new festival. Novelty does not emerge out of vacuum as celebration dates,

---

[21] One such legend tells the story of a sharp-toothed demon who hid inside the vagina of a beautiful woman. On two occasions, the demon bit off the penis of young men on their wedding night. The desperate women asked a blacksmith to fashion a metal phallus. The demon, tricked by the young women, broke his teeth on it, which led to the enshrinement of the metal penis.

[22] In the mountains of Kōchi, wild boar was traditionally consumed even during the times of historic proscription. Deer, on the other hand, has no consumption precedent with few people that know how to prepare it and few people that have acquired a taste for it.

[23] Traditional prefecture wide banquet. For more thorough information about the festival see chapter 5.

food recipes, ritual practices express real and imagined continuity with the past. While traditions are transmitted, there are also important transformations necessary to adapt these practices to a contemporary setting. Once a year, the Okawamura village organizes the *Shanikusai,* thanksgiving meat festival, or literally carnival. The festival is an all you can drink barbecue feast that triples the remote village population to 1500 participants. Although the festival serves to promote the local beef industry, it incorporates embodied practices of the past like *tachiodori*.[24]

> Mats are placed around the *yudono* and all are invited to the *Nakabarai* or sacred meal. The *Ageyu* ceremony has heated the *omiki* (sacred wine), so this is passed around in tiny bowls and then *omochi* (rice cakes) and small dried fish are eaten. *Omochi* symbolizes the produce from the land, fish that from the sea and river. By sharing in the *kami*-containing food, the COMMUNITY is united with the *kami*. This is the heart of the whole *matsuri* dynamics (Moriarty 1972:103).

In her description of the Kamimura Shimotsuki festival, Elizabeth Moriarty (1972) emphasizes in her ethnographic account how communitarian aspects of the Japanese festival have emerged out of agrarian necessity. Although it appears that contemporary *matsuri* are far less about worship, the communal dimension of the event remains central to the celebration. Participants in this festivities gain a sense of belonging and emotional support based on their role in such a culturally significant event (Roemer 2007). In Kōchi's festivals, this support is embodied by the immediate necessity of the region: economic revitalization. Several informants working at these festivals explain that the food sold helps supplement income of restaurants that would not make it otherwise. This means that vendors and festivals themselves are in competition over the meager resources available in the region. Furthermore, community solidarity serves to explain the success of festival foods. People show up to festivals to show social and economic

---

[24] A traditional type of dance in Kōchi that requires much practice, which involves dancing in pairs with samurai sword to ward evil.

support to the local community. In many cases, they will patronize a particular food stall because they know the owner. In Japan, customer loyalty can be better understood through the larger framework of social relationships and obligations that determine business patronage (Bestor 1990). In one such establishment I regularly visited, the owner invited me to prepare sushi rolls (*ehōmaki*) for the *seitsubun* festival.[25] The food preparation was a chance to network with many local cooks who all came to help for free. Collective labor and consumption of festival food cultivates social proximity among members of the community. In this manner, taste and other embodied traditions become grounded in lived experience that connects people through space and time.

Figure 13. Making *ehōmaki* for *setsubun*

*Yosakoi* is Kōchi's most famous festival. It was created to revitalize the region after the destruction of the Second World War but its roots can be traced back to the *awa odori* festival.[26] I was convinced to participate in the festival not fully understanding what it

[25] *Setsubun* is a countrywide celebration, which in its many regional iterations celebrates the coming of spring. There is a special ritual to cleanse away evil by casting dried soybeans called *mamemaki*.

[26] On the island of Shikoku the start of obon "day of the dead" is celebrated by a dance festival called *awa odori* that is choreographed during the day and devolves into the drunken dance of fools at night.

involved. For up to six months, teams practice their elaborate routine until movements are enacted almost unconsciously. As the movements become incorporated, dancers become more attuned to any deviations in the routines. Where festival observers are unaware of any changes of tempo or improvised moves, the dancers that have embodied the regimented routines experience the festival via their senses with deeper awareness. Japanese festivals are above all social performances that find their roots in religious rituals. Cooks at these events are ritual performers that display their skills with much showmanship whether it is flame searing bonito or grilling octopus balls. Yet, consumers are also performers on stage (e.g. drinking contest) where participants are keenly aware of their role in this social drama. Food performance at a festival is a creative process where regional and national identities are reaffirmed like in the case of the celebration of Peruvian National Holiday in Chile (Imilan 2015). Staged food performance like the one at the world-renowned *noma* restaurant[27] is a physical and sensory manifestation of cultural heritage (Larsen 2010). Vannini et al. (2010:387) illustrate this complex performance at wine festivals: "As an appallingly indiscriminate wine taster I am painfully aware of these dramaturgic demands. As the pourer pours I must listen. As the wine speaks I must taste. As I taste I must speak. As I speak I must make sense." As embodied practice, the multiple actions of cooking, tasting, talking, shapes our social self, the continuous repetition of these ritualized habits (i.e. rotating food on a grill, toasting people, communicating delight) shape our palates.

# III. Tradition and Change

## 1. Evolving Traditions

Japanese cuisine, including what is considered to be traditional cuisine, has tremendously changed throughout history. Rice, the symbol of Japanese cuisine and a symbol for Japan itself

[27] Noma is one of the most influencial trendsetting restaurants in the world. It is often credited for starting the New Nordic Cuisine movement.

(Ohnuki-Tierney 1993), was until recently in large part consumed only by urban elites (Francks 2007). Few are aware that before the introduction of soy sauce in the 7th century the main form of seasoning was instead fish sauce still consumed in remote parts of the archipelago (Ishige and Kegan 2001). Japanese cuisine as we know was a deliberate attempt on the behalf of a modernizing elite to transform diet on a national scale (Cobbi 1989). The emergence of traditional Japanese cuisine, as most traditional forms of art in Japan, is in fact a historical process that took place in response to westernization and industrialization (Cwiertka 1998). The communities living in the mountains of Kōchi constitute interesting sites to observe the fluctuations in so-called traditional cuisine. In the highlands of Kōchi, rice was difficult to grow so that it was mixed in small amounts with other grains to make porridge (Rath 2016:197). To this day, older residents remind me that vegetable sushi served in the mountain (*inaka zushi*) was a treat (*gochisō*) precisely because rice was such a rare commodity. These changes in diet are sometimes so swift, they are erased from the collective consciousness. From its arrival in the seventeenth century until the early 1960s, dried corn was a staple of mountain diet in Kōchi that has vanished from today's diet (Rath 2016:197). As for fish, Hideko Mitani explains: "Growing up in the mountain we did not get much fresh fish. The fish we had was salted like mackerel." With the introduction of refrigeration, raw fish like *katsuo no tataki* could be consumed even in the mountain. However, elderly residents in the mountain still today have a preference for salted mackerel sushi (*sugata sushi*).

Historians in particular have devoted considerable energy at debunking numerous traditions as modern inventions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Vlastos 1998). Emerging nation-states seeking to legitimize relations of authority and to establish social cohesion explains why these invented traditions were more frequent in a specific historical period (Ranger 2014). According to Katarzyna Cwiertka (2007:175), "Even the term *washoku*, nowadays saturated with a sense of timeless continuity and authenticity, is a modern invention." The crafting of tradition is an ongoing project that serves multiple agendas. For one, traditions are essential components of nation-state building as they help legitimize a common shared past. At the same time, these invented traditions are more often than not the product of savvy

entrepreneurs (Chuang 2011). In Kōchi, traditional foods like *katsuo no tataki* that symbolizes the regional cuisine appear to be an example of an invented tradition.[28] Although *katsuo no tataki* first appears in writing in a text dating back to the 16th century (Miyagawa 1993), the dish was made from fermented salted fish bearing little resemblance to its modern form (Kawamura 1974). *Katsuo no tataki* was originally developed and consumed in very localized coastal areas but came to symbolize the region as a whole (Kōchi Life Improvement Association 1994; Matsuzaki 1986). A sample of the last 30 years of Kōchi travel magazines available at the prefectural library reveals a shift in popularity from *katsuo* raw slices (*sashimi*) to *katsuo no tataki*. Finally, the place of origin and the right way to do *katsuo no tataki* is subject to much debate (Miyagawa 1993). The towns of Kure, Kuroshio and Shimanto, none of which are serious candidates to be the birthplace of the dish, have recently branded themselves as *katsuo no tataki* destinations laying claim to the tradition, monopolizing a precious resource and transforming its meaning.

As previously discussed, systematic historic investigations points out that a great number of traditions are invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Vlastos 1998). Yet, this vision has limits and has been subject to much criticism. For one, it takes for granted that some traditions are genuine while others are spurious. In fact, traditions are not natural objects that can be identified through a positivist approach but rather through an interpretative process that sees traditions as embodying continuity and discontinuity (Handler and Linnekin 1984). While discussing the invention of *katsuo no tataki*, Atsuko Matsuzaki (interview 03/24/15) recalls: "When I was a child, it was popular. Therefore, every house without fail would have one of these [shows me a *katsuo no tataki* cooking implement]". Traditions appear to be less about the continuity of unchanging cultural object into the present but more about ongoing interpretations of the past (Handler and Linnekin 1984). If traditions are interpretations or reinterpretations of the past, all traditions must transform once they live in the present. As anthropologists, we should not presume to hold the "truth" about past traditions as to do so would be ignoring "the encoding of past-present relations in the variety of symbolic

[28] Katsuo no tataki is an regional dish of seared bonito tuna. For more information see chapter 3 and 5.

constitution of tradition" (Jolly 1992:63). As traditions are contemporary interpretations of the past, the question of traditions being new or modern, genuine or spurious loses its relevance (Handler and Linnekin 1984). This is not to say that traditions escape being molded by the pragmatic forces of political identity and capitalism. As Robert Tonkinson (1993:599) puts it: "'tradition', like culture, is a contested field in which differently located groups struggle to establish and reproduce particular symbolic forms and constructions of meaning." Although Kōchi government and entrepreneurs mobilize, and therefore transform, local culinary traditions, the meaning ascribed to these food traditions, through the repetition of routine practices and the familiar pleasures of their consumption, renders the debate over invented traditions far less salient.

A point that should be restated is that culinary traditions are not static. They are living cultural phenomena that need to change if they are to remain relevant. Tradition is an ongoing project that is shaped by real life imperatives and subject to situated interpretations. No other cuisine than *sawachi* better personifies the traditional cuisine of the region of Kōchi. The cuisine is represented as ancestral and tied to a long heritage of cultural practices and codified rules (Kawamura 1974; Matsuzaki 1986; Tosa Traditional Cuisine Research Group 2007). During the Edo period, these plates were owned by samurai and were used as much as display vessels than serving plates (Eric Rath email communication 11/17/15). After the Meiji restoration, impoverished samurai were forced to sell their heirloom treasures to the emerging bourgeois class (Matsuzaki personal communication). Thus, was born the flamboyant style of cuisine we know today, *sawachi ryōri*. Contemporary forms of the cuisine have little to do with the plain form of cuisine served in samurai banquet.[29] Furthermore, contemporary *sawachi* renditions tend to include outside elements like fried chicken and sweet and sour shrimp. In the tourist area of Kōchi, small two-person *sawachi* are sold to visitors, albeit locals often criticize them as being inauthentic. *Sawachi* festival posters reveal that in the last 30 years representations of this typical cuisine have evolved. From 1987 to 2017, the esthetic of the plate—that is food

---

[29] The Mori family diary describes a typical samurai banquet that includes a Japanese Spanish mackerel sashimi *sawachi* and a mackerel sushi *sawachi* (see appendix B, Figure 50)

arrangement, color contrast, and the sheer amount of ingredients—has gradually changed. As each dish carries symbolic meaning,[30] the shift from jellied and simmer dishes to fried food and exotic fruits comes to signify more than changing tastes in regional cuisine, it symbolizes a shifting relation with the past. In the end, tradition as a work of interpretation remains relevant only if the people who practice these cultural elements can relate to the object. Rather than seeing this as the invention of tradition, I choose to interpret this as the constant transformation of tradition.

## 2. Continuity in Change

"You came exactly at the right time. We just shot this one this morning," says Matsumoto san pointing in the direction of a lump on the ground hidden by a blanket so as to keep it warm. The night falls rapidly in the mountain and I am ill equipped to face the chill of the early evening so I come closer to the fire pit. Matsumoto drains a glass of hot sake, pours another glass, and submerges it in a pan of water balanced over the brazier. His two hunting companions, hunting knives in hand, lift the blanket revealing a small boar. "It's about junior high school age," jokes Matsumoto. After cleaning the little beast, it is placed in a tub of hot water over the fire pit for a few minutes, then removed to pull most of its hair off. It is given a second dunk in the water and given a close shave, as the skin is considered particularly tasty. The butchering is a coordinated effort between the three hunters that have perfected this choreography so many times so that few words are uttered in the process. The head is separated from the body and ventral incision is made from the neck to the belly button. The innards are removed and the liver is placed in a cooler to be grilled later. The rest of the animal is broken down, ham, shoulder, side, loin, and split among the hunters. Matsumoto will freeze what his guest cannot eat tonight. At dinner, Matsumoto's wife serves us a *nabe* (Japanese hotpot) of thinly sliced boar with carrots and white radishes. Previously thawed raw

[30] Food in Japan is permeated by a multitude of symbolic meanings (Barthes 1983). Each dish on a *sawachi* plate is chosen because it symbolizes a particular place, a season or a time long gone.

boar sashimi with skin on is served with *ponzu*. Fresh boar loin *tataki* is seared on the fire pit and sprinkled with coarse salt. I am not convinced that it is safe to eat undercooked game but I go along with it so as to not offend my host. Matsumoto sits next to me. His nose is red from either the chill outside or the hot sake he has been drinking all night. He explains that the prefecture does not subsidize this kill as money can only be collected in the summer months. "We must protect the *satoyama* (mountain ecosystem)," solemnly reminds Matsumoto san, "this is why our family stayed in this area."

Figure 14. Boar butchering with Matsumoto

Inhabitants of Kōchi clearly demarcate a line between what is considered traditional cuisine and novelty. As demonstrated previously, traditional regional cuisine is far from static, transforming through time with each new interpretation. In the same manner, novelty in regional cuisine is also a work of interpretation, one that appears at first glance to be a break with the past. There is in fact continuity in novelty, as new expressions of culture do not appear out of thin air. Novelty might be argued to be the fruit of cultural improvisation where "people work it out as they go along" (Hallam and Ingold 2007). Continuity and change in diet that bridge physiological and symbolic aspects of taste can be best understood through the analysis of people's embodied response to food (Harbottle 1997). In Kōchi, *gibier* cuisine

illustrates the duality of change and continuity in a culinary social practice. The term *gibier* is a borrowed word from French cookery manuals that loosely refers to wild game. Although efforts to promote this type of cuisine in Kōchi are quite recent, the practice of eating wild game in the mountain of Kōchi is ancient, being practiced even in times when the consumption of animals was proscribed[31] (Ishige and Kegan 2001). The cuisine is as much novelty as it is revival and continuation of past practices. Traditional forms of cuisine that are endemic to the region, like wild boar (*inoshishi*) cuisine, become incorporated under the umbrella of *gibier* cuisine. The proper gestures that are learnt while hunting, butchering and cooking boar are transmitted down, while at the same time evolving, in a manner that makes today's eating practice unique to the region (e.g. boar *tataki*). In Japan, elements of modernity are entwined with elements of the past where traditional pattern have helped developed an alternate kind of modernization (Bellah 2003).

Japan has a long history of incorporating foreign cultural elements that are then japanized to fit the narrative of homogeneity (Bellah 2003). Elements in Japanese cuisine considered today traditional (e.g. soy sauce, tofu, sushi) are of foreign origin but were transformed to fit the Japanese palate (Ishige and Kegan 2001). Typical regional products of Kōchi like *yuzu* and taro leaf-stems (*ryūkyū*) and regional techniques like acorn tofu (*kashikiri)* and stone pressed fermented tea (*goishicha*) all emerged in continental Asia. Furthermore, foreign food is not merely incorporated into the Japanese diet, it is domesticated in ways to accommodate the Japanese culture and palate (Cwiertka 1997; Tobin 1994). *Ramen* is perhaps one of the most compelling contemporary cases of a foreign dish incorporated in the Japanese foodscape. The noodle dish, once considered foreign, has become a national representation of Japanese cuisine (Fukutomi 2010; Solt 2009). Today in Japan, *ramen* is widely recognized as a national dish of the people (*kokuminshoku*) adapted across Japan in countless regional iterations (Kushner 2012). The rise of B-grade gastronomy (*B-kyū gurume*) in Japan of the nineties created a new

---

[31] In order to make meat acceptable in Kōchi, flower names are substituted for the name of the animal (e.g. boar=*botan* or peony, horse=*sakura* or cherry blossom).

niche of connoisseurship accessible to all, thus transforming Japanese eating habits (Fukutomi 2010).

This popularization of cheap forms of regional foods is an important source of economic revitalization and a shaper of the regional taste. Ramen noodle soup is particularly adaptable to even the most traditional settings like Kyoto (Maurice 2012). In Kōchi, the town of Susaki is famous for a unique noodle dish cooked in earth ware (*donabe*) called *nabeyaki ramen*. The dish originated fifteen years ago in an effort to revitalize the town and has become a permanent fixture in the cuisine of the region for tourists and locals alike.[32] *Ramen*, a recent import from China, is a clear break from past expressions of Kōchi regional cuisine. At the same time, *nabeyaki ramen* is in continuity with practices of the past as it uses local ingredients, techniques and flavoring that are endemic to the region. The expression of the noodle soup is regimented by a number of rules that dictate for instance the temperature and soup base for the broth and how to best enjoy it. In this manner, *ramen* preparation and consumption do not escape the rigors of ritualized forms (*kata*) that are essential to thoroughly appreciate it (Fukutomi 2010).

[32] The noodle soup is the main attraction of the derelict town. It is sold as a regional souvenir (*omiyage*) in freeze-dried form in tourist shops across Kōchi.

Figure 15. *Nabeyaki ramen* in Susaki city

In order for a new dish to emerge and become successful in Kōchi, the discourse surrounding the food must include some level of continuity. The food, albeit often times the creature of savvy entrepreneurs, must fit into the local historical narrative. Myths of origin are essential in order to anchor regional food in a given time and place providing some sense of continuity to the consumer[33] (Ceccarelli, Magagnoli, and Grandi 2013). Narratives emphasizing local traditions helped cement a place for French regional cheese like camembert and roquefort in the national collective imaginary in France (Boisard 2003; Vabre 2015). Discourse that provides a sense of permanence in food practices is just as important as using traditional ingredients and techniques. For example, Ryōma is credited for his influence on many products in the region of Kōchi (e.g. *tataki*, *shamo*, *shōchū*). The veracity of these stories matter little because they accomplish what they set out to do: providing a sense of continuity in food practices. The images these discourses conjure are so compelling that one can taste bits of local lore with every bite.

Although Kōchi residents distinguish between tradition and novelty in dishes of the region, the line that demarcates old and new can sometimes be blurry. The *chirimendon*, a dish of rice topped with dried whitebait that is the specialty of Aki city, locates itself in this gray zone. Yukari Sento, the vice president of the *chirimendon* promotion project, explains:

> It first started in the year 16 or 17 of *Heisei* period about 10 years ago. However, people have been eating *jako* (dried whitebait) on rice since a long time ago [...] People living here have always eaten *chirimendon*. This is how this food culture arrived here. They wanted to eat it. For regular people living here, it is just a regular ingredient. It is an everyday delicious dish. We thought that visitors would also be eager to try it. (Sento interview 04/13/14)

[33] Taste is also intrinsically tied to storytelling. See chapter 3 for more information.

To sum up, new dishes do not emerge out of nowhere. Local techniques, local ingredients, local taste preferences and local discourses permeate any attempt to introduce novelty so that no dish is left untouched. These many cultural elements influencing the expression of new dishes live through the bodies of local residents. How food should be made or how it should taste is so thoroughly incorporated that to do it any differently would seem unnatural. Embodiment postulates that the body is not an object to be studied in relation to culture but instead is the existential ground of culture (Csordas 1990). Mie Yamamoto president of the *chirimendon* promotion project is also the inventor of soft-serve ice cream topped with dried whitebait. "The point is to use a hundred percent milk. When using eggs, the taste of whitebait is too strong and you lose the cream flavor. The first time, I kneaded whitebait directly in the soft-serve, but the flavor was too delicate so I decided to use it as a topping. The sweetness of the soft-serve combined with the saltiness of the whitebait increases the deliciousness (*umasa*)," explains Yamamoto in an interview (Kōchi Economic Newspaper 2015). Even in this case of what appears like radical change, old preparation patterns and established notions of taste still prevail.[34]

[34] Esthetically speaking, whitebait over soft-serve ice cream mirrors the practice of using whitebait over rice.

Figure 16. Soft served topped with dried fish

In a similar manner, cultural practices of the past, dishes that are forgotten, still endure in the present long after the people who made and ate them have passed away. Kōchi residents fear for the future of the emblematic tradition of *sawachi* cuisine. Although the cuisine has demonstrated its resilience to the passage of time, less and less young residents have the time, the knowledge or the desire to engage in this practice. What few residents remark on is that cultural practices derived from *sawachi* cuisine are still alive and well in places like the Hirome market.[35] As eating practices of the past disappear in the region and new practices emerge, change appears as ineluctable. However, cultural practices are resilient, take new forms and adapt to new settings.

## 3. Authentic Taste

We have seen how the line demarcating tradition and novelty is arbitrary at best. What we call tradition is in fact an interpretation of the past that is in constant flux. To remain relevant to the people who live this tradition, it must constantly evolve adapting to contemporary circumstances. On the other hand, novelty in regional cuisine emerges out of a very localized context and is in many ways a continuation of historical practices. The question of authenticity is key in answering why certain dishes are considered traditional and others not. For Arjun Appadurai (1986:25), "authenticity as a criterion seems to emerge just after its subject matter has significantly transformed." One can hardly contest the authenticity of grandma's cooking but when it comes to shifting representations of ethnic food abroad the first question that arise is its authenticity (Pang 2003). In "Culture and Authenticity" (2008:83), anthropologist Charles Lindholm presents the case of the hegemony of Bordeaux as a wine making region. Although winemakers of the region argue that the quality of the wine is due to an exceptional

[35] The shared tables where people shared countless small dishes serve as substitute to the more formalized *sawachi* cuisine. For more information see chapter 4.

*terroir*, the success of Bordeaux lies in the strategic investments of the industry. Thus, a closer look at the political economy of region will reveal how power intersects with the definition of authenticity to help craft a genuine food tradition. This also means that relatively new or changing cultural practices can rapidly acquire a sense of authenticity also called "emergent authenticity" (Richards 2008; Cohen 1988). In Kōchi, elements previously discussed like *shamo nabe*, *nabeyaki ramen* or *chirimendon* are all examples of "emergent authenticity". In short, the authenticity of any traditional cultural practice must be understood not as a natural object but as a symbolic construction (Handler and Linnekin 1984). Food authenticity might be a social and symbolic construction, still, as with all social construction, it has a very real impact on the world we live in.

Authenticity of regional cuisine matters a lot to Kōchi residents because it is an important economic resource. Dishes that are deemed to be authentic representations of the region become precious commodities that can be sold to local residents or tourists. Residents tend to have a constructive view of authenticity, one that ties into local cultural references, whereas tourists are drawn to an existential view of authenticity as it relates to the enjoyment of the event and the experience of difference (Richards 2008). In the Kōchi's Hirome night market, authenticity for tourists is constructed via loud pictures displaying recognizable symbols of regionality while more somber descriptors written in regional dialect adorn shops patronized by local residents. Regardless of the target market, notions of authenticity are important because they sell. The production of authenticity in Japan provides added value to a food product by tapping into collective notions that are socially meaningful (De St. Maurice 2012a). In economically marginalized areas around the world, laborers are often left with no better choice than to market their culture and identity (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). The need for food authenticity reflects concerns that once a practice is removed from its original context, it carries the burden of reassuring the consumer that it is genuine (Tierney 2016). Regional dishes gain tremendous value from this transaction, being certified as authentic, so that they can be commodified on the market. *Goishicha*, fermented stone tea, is a unique product made in the mountains of Otoyo, a remote part of Kōchi. The tea was brought from China two centuries ago almost disappearing until its recent revival. It is certified as an authentic regional product (*honba no honmono*) that ensures provenance and cultural specificity of 52 other

“authentic” products throughout Japan. Recent geographical indications reflect Japan’s concern with an authenticity that increases product value on the market (Kimura 2015).

In Kōchi, authenticity can become the source of economic revitalization. The group “lily of the valley” (*suzuran*) is one out of five elderly women groups working at the “wonderful field” (*marohoba hatake*) farmer restaurant (*nōka resutoran*) in the city of Nankoku. Farmer restaurants offer a chance for groups of elderly women to gather in a place to cook traditional food for the local community.[36] These establishments are symptomatic of a political climate of devolving responsibilities demanding increased self-reliance on hidden resources to revitalize the region, as we saw above (Love 2013). At the “wonderful field”, around twenty dishes are served buffet style on large traditional plates with the name of the dish inscribed on a tag. The menu changes every week, offering seasonal foods that are representative of local culinary culture. Menu focuses on produces sourced at the local farming cooperative and features regional dishes like Japanese knotweed in vinegar (*itadori sunomono*), Indian taro sushi (*ryūkyū sushi*) and *tataki* style eggplant (*nasu no tataki*). Authenticity of the farmer restaurant is as much a product of the dishes as it is a product of the experience (Tierney 2016). Having experienced grandmothers cook at the restaurant is certainly part of the appeal and helps legitimize a taste as authentic. The weekly event is immensely popular with over 7,200 customers in 2011 of which a majority are women (83%) over fifty (69%) (Kōchi Prefecture Nankoku city 2011). Older women become the producers and consumers that have the dual responsibility of safeguarding food traditions and revitalizing the local economy. Women of the group “lily of the valley” are in fact entrepreneurs that have successfully commodified the taste of tradition. In a region with few economic opportunities, retired women harness the one resource at their disposable: authenticity.

> Well, cats don’t eat farmed fish. I heard from the prefecture government that they don't even eat dried fish (*himono*) that is farmed. I am telling you: cats know […] In Kure,

[36] These groups are sometimes affiliated with the Tosa Traditional Cooks discussed earlier in the chapter and in chapter 2.

> they don't farm fish. I went there to buy fish caught in the ocean to make sea bream noodles (*tai zomen*). I served a larger amount than usual. My husband kept picking at the fishing head and finished all of it. I didn't even tell him that the snapper wasn't farmed […] People today can't tell the different tastes. Young kids that is. Babies also know the difference. My great-grandson came to visit. We ate dinner out. There were many things to choose from on the menu. He would not eat anything but when I made him *katsuo* and miso soup with fish broth, he ate it all. Babies can taste the difference. Unfortunately, when he came back from Tokyo at the age of five. You know there is no fish in Tokyo. He did not have a taste for it anymore. (Matsuzaki interview 03/24/15)

Changes in taste are often articulated as a loss of authenticity. Fish farms have become an increasingly common sight on the coast of Kōchi and important economic resources. Educated consumers like Matsuzaki recognize the advancements that have been made in fish farming but still believe wild fish tastes better.  The fetishization of wild fish is large part a response to the recent development in fisheries technology where the category of "wild" is produced and altered by culture, politics and the market (Takahashi 2014). In the Shimanto area of Kōchi, wild eel (*tennen unagi*) is sought out for its taste and fetches a much higher price on the market. In this case, authenticity becomes a guaranty of quality where food will taste better if the consumer's concerns are assuaged (i.e. it must not come from China). For Matsuzaki, there appears to be a natural taste predisposition for wild caught fish almost as if taste buds, and by extension the body, did not lie. As people experience the world through enculturated bodies, notions of authenticity, in particular in relation to practices of the past, can also be tasted.

## Conclusion

Thomas Csordas (1990) suggests that an "approach to embodiment begins from the methodological postulate that the body is not an *object* to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the *subject* of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture" (p.5) concluding that "on the level of perception it is not legitimate to distinguish

mind and body" (p.36). Simply put, the body is the staging ground for culture. As our body is a necessary conduit to experience our surroundings, embodied dispositions shape the way we perceive the world through our senses. If we are to accept this the premise of embodiment, food practices in the region of Kōchi, how to cook and eat, are learnt and repeated until they become incorporated as part of one's being. Shared notions of taste do not arbitrarily emerge; they constitute a habitus shaped through the repetition of culturally prescribed forms. *Techniques du corps* as Marcel Mauss would call them (1936) are transmitted via emulation of cooking techniques, government sanctioned ideology and the repetition of essential daily activities. These learnt attitudes reflect the lived reality in which an individual is socialized, meaning that they operate in a world of economic and political constraints. Habitus helps individuals cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations developing new solutions without deliberation while remaining socially constructed (Bourdieu 1977). In Kōchi, the scarcity of economic resources forces individuals to devise new strategies that must reconcile novelty with established patterns.

Moreover, embodied practices provide a lens through which we can better grasp the innovation and transmission of regional taste. This understanding of how practice and taste are tied together is critical if we are to develop a framework to resolve the underlining tensions between continuity and change. In Kōchi, food-centered social performance is in effect the site of ongoing staged negotiations between novelty and tradition. What constitutes novelty or tradition is a contested field in which various actors compete over the legitimacy of their interpretation of the past. An in-depth analysis of any cultural elements will reveal continuities and changes that are intrinsic to the nature of living traditions. As for Kōchi regional cuisine, the distinction that people make between traditional and new regional foods illustrates a need to separate food practices in discrete categories. Authenticity of traditional food is a social construction that matter a great deal as it is the arbiter of success and good taste. In the region of Kōchi, authenticity of a dish can determine the viability of economic schemes that support whole communities. When I think back on the *katsuo tataki* burger from the opening paragraph of this chapter, I often wonder if I made a mistake endorsing it. After all, for many in Kōchi, the burger is still not authentic regional cuisine. Yet, in my mind it is tied to an embodied experience and a story of rural resilience. For Sakamoto, the high school students

and all the people involved in making the dish what it is today, the *katsuo tataki* burger has become a part of regional cuisine, a living tradition that is at the same time continuous and changing.

# Chapter 2. Tasting Nostalgia: Lost Memories from the Ancestral Village

On a vernal Sunday morning, I meet with a group of retired women to travel to the mountains of Kōchi in Japan. The day is overcast, yet the drive outside the city is pleasant with patches of flowering trees dotting the side of the road. We reach a small windy road wide enough for one small car. Mitani sensei, the driver, tells me that the road did not exist when she was younger and the trip had to be made on foot. We reach her hometown, a hamlet, also called Mitani where we came to collect wild mountain vegetables called *sansai*. Mitani sensei loans me a pair of white rubber boots for protection from snakes that can be a problem this time of the year. We set off on the mountain slopes with fabric bags in hand. I can hardly identify any of the wild edibles but my chaperones, intent on educating me, point out the different plant species as we go. Fiddleheads (*zenmai*) and bracken (*warabi*) grown in bunches on the steeper slopes, butterbur (*huki*) and wild ramps (*nobiru*) hide in an abandoned orchard and Japanese knotweed (*itadori*) and wild *wasabi* crowd the banks of a mountain stream. A new world of possibilities opens up to me. I am sent with a pitchfork to the bamboo grove to dig up bamboo shoots. It looks easier than it is as each shoot is buried deep in the mountain earth and will not give way. My loot in hand, I walk back to the Mitani family house where in the back I am greeted by Mitani sensei's mother who shows me how to wash and clean each plant. A traditional outdoor stove is boiling with water mixed with rice bran. Mitani senior explains that it is meant to take away most of the bitterness out of the wild plants. And it dawns on me that for many residents of the region of Kōchi, the taste of mountain vegetables remain tied to such seasonal recollections.

For many in Japan, spring evokes recollections of a peculiar grassy bitterness that can only be found in these wild mountain greens. This bitter taste is one that Japanese people seek as it reminds them of seasonal flavors from times long gone. In this manner, Mitani's elderly inhabitants still gather mountain vegetables, a symbol of their connection to practices of the

past. The aim of this chapter is to uncover how taste is a medium that allows the recollection of the past and how memory of food articulates with the sentiment of nostalgia. I draw here in part on phenomenology in order to comprehend how taste triggers such deep-seated emotional content. Although food tastes are in constant flux, the taste of nostalgia remains constant as it is born out of a unique experience that is anchored in a location and a moment. Food memories sit at the intersection of individual experiences, collective recollections, and, in some cases, imagined remembrance for food never tasted before. In the region of Kōchi, food nostalgia might also have been put to pragmatic use. The preservation and revival of disappearing flavors through heirloom vegetables and traditional cuisine are part of a broader effort to revitalize the region of Kōchi. This astute use of resources is possible because rural regions like Kōchi are considered the resting place of Japan's traditions. Nostalgia fuelled by Japan's deep anxiety over the imminent loss of their shared past contributes to the general sense of urgency felt in the region. In a region with an aging population, the memory of the past lives on as a fragile legacy of what was.

## I. Taste and Memory

### 1. Food Recollections

> It's about more than simply taste. When you eat, it's an experience [that you partake in]. That's because it's food. This is particularly true for regional cuisine. When we are children, we make important memories. You are extremely happy because you all eat these things together with your family. Therefore, even if you didn't feel that this food was delicious as a child, this intense [memory] input makes you want to eat it. (Mitani interview 07/01/15)

According to Hideko Mitani, memory plays a crucial role in shaping the desire to consume the regional food in Kōchi. This connection between food and memory has been explored in literature (Proust 2006) and in the social sciences (Holtzman 2006). Although widely acknowledged, few have pondered on how memory, in particular nostalgia, affects the

experience of taste. Most people love the food they ate growing up in part because we associate pleasant memories to it. Proustian recollections, that is when a taste of the past triggers a profusion of involuntary memories, are commonly used in food-centered memoirs (Fisher 1989; Clarke 2014). However, these sudden recollections of sensory nature are not reserved to literature as anthropologists have started to examine the link between unique tastes and memories. Scholars have made clear that memories affect behavior and beliefs about food choices (Fox and Alldred 2018). In "Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory," David Sutton (2001:1) uses similar literary techniques to engage in what he calls "Proustian Anthropology." In his study of the Kalymnos island, he uses food memories of his informants to draw broader anthropological considerations such as how rituals of daily life, feasting and acts of generosity participate in the construction of identity and the collective remembering of the past (Sutton 2001). Across Japan, and in particular in rural areas, the taste of mountain vegetables elicits similar memories. Since the cultivation of these vegetables present many challenges (Love 2010), they are more often than not collected in the wild. The taste of each mountain vegetable is a unique combination of mild acridity and fibrous texture, which is for most an acquired taste. People in Japan consumed them in great part because their flavor triggers memories of the spring, bucolic settings and traditions of the past.

Many mountain vegetables (*sansai*) are consumed during the spring season in Kōchi (Appendix B, Table V). Their rarity and the seasonality of these wild edibles make them all the more appealing. On one of my trips to collect *sansai*, my friend Yasu Hamada asked me if I could find him some green brier (*shiode*), as it is only available for two weeks of the year. Unfortunately, only one person of my foraging group knew what it was and we did not have any luck finding it. Wild plant knowledge is very much localized as names of plants change from one area to another and the same name can be used for different species depending on local dialect. In a study on mountain vegetables, anthropologist Jane Cobbi (1978) classified 43 wild edibles in the remote mountain village of Kaida in Nagano. These wild greens used to be a precious resource in times of famine but are slowly forgotten (Cobbi 1978). Foragers do not randomly sweep the mountain, instead relying on passed down knowledge and life experience to know where to find which plant (Cobbi 1978). Experienced foragers can tell where to find certain plants, how to process them and how to cook them in tasteful ways.

Although processing through leaching and salting seems to be similar from one place to another, recipe preferences vary from place to place. For example, Kōchi residents claim that Japanese knotweed is best cooked in fat (pork or sesame oil) whereas Mie prefecture residents prefer to boil them (Bernard Bernier personal communication 05/24/16) or stir-fry it rapidly so it stays crunchy (Mie Prefectural Office 2015).

Figure 17. *Sansai*: *warabi*, *zenmai*, *takenoko* and *itadori*

How can specific tastes trigger a host of forgotten memories? In order to answer this question, one must acknowledge the complexity of how the mind constructs flavors. In order to better understand this process, we must first discuss the cross-modal nature of taste and in particular the flavor images. These "images" are constructions of the brain that combine taste, touch, hearing, sight and most importantly smell (retronasal olfaction) to produce a complex sensory experience (Shepherd 2006). Although humans are considered to have a weak sense of smell compared to animals like dogs, their capacity to identify varied substance that are ingested through retronasal olfaction is much higher than any other animal (Shepherd 2011). The construction of these flavor images involves neural pathways that are connected into a feedback loop that involve memory, emotion and language (Shepherd 2006). Thus, memory plays a salient role in shaping the human experience of taste. In a recent study, Poncelet et al.

(2010) compared the perceptual and physiological response to the smell of mint between French and Algerian-French. Their study found that, perceptually, the smell of mint triggered more experience-oriented association in Algerian-French. Physiologically, the smell of mint produced more neural stimulation than with French only participants. The authors concluded that early exposure to mint tea modulates brain activity and behavioral response (Poncelet et al. 2010). Using a similar line of reasoning, the smell of fish broth (*dashi*) evokes strong memories for Japanese people (Imai 2015). Fish stock made from dried bonito is a smell ubiquitous to any Japanese home and a cornerstone of Japanese cuisine. One of the particularities of Kōchi cuisine is that it uses different ingredients to make its fish stock thereby creating a unique type of flavor that is anchored in local resident's memory.[37]

In order to understand the strong emotional bond that links taste and memory, I choose to also draw on a phenomenological approach, one that concerns not so much to describe how things are but rather how they manifest themselves to the conscious mind. This approach does not necessarily follow a set theoretical paradigm but sees itself instead as philosophical practice. The promise of a foundational intersubjectivity, that is that we mutually inhabit the same sharable world, is a core component of this perspective (Desjarlais and Throop 2011). This means that how I experience food through taste and emotions is not entirely subjective leaving room for the possibility of mutual understanding. According to Knibbe and Versteeg (2008:52): "In phenomenological anthropology, taking the 'apprenticeship' of an anthropologist in a new life-world seriously means looking for meaning as something that appears to our senses, something that anybody can immediately understand because of our shared human nature, but also learn through becoming an insider." Long stretches of participant observation enables to a certain degree some level of empathy and, in some cases, the construction of common experiential memories. The resulting phenomenological ethnography suspends judgment on the existence or origin of the phenomenon instead focusing on the analysis of experience, a process called bracketing (Maso 2007). Descriptive

[37] According to informants, a characteristic of Kōchi cuisine is that it relies more on freshly caught fish and stronger flavored dried fish flakes (*soda bushi*).

vignettes are well suited to mobilize such content as it illustrates how emotions, memory and the various senses mesh together. This approach gives the possibility of a more holistic comprehension of how taste is formed and reshaped without falling into old dichotomies (Harbottle 1997).

> We set off to the Nyodo river one of the last remaining untainted rivers in Japan. It is only a fifteen minutes hike from the deserted train station but my sweat smells of spirits and my stomach is feeling uneasy. The river is an empty vastness surrounded by emerald rolling hills. The secluded spot is so quiet that one notices sounds that usually go undetected: the summer breeze rustling in the leaves, the running water against the river pebbles, the calls of the black kites (*tonbi*) circling above. I put my bag down and plunge in the icy water. The cold current numbs my body and the rocks hurt my feet. I emerge reborn and my senses awaken. My companions have gathered driftwood and are starting a small fire and have placed cans of soda and beer in a mesh bag in the river. The grilled Japanese abalones (*nagareko*) twist and turn while they cook on the fire. They taste of the sea and crunch under the tongue like cartilage. The grilled whole smelt (*shishamo*) are burnt at their extremities. We eat them like tiny salty snacks in between each drink enjoying the crispy egg sacks. The sliced pork belly (*buta bara*) splatters on the river rock circling our fire, an enduring trace of our feast. Every once in a while a piece catches on fire and the smell of burnt gristle makes our mouth salivate. The thinly sliced marbled Japanese beef (*wagyū*) topped with a pinch of salt literally melts in our mouths. Finally, we end our meal with grilled rice cakes (*mochi*). Their texture is toasted on the outside and gooey on the inside. Sight, sound, smell, touch and taste remain inextricably tied to the memory of our recurring river barbecues.

According to Jon Holtzman (2006:365), “the sensuousness of food is central to understanding at least much of its power as a vehicle for memory.” The senses are the site where the structure of experience and the structure of knowledge converge and cross (Seremetakis 1996). We do not only remember in the form of ideas, we also remember in the form of smell, taste, touch and sight. The repetition of everyday habits, like drinking a cup of coffee, still time by recreating these past sensory experience (Seremetakis 1996:17). The multi-sensory shifts in

the Japanese tea ceremony (smell of incense and taste of green tea, sound of the outdoor and silence) attest of the importance of repetition in this ritualized activity (Kondo 2005). Yet, one must recognize the unique sensorial combination of each ceremony that is best illustrated by the Japanese idiom "one time, one meeting" (*ichigo ichie*) reminding people that no encounters are the same. Cultural synaesthesia, experiencing all senses as one, and intersensoriality, the interconnection of the senses, serves to recognize the unified nature of the human sensorium (Howes 2006). This singular interrelation of the senses makes each and every food experience a unique and memorable experience. North of Kōchi in Kagawa prefecture, handmade *udon* noodles is a source of regional identity and economic revitalization (Kim and Ellis 2015). Although each shop offers very similar fare, Kōchi residents visiting Kagawa make a point to eat *udon* at three or four different places on a day visit. Texture of the noodles, fragrance of the broth and decor of the restaurant make each visit and each bowl of noodle a singular sensorial experience. Thus, memory of the best noodle shop is seldom articulated in terms of unisensory characteristic but more as a whole experience.

Figure 18. Sanuki handmade *udon* in Kagawa prefecture

As our body acts as conduit through which we experience the world through our senses, memories, especially of daily repeated tasks, are also embodied. Bodily memory operates as a locus upon which identity can be constructed and performed like the consumption of *kimchi* for Koreans in Japan (Lee 2000). Everyday cooking, with no recipe and no measurements, is perhaps the foremost example where embodied memory allows individuals to operate (Sutton 2006). When cooking from experience, the body knows the proper techniques and taste it has memorized through countless repetitions. Handmade *udon* at the family-owned Miyake shop in Kōchi illustrates how the body, the senses and memory all converge in a culinary practice. Chef Akiyama has been making *udon* for 36 years and his shop always has a waiting line parked in front of the door. Every morning at 5 am, he goes through the same routine he has perfected over the years. First, he makes the noodle broth base (*tsuyu*) and without measurement, he approximates the amount of each ingredient and then adjusts to taste.[38] Second, he prepares the noodles by mixing two types of flours with salted water.[39] The mound of dough is then covered with fabric and kneaded with the sole of the feet until the texture "feels" right. Although Akiyama now uses a machine to roll out the dough, he confides that he used to roll it by hand when he was younger, as noodles that are too even do not taste as good. Finally, he prepares the tempura batter that will be made to order in accompaniment of the noodles. Frying tempura requires skills that combine sensory and bodily memory. For example, the sound of the frying enables one to evaluate temperature, the color indicates how done the food is, the direction one throws the tempura will determine how much the batter sticks and the deft use of chopsticks is necessary in order to not break apart the delicate finished product. Hence, the body, as the lived center of experience, constitutes a medium upon which memory is constructed.

---

[38] He devised his own recipe which is a combination of dried mackerel (*saba*) and thazard (*mejika*) flakes, soya sauce, sweet rice wine (*mirin*) and, he insists, *sake* fit for his own consumption.

[39] It is worth noting that the salt content of the water changes with the seasons in order to obtain proper noodle texture.

## 2. Place and Time

Famous dishes that are tied to a specific location can trigger memories of places that are near and far. The spatial nature of memory has attracted much scholarly attention in the recent years (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). Food memories can be tied to places far away like the longing for food of diasporic communities (Sutton 2001; Mannur 2007) or times long gone like in the case of heritage revival (Love 2007; Hodges 2001). This is particularly important when looking at the case of Japan. Emblematic dishes in Japan are always tied to a particular place (Claus 2017; Knight 1994a; Noguchi 1994). Unlike the case of food and wine in the European Union, the Japan's systems of geographical indications is still in its infancy (Kimura 2015). Yet, we should not underestimate the ability of Japanese consumers to tie an emblematic product to its place of origin best illustrated by famous products sold as souvenirs (*meibutsu*) (Noguchi 1994). With this purpose in mind, roadway stations (*michi no eki*) selling local farmed products have sprouted across rural regions. Roadway stations emerged in the 90s to enhance the typical amenities of motorway rest stops by providing retail space to travelers (Rath 2016:177). The goal was to foster local economic sustainability in the form of direct sale outlets for local farmers. Roadway stations are an integral part of Kōchi prefecture's foodscape as they are more than highway rest stops. The most popular roadway stations have restaurants that offer local cuisine and people will travel to these stops for a taste of tradition or unique food items (mountain vegetables, types of tea). The cuisine and products sold at the stops are specific to the area and are often labeled with the name of the farm. Thus, this experience enables visitors to actively fix in their memory a specialized product with an area and a producer.

On one hand, scenery of bucolic settings act as reminders of a past real and imagined. On the other hand, rural landscapes shaped by the interaction of countless generations with the soil become a living testimony of an ancestral way of life. Cultural landscapes like the rolling hills

of Tokaj wine region of Hungary are valued because they combine works of nature and man[40] (UNESCO World Heritage 2017). The *terroir*, the space where culture and nature collide, provides us with a way to apprehend a landscape that incorporates natural environment, territory, advertisement and memory (Vaudour 2002). In Japan, the disappearance of the *satoyama*, the interstice area between field and mountain that is managed by human activity, is not only perceived as an environmental loss.[41] It is also seen as a loss of cultural heritage (Kobori and Primack 2003; Kambu 2008). Similarly to *terroir*, the *satoyama* becomes an idealized model of how humans should manage their ecosystem and their landscape. In Kōchi, the *satoyama* is the area where mountain vegetables are collected in the spring. The foraging is done every year in the same places taking great care not to uproot certain species and leaving enough plants to ensure next year's yield. Mitani explains that if the semi-forested area is not maintained mountain vegetables will not grow as well. As the area of foraging is in close proximity to the house, it appears that mountain vegetable foraging is more akin to a type of control growing of desirable species. Eroded terraced hills and treeless clearings leave a mark on the *satoyama* landscape that make it impossible to forget how humans have modified their natural environment.

---

[40] The complex interaction of soil, climate and human knowhow has made the flavor of Tokaj wine unique to this region.

[41] Satoyama (lit. field and mountain) is often compared to the concept of *terroir*.

Figure 19. Kōchi *satoyama* landscape

In Kōchi, farmer's markets also help build memories that link food and taste to place and time. First, local production and consumption is the most important feature of these markets, firmly anchoring them within notions of place (Dodds et al. 2013). Second, the revival of cultural heritage is another dominant trope of these markets that reinforces the links of the food sold to an idealized past (Autio et al. 2013). The Kōchi Sunday market (*nichiyōichi*) is the most important farmer's market in the region. A tourist attraction that takes over six blocks of Kōchi's main avenue and was established 300 years ago, it caters as much to the occasional visitors than to the local regulars as the price is affordable.[42] The market represents the local and seasonal diversity and character of the region (Kōchi Prefecture 2015). Elderly women hold most of the small market stalls giving the market an air of rustic authenticity. Kazuhide Yoshikawa, the owner of Yoshisho restaurant, recommended me to visit a particular stall held by an elderly woman in her 80s. He explained that every Sunday she makes the trip down the mountain pulling a cart full of her produce to the market. This old lady is but one among many examples of how the market embodies the resilience and character of the region. Moreover,

[42] Many elderly residents come early to buy their groceries and the price of the produce is affordable compared to chain supermarkets.

the deeply sensorial context of the market with its sounds, sights and tastes triggers memories and feelings connected to time and place (Autio et al. 2013). Fieldwork at the Kōchi Sunday market enabled me to better grasp the dual process of constructing my own memories of my market routine (i.e. where to go and what to taste) while acknowledging the role that the market plays in building a shared food memory for the people of the region at large.

Figure 20. *Nichiyōichi* Sunday market

Finally, seasonality is of paramount importance in the practice and discourse of Japanese cuisine (Kohsaka 2017; De St. Maurice 2012a; White 2004). For instance, some species of fish caught in different seasons have different names and the first produces of the season (*hatsumono*) are celebrated as harbinger of the seasons (Bestor and Bestor 2011). David Sutton (2001:20) refers to the memories brought on by the anticipation of seasonal food as prospective memory. People living in areas where the change of the season is synonymous to the availability of the food, remember with much anticipation the taste they come to experience at the same moment every year. Prospective memories are constructed through everyday discourse that acknowledges the primacy of seasonal foods. For example, in a Kōchi newspaper column entitled "A Kōchi spring scenery," the author ties the preparation of bamboo shoots (*takenoko*) and Japanese knotweed (*itadori*) into her narrative of the arrival of

spring (Matsuzaki 2015). Books about Kōchi cuisine frame the importance of seasonality of each food by providing precise seasonal food calendars to help the reader better grasp the importance of seasonality in the regional food culture (Tosa Traditional Cuisine Research Group 2007; Kōchi Life Improvement Association 1994; Matsuzaki 1986). However, seasonality of food goes beyond discourse as in farming communities it is a lived reality. Farmers in Kōchi must adjust their daily activities to the rhythm of the changing seasons.[43] For example, the arrival of citrus tamurana (*konatsu* lit. small summer) at the farmer's markets signals the start of the early summer. Thus, prospective memory in farming communities not only gives people a sense of passing time, it also governs how taste follow the rhythm of the seasons.

## 3. Collective Memory

> Why did I start on this path? One could say it's because it's the main trade of my countryside town Muroto. My family members were fishing managers (*amimoto*). They would fish tuna. A fishermen family if you will. They caught fish overseas in places like Australia and the Indian Ocean […] When I was young, I sure could eat fish in Muroto. […] My father and mother. Well, dad used to bring some of the fish he caught. A [middle man] would kill the fish and bring it to the market. For the fish that was caught and brought home, we would sort it out ourselves. My dad would use all of it himself. The fish he caught, he cooked himself. I learned to cook that way. (Yamashita interview 06/10/15)

Recalling the past uses of food is a deeply personal experience yet it is more often than not grounded in a collective one. Yamashita's recollection of why he became a chef is anchored in the personal experience of sorting and cooking fish. Nevertheless, this experience inscribes

---

[43] This is only partially true with greenhouse agriculture, which has a much longer growing season and where farming activities are as much prescribed by the weather than by the market price.

itself into the larger shared memories of his family that owned a fishing fleet and his native area that is well renowned in Kōchi for its fishing industry. In her study of food and family in Florence, anthropologist Carole Counihan (2004) acknowledges the collective nature of food and memory. According to one of her elderly informants, "Eating is recalling" as it is embedded in physical sensation and connected to powerful recollection of singular experiences (Counihan 2004:25). She argues that emblematic dishes that are no longer regularly consumed can become "objects of memory," poignant reminders of the fracture with the past and a connection to history upon which to build a common cultural identity (Counihan 2004:26). Although on one level food memory is an intimate process that is unique to each person, the construction of these food recollections is part of a broader shared reality that includes family, region and nation. In a sense, group belonging plays on what foods we choose to remember as individuals, while personal food memories participate in the construction of a common shared memory.

As previously described, taste is experienced through the complex articulation of personal and collective food memories. It is difficult to separate the memories of meals and tastes of childhood from the collective memories of the group we belong to. For example, Japanese people will have keen recollection of their mother's miso soup, a very intimate memory that nevertheless inscribes itself in the broader context of what it means to be Japanese. In his ethnography of the Kalymnos island, David Sutton (2001:2) suggests that memory can be culturally structured around food practices giving rise to a distinct Historical Consciousness. As how we perceive and experience history is affected by our cultural context, it appears reasonable to advance that in an environment where food is central to daily life, memorable meals help better appreciate the pace of past events. According to Sutton (2001:117), "For Kalymnians, 'history,' like the meal, is constituted by events organized around certain accepted themes (structures) that break up the flow of everyday life in which 'nothing happens'." In Japan, celebratory banquets like *bōnenkai* (lit. forgetting the past year, end of year meeting) and *shinnenkai* (New Year's meeting) help pace professional and personal life and provide memorable moments to remember (or forget). In Kōchi, celebratory traditional

meals take the shape of *okyaku* banquets.[44] First, these banquets are an attempt to provide a sense of historical continuity to the region. The food served, the drinking rituals and social interactions follow rules of reenactment that provide a link with the past. Second, and in our case more importantly, talk of these memorable meals is more than a discussion over deliciousness and who did what, it is a way to remember the past. Thus, meals and special foods help build a narrative that helps understand the past.

According to anthropologist Sidney Mintz (1997:96): "a genuine cuisine has common social roots; it is the food of a community—albeit often a very large community." Thus, he distinguishes cuisine born out of daily practices and availability of an area with the loose assemblage of dishes that constitutes national cuisines. Although I agree with this sensible point, this distinction fails to recognize that all cuisines, even the one anchored in the social relationships of a community, are the product of collective selection that helps delimitate identity and past traditions. Cuisine is a form of social memory that draws on *gemeinschaft* and nostalgia for the past (Sutton 2008). In this light, recipes transmitted orally through family or disseminated more widely through cookbooks constitute a shared way of remembering.[45] Unfortunately, recipes die out with the passing of older generations and books go out of print (a point I struggled with in my own search on historical cuisine). However, as cuisine is a construction of a shared past, it can always be reconstructed, reinvented and reassembled. In the region of Kōchi, history is remembered in the form of narratives that allude to the past and tradition using the feudal name of the region (*Tosa*). Such historical representations are important because they shape how we experience traditions in the present. As people consume the cuisine of *Tosa*, they can appreciate a taste that is anchored in a shared experience of the past.

---

[44] *Okyaku* traditional banquet, albeit less practiced than in the past, are a fixture of Kōchi food culture. For more information see chapter 4.

[45] In this case, authenticity becomes the arbiter of the real memories (think authentic recipe). For more about authenticity see chapter 1.

Food memories can also be based on a shared fictional past that one has never actually experienced. Nostalgic remembering of food can be based on fictional memories of happy childhood (Lupton 1994) or imagined representation of the homeland (Mankekar 2002). The process upon which fictional memories are based, i.e. the invention of tradition, serves in the selling of consumer goods[46] (Ulin 1995; Terrio 1996). Consequently, a shared fictional past is anchored in the collective memory through the consumption of emblematic foods of the past. The various incarnations of food nostalgia, whether they are based on authenticity, tradition or regionalism, participate in the construction of memories that are as real as the ones we experience. Regardless of how we acquire these food memories, the taste of food is enhanced as it incorporates history and tradition in its meaning. In the cuisine of Kōchi, shared fictional memory articulated via nostalgia is an enduring theme that shapes consumption patterns as well as gustatory appreciation. After a Japanese plum harvesting trip with a group of elderly people, we were invited for tea and handmade rice cakes wrapped in Japanese ginger leaves (*hagedango*). Everyone could barely contain their amazement at how delectable the rice cakes were. The rice cakes carried particular significance for people that had eaten them in their youth, yet they were also delicious to people that had never tasted them as they could taste the weight of embedded memories of the region in every bite.

[46] The invention of tradition has been much discussed among historians as a process that aims to increase national cohesion and capitalist interests. See chapter 1 for more details.

Figure 21. Homemade *Hagedango* dumpling

# II. The Power of Nostalgia

## 1. Talking about the Past

In order to better use the concept of nostalgia, it is central to define this elusive term as it carries a plethora of meanings. Originally conceived as a form of acute homesickness, nostalgia is a sentimentalized longing for the past and when things were better. More often than not, these feelings are articulated through a combination of the remembered and the imagined taking the form of recollections of a past that appears better than it actually was (Creighton 2015). Nostalgic discourse, fed by this deep-seated emotional relationship, is circulated among members of a community that experiences it as a group (Creighton 2015). Nostalgic projections that allude to a specific place and time help establish what some authors call a “community of memory” or a common understanding of the cultural practices that define the community’s way of life (Bellah et al. 2007). Collective nostalgia is induced by the contemporary condition of postmodernism personified by a sense of uncertainty and instability brought by rapidly changing lifestyles (Ivy 1995:56-57). It is in effect a response to cultural

transition that leaves masses of people with feelings of loneliness and estrangement (Davis 1979:118-122). In Japan, collective nostalgia is best understood as a cultural logic that frames everyday practices and discourse. Expression of nostalgia can be found in music (e.g. *enka* or sentimental ballads) (Yano 2003), commonly used idioms (e.g. *natsukashi* or 'how nostalgic') (McMorran 2008) and of course in taste expressions (e.g. *inaka no aji* or a taste of the countryside)[47] (Knight 1996). Nostalgia in Japan is a pervasive entity and a force to recon with as it shapes politics, the economy and culture at large.

Of pressing interest in the analysis of nostalgia is how nostalgic discourse shapes the desire and the taste for particular foods. Culinary discourse infused with elements of nostalgia creates an emotional and memory connection entangling imaginary past, longing for the homeland and food practices (Mannur 2007). The Japanese government has used the eagerness of the public to embrace nostalgic discourse about food to implement a national food and nutrition education program (*shokuiku*) (Takeda, Banwell, and Dixon 2016). Nostalgic food discourse evokes idealized notions of a time and place when and where life was simpler and community bonds were stronger that is fueled by the impending sense of loss when the survival of these dishes are threatened (Yano 2007). Regional food discourse is permeated with the subtext of nostalgia. Books about the cuisine of Kōchi must use the vocabulary of nostalgia if they are to capture the essence of tradition and authenticity. Terms like *furusato no daidokoro* (the ancestral village kitchen), *fukuro no aji* (mom's home cooking) and *Tosa no aji* (flavors of Tosa) contribute to disseminating an affective image of a cuisine that lives in the past. In the Kōchi newspaper monthly section "delicious Tosa," the reader learns about traditional dishes and their place in daily practices of the past. More than mere nostalgia for a flavor of the past, these columns articulate nostalgia for traditional practices. Here, as well as elsewhere with tradition, one grows nostalgic for a cuisine and its flavors because they are intimately linked to a way of life.

---

[47] The term nostalgia does not have an exact equivalent in the Japanese language often translated directly from English as *nosutarujia*, *kyoshu* (homesickness) or *kaiko no jo* (yearning for the old days).

Today this way of life is strongly associated to the image of the countryside best captured in Japan by the word *inaka*. After the Second World War, the *inaka* was considered crude and backwards. With time, the *inaka* became an idealized representation of a way of life, a bastion of tradition and a mode of community-based subsistence closer to nature (Kelly 1986). The *inaka* is today an inescapable theme of the rural cuisine of Japan as it is a tremendous symbolic resource that bestows a sense of authenticity and quaintness to any food it touches. In an attempt to revitalize local economies, the Kōchi prefectural government has promoted what they call *inaka no suitsu* (countryside sweets), new products made from local specialties ( Kōchi International Association 2013). Also, the emblematic dish called *inaka zushi* (countryside sushi) inherited its name after winning a food competition (Matsuzaki interview 03/24/15).[48] In Kōchi, Tampopo, a hole in the wall family-owned restaurant, proudly displays a big sign outside its door calling itself *inaka ryōri* (countryside cuisine). The restaurant serves rustic food that emphasizes a local, yet simple, fare catering to locals and adventurous visitors. Popular restaurants in Kōchi also presented themselves as practicing *inaka ryōri*. The food served at the restaurant Nishimura Shoten is a mix of local traditional elements like fried sliced mushrooms (*shitake no tataki*) and contemporary takes on local ingredients. The restaurant sources its produce locally, taking pride in also providing an outlet for farmers to directly sell to consumers (*chokubaijo*). What makes countryside cuisine so unique is not so much the ingredients or the dishes but more the link to the local rural community in which it is embedded. Discourse on *inaka ryōri* is more than a marketing ploy, as considerable effort is put in emulating the *inaka* ethos. Countryside food is not only a constant endeavor of crafting memory out of familiar tastes and past community practices, it is also a means to generate income.

[48] Inaka zushi is sushi made in the mountains of Kōchi using typical vegetable ingredients like Japanese ginger (*myoga*) and elephant ear taro leaf (*ryukyu*) instead of fish.

Figure 22. *Inaka zushi*

## 2. Selling Nostalgia

Food nostalgia draws on memory—real or imagined—and emotions to sell a product to consumers that live in and outside the region. Entrepreneurs and prefectural governments of declining rural regions of Japan will masterfully use compelling nostalgic images as a resource for economic revitalization. For example, home village societies (*furusatokai*) send food "care packages" and newsletters introducing urban members to life in rural villages (Knight 1994a). In exchange, the formal memberships consist of an annual subscription that theoretically contributes to the sustainability of the village economy (Knight 1994a). In Japan, nostalgia for the rural way of life plays on consumer desires so that they contribute to these regions while at the same time helping them come to terms with the economic decline of these peripheral regions. According to anthropologist Bridget Love (2013:115), "nostalgia should be understood as a conceptual framework deployed by officials, academics, and even rural inhabitants to make agreeable sense of the persistent downward spiral of villages and towns against the grain of national growth trends." In a region like Kōchi, which has few opportunities, nostalgia for traditions of the countryside serves the interests of local entrepreneurs tapping into the one resource they can readily use. The quarterly publication

“Tosa Bushi” masterfully draws on rural nostalgia themes, using discourse, photography and drawings, to ultimately sell the region and its food products to the urban masses.[49] The commodification of nostalgia through the use of the imagery of tradition and the past adds value to a product that would be otherwise difficult to sell.

In late capitalist consumerism, the merchandiser supplies the “lubricant of nostalgia” to which the consumer is only required to bring the “faculty of nostalgia” for an imaginary loss in truth never experienced (Appadurai 1996). Fueled by the capitalist machine, nostalgia is neatly packaged in the form of a commodity that triggers sentiments of longing. This economic imperative fosters the creation of a mythical past that only exists in the consumer’s mind. In Kōchi, Umaji village’s Gokkun drink is a prime example of the successful packaging of nostalgia in a consumer product. The drink’s simplicity, containing only *yuzu* juice, honey and mountain water, make it all the more appealing. The old-fashioned glass vial, pop-off top and rustic label with a young boy downing the drink in one gulp provide the consumer with an explicit nostalgic message. Campaign posters for the drink depict idealized mountain sceneries and young boys on vacation in order to elicit the consumer’s recollection of childhood. The posters display the slogans “Bringing the refreshing feeling of the village wind”, “Summer is Gokkun in Umaji village”, “Come back to life” suggesting that the drink represents a place (home village) and a time (summer childhood). Incorporated in these messages is the well-known backstory of the resilience of a struggling mountain community, an enduring theme of overcoming the unfavorable economic odds. Although the popularity of this drink might be the product of a manufactured image, it has a very real impact on the consumers across Japan that purchase it in mail order form. The drink tastes delicious to consumers as it encapsulates the purity of the mountains, the innocence of childhood and the resilience of a rural community.

---

[49] For example, the September 2016 issue that includes a dossier on Japanese seasonings done the Kōchi way combines images of nostalgic dishes with product placement.
(see http://tosabushi.com/archives/001/201610/5dface2dc6a70b5cb72c8107d483088d.pdf)

Figure 23. Gokkun bottle on a summer day

In order for nostalgia to be a resource local entrepreneurs can rely on to create added value and a taste for a food product, formal and informal systems of authentication need to be put in place. Fears of changes brought on by globalization have helped nourish a *terroir* nostalgia in the consumer (Csergo 1995). In the European context, *terroir* and the nostalgia that it elicits have been used as a marketing strategies to promote the legitimacy of food products (Ceisel 2013). It is a cultural capital that can be mobilized by a region as a historical memory of the nation-state (Lindholm 2008:83-86). Although the concept of *terroir* is not readily used in Japan, systems of certification enable Japanese food producers to harness the power of nostalgia. In rural communities across Kōchi, typical dishes, like many other traditions of the past, are slowly eroding under the assault of the industrialization of the local diet and an aging population. The prefectural government in concordance with women's cooperatives and local businesses, have taken active steps in trying to revert this unavoidable process of cultural transformation through a system of regional food certification. This system of approved regional dishes (*kyodō ryōri*) enables the localized monopoly of a specific dish at the expense of other regions that might have practiced similar food traditions in the past. For example, seared skipjack tuna (*katsuo no tataki*) is now considered the specialty of the coastal town of Kure. This tacit monopoly is solidified via tourist food guides, regional food specialties maps

and newspaper articles. The process cementing the legitimacy of certain dish and flavors in particular places can easily become a battleground where political and economic interests are at stake.

## 3. Nostalgia Travel

Gastronomic tourism, especially how it relates to local economies, is an emergent field of inquiry that has garnered much attention (Gheorghe and Bulin 2014; Kivela and Crotts 2005; Henderson 2009; Everett and Aitchison 2008). In the Japanese context, nostalgia for the country's rural heritage is a dominant trope of the Japanese domestic tourism industry (McMorran 2008). By carefully crafting idealized representations of Japan's past, rural regions have managed to market themselves as tourists destinations (Graburn 1995:66). Through the use of commodified nostalgia, these destinations enable the urban travelers to be grounded in an experience of the home village (*furusato*) transforming remote areas into popular travel destinations (Creighton 1997). The region of Kōchi sits geographically and economically at the periphery of Japan and as such has inherited a special place in the Japanese nostalgic imaginary. As with most rural regions, tourism is a major source of economic revitalization attracting over 4 million domestic tourists that spent an average of 26,662 yen (239 USD) in the year 2015 alone (Kōchi prefecture 2015). With close to one billion dollars in revenue pouring into the prefecture, tourism is, like in most rural regions of Japan, a source of profit to be reckoned with. The newly built tourist information center next to the Kōchi station attests to the importance of tourism in peripheral region. The brochures available at the center play on the subtext of nostalgia emphasizing historical heritage, pristine nature and traditional food, characteristics that make the region unique.[50] In short, deep-seated

[50] Kōchi prefecture new travel website also invokes these dominant themes to encourage visitors: http://visitKōchijapan.com.

nostalgia is seen as an asset that attracts domestic travelers to experience the roots of Japanese culture.

Kure is a bucolic fishing town that sits on the south west coast of Kōchi. A local train that comes every two hours services the remote community. Narrow streets with small wooden houses lead to the harbor where elderly residents sit on the edge of the moss covers sea wall like cats taking up the sun. Past the harbor is the *Taishō Ichiba* (Taisho period market) the main tourist attraction in town. A large sign that reads "Kure Taisho Ichiba" surmounted by a giant bonito tuna with a rising sun background greets visitors upon entering the market. Rows of *tairyōbata* (flags that bless ships for large catches) and *ukidama* (old glass fishing buoys) hang from the ceiling, an inescapable reminder that this is a fisherman's market. It is said that fishermen's wives run the market while their husbands are at sea for days or weeks at the time. Shop workers, mostly elderly women, are hawking their wares grabbing passing tourists to recommend the catch of the day. On the left side of the arcade, small stalls display freshly caught *hatsugatsuo* (first bonito of the season), *mejika* (local name for a type of frigate tuna) and countless other seasonal local fish. Customers can select their fish and have them sliced *sashimi* style right on the spot. On the right side, tiny picturesque "tea houses" beckon hungry travelers offering them places to sit and enjoy their food with a bowl of rice and a cup of tea. A few minutes later, the sashimi sliced fish arrives on a bed of white radish, topped with green onion and served on a *sawachi* plate. There are many ways to eat the raw fish; dipped in salt with a slice of raw garlic, or marinated a few minutes in soy sauce over rice with hot tea poured over it. As ordering and eating etiquette does not come naturally to tourists, they are given instructions by shopkeepers, and they discretely observe and emulate more experienced customers. On the way out of the market, tourists can purchase traditional specialties from artisan shops like *tokoroten* (agar noodle) and *kureten* (deep fried fish cakes) for a take-out taste of the region.

Figure 24. *Taishō Ichiba* market sashimi

In the small fishing village of Kure, the *Taishō Ichiba* fish market takes tourists on a trip back in time. Like other food markets in the prefecture, the *Taishō Ichiba* is a symbolic preservation of the slowly eroding past.[51] The explicit reference to the *Taishō* period (1912 to 1926) is not fortuitous. This period of Japanese history is remembered with great fondness, an idealized period where democracy and culture flourished, contrasting with the preceding and following periods of political upheaval. Albeit some of the nostalgic images present in the market are manufactured for the benefit of the tourists, Yoshinori Nishimura, a local resident turned restaurant owner in Kōchi city, regularly visits the market to stay in touch with the community where he grew up. On our visit of the market, Nishimura was not so much concerned about the authenticity of the market or if the nostalgic feelings it elicited were sincere. For him, the market was as real as it gets, instead focusing on giving insider tips like where to order (the stalls where the fisherman boss works) and how to order (freshly seared *yakitate katsuo tataki*). Representations of the past are so deeply connected to how we construct memories that for people like Nishimura our visit of the market place was, in effect, a way of remembering.

---

[51] The Nichiyoichi (Sunday Market) and the Hirome market (See Chapter 4) both employ nostalgia to attract tourists.

Rural food markets like the *Taishō Ichiba* are perceptible incarnations of how nostalgia pervades the tourism industry. These markets will focus on creating an atmosphere of authenticity articulated through an experience (visiting the market) and a product (local food). Food nostalgia experienced in these markets is in fact a quest for one's culinary past, one rooted in flavor of childhood and a unifying common heritage (Bessière 1998). In this manner, food markets appeal to individual memories (e.g. grandmother's Sunday market rituals) and the collective imagination (e.g. agrarian lifestyle). Tsukiji market in Tokyo, one of the largest fish markets in the world, is a space where global business takes place. Still, the fish market is redolent of the early urbanite landscape triggering pangs of nostalgia to the Japanese visitors (Bestor 2004:24).

When examining food, travel and nostalgia, one can hardly overstate the importance of local specialties (*meibutsu*). These local specialties are, for the most part, foods that are produced with knowledge and skills unique to the region. They are purchased by tourists so that they can be brought back as symbolic token of gratitude to coworkers, friends and family (Ikkai 1988). The items are sold as souvenirs (*omiyage*) in tourist shops, creating a revenue stream that encourages the development of merchandise that appeals to outsiders (Freedman 2015). As these souvenirs are meant to be gifts, the taste of the product is intimately tied to a different place and a time past. In Kōchi for example, the image of Sakamoto Ryōma, a famous samurai from Kōchi, is displayed on souvenirs to add value to them. Food specialties capture subtle undertones of nostalgia that appeal to taste and memory. The well-known biscuit (*mire bisuketto*), a sweet and savory fried biscuit, is sold in every tourist shop in Kōchi. The biscuit manufactured is presented as a legacy of the Taisho period that endures in modern times (Nomura Company 2010). According to the biscuit producers: "If you hand out *mire* biscuit to a foreigner, that person might not be pleased. This is because Japanese people ate these treats as children. Even without recollection, the tongue still remembers. *Mire* biscuit gives you this kind of peace of mind" (Nomura Company 2010). I was recommended to purchase them as souvenir not because they are special but because they are famous and a taste of childhood (Keiko Kawamura personal communication 06/07/15). Thus, food products are mostly famous because they are anchored in collective memory.

# III. Fear of Loss

## 1. The Ancestral Village

Mitani hamlet is a group of seven farmhouses located high up in the mountain of Kōchi near the border of Ehime prefecture. Since the train stops in the valley at the Otoyo station, the only way to get up to the hamlet is to take a windy road large enough for one car to travel at a time. The slow ascension is fearsome for anyone not used to taking the precarious road but the dizzying scenery is worth the risk. Green, lush, forested mountains roll over in the distance. At the bottom of the valley a sapphire blue river snakes its way through the green giants. Here and there, rooftops and terraced slopes dot the otherwise forested landscape. As the road twist and turns, dried rice paddies, orchard overtaken by vegetation, and dilapidated wooden structures stand as a visible testament to what was. Mitani hamlet is hidden in the dense greenery of the mountain, with a small crystal clear waterfall is bordered by a concrete embankment and rows of planted flowers serves as a reassuring sign that people live here. The hamlet is composed of elongated farmhouses that sit on the steep slopes of the mountain. The small village is still, like time has stopped. Each house is equipped with an outdoor stove (*kamado*) and an outdoor bath (*ofuro*) that have hardly seen any use recently. Out back, a green hose is connected to the nearby stream feeding a basin used to wash vegetables. Open screen doors let the summer breeze in inviting glimpses inside of the rows of straw mats (*tatami*). Visitors seldom come to these parts and, yet, the feeling emanating from Mitani is one that you have finally arrived home.

Mitani hamlet is but an example out of many vanishing mountain communities across Kōchi and rural Japan. Japan's national demographic crisis and decades-old economic slump are almost palpable in rural communities. Isolated rural villages have been hampered by a dwindling economy with few jobs, an aging population and a rural exodus that leaves some small villages entirely abandoned. The population of Japan's rural regions is shrinking at a

much faster pace than more urbanized parts of the country (Matanle and Rausch 2011). The region of Kōchi is particularly touched by these changing demographics, losing close to 10% of its population in the last 10 years (Kōchi Prefecture General Statistic Section 2017). Furthermore, government projections through 2030 show the population dropping by 28.2 % (Matanle and Rausch 2011:124). As the population of rural regions decreases in size, the ancestral village is under threat of disappearing. In fact, rural villages are literally disappearing off the map, being replaced by administrative units that regroup under-populated villages (Knight 1994b). Rural regions, widely considered the guardians of Japanese traditions, are seen as slowly dying as a result of their dwindling demographics. The demise of the rural village is sometimes said to mean that a whole way of life and the essence of Japanese culture would disappear with it. This now permanent state of fear surrounding the disappearance of the ancestral village is anchored in Japan's collective consciousness.

Rural villages like Mitani occupy a significant place in the Japanese imaginary. The *furusato* or ancestral village carries with it the essence of Japanese traditions (Robertson 1988). Far from being a tangible place, this village is a space that exists in the hearts and minds of Japanese people, as even long time city dwellers experience a lingering feeling of loss when one mentions it. The *furusato* is ever present in traditional country songs called *enka* (Yano 2003) and the tourist industry (Creighton 1997). The "boom" of all things connected to the *furusato* projects the image of the home village as the birthplace of the Japanese nation itself (Kelly 1986). The making of the ancestral village (*furusato-zukuri*) is a political and cultural process by which symbols, customs and beliefs are reproduced (Robertson 1988). Although the *furusato* exists in this rarified state, its image has very real impact on the experience of taste. Products and dishes associated with the *furusato* are deemed to possess a distinctive flavor that qualifies as rustic, pristine and unpretentious. Every year in Kōchi city, the home village festival (*furusato matsuri*) is the chance for producers across the prefecture to sell their specialized food products. Visitors to the festival can sample and buy products like mandarin (*mikan*) from the Yamakita village or rice brands (*daiyamikome*) from the Shimanto area. The festival provides the chance for city dwellers to experience a taste of a remote village and to participate in a communal recollection of the past. These flavors, far from only being a

marketing ploy, are the product of unique contexts, a sort of collection of memories from remote locations.

In the context of the slow attrition of the rural areas, seasonal, and sometime permanent return to the home village becomes a lifeline for villages with dwindling population. The *furusato* "boom" discussed above is in part built on the idea that urban dwellers should maintain a direct link with their ancestral land in the form of the annual pilgrimage home (*kikyō*) (Cooper, Masakatsu, and Eades 2013). This annual visit most often takes place during the *obon* celebration but lasts only a few days.[52] Local governments across Japan have developed a number of more permanent resettlement schemes for rural areas. These rural government have targeted return immigrants (*yutansha* or U-turners) and new settlers (I-turners) interested in organic farming and an alternative lifestyle (Knight 2003). Repopulation is an integral objective of the *Kōchikei* campaign that promotes the ideas of immigrants becoming part of large extended family[53] (Kōchi Prefecture Website 2017). Hayato Ikeda, author of the blog "Are you still exhausted in Tokyo?" encourages city dwellers to change their life around by moving like him to Kōchi.[54] "Slow Life," a lifestyle derived as a reaction to urban life style and inspired by the slow food movement, is part of the local government discourse invoked to attract people to the prefecture (Okabayashi interview 06/10/15). The information magazine Tosa Wave (2013) promotes this alternate life style through a series of interviews of people, some of them from outside Japan, that have successfully transitioned to life in Kōchi. The interviews provide the reader with a transformative narrative towards a lifestyle that is timelessness, pristine and simpler. Still, the immigration of young families to Kōchi is not enough to reverse the current demographic trend that menaces the integrity of the ancestral village.

---

[52] *Obon* is a Japanese Buddhist custom to honor the spirits of the ancestor. It has evolved into a family reunion where people visit their ancestors' graves.

[53] *Kōchikei* (Kōchi family) is the main theme of the prefectural revitalization program, which aims at attracting people to move to the prefecture. For more on the subject see chapter 4.

[54] The website www.ikedahayato.com has since changed its focus from promoting life in Kōchi to promoting cryptocurrency which could be a sign that money is drying up in Kōchi revitalization.

## 2. Memory Gatekeepers

Senior women in Kōchi play a central role in shaping the cuisine of the region for a number of reasons. First, one out of five inhabitants of the prefecture is a women over the age of 65 (Kōchi Prefecture General Statistic Section 2017). Second, the Tosa Traditional Cooks, a group primarily composed of senior women, is the main institution responsible for the preservation of Kōchi traditional cuisine. Third, many senior women in Kōchi are active entrepreneurs that use cuisine as an economic resource. Women collectives that make, promote and sell their specialties food products operate many small-time craft regional food businesses in Kōchi. For example, Kiyoko Sasakura is part of Manten, a women's collective that travels from the Western part of the prefecture to sell handmade tempura in Kōchi city.[55] Kōchi women reputed to be strong-willed (*hachikin*) actively participate in a narrative of self-reliance promulgated in rural regions (Love 2013). News segments about old women taking on the dual responsibility of preserving the cultural heritage while revitalizing the region are regularly featured in the nightly news (Japan Broadcast Association 2017). As such, elderly women played an essential role in my research, granting me with privileged access and insights. The difference of age, occupation, gender and nationality presented the advantages and drawbacks of being an outsider. As a foreign researcher, I also recognized that my presence was instrumentalized accordingly as my work was seen as increasing the legitimacy of groups I became associated with.

Although men play a large role in agriculture, fishing, restaurants and teaching, older women in Kōchi are perceived as the gatekeepers of regional food tradition. These women hold a monopoly over the imaginary of traditional food (e.g. grandmother's cooking) and the practical aspects of cooking practices (i.e. few people know how to make these dishes). This

[55] *Tempura* in Kōchi dialect does not indicate a style of deep fried food like elsewhere in Japan but instead deep-fried fish cakes.

of course is not unique to Japan, as women from very different cultural backgrounds are seen as the guardians of traditions (Seremetakis 1996; Clair et al. 2004). For instance, in places like Florence Italy, women see cooking as an essential part of their female identity that is slowly eroding under the forces of social change (Counihan 2004:175). In the region of Kōchi, older women are the gatekeepers as well as the guardians of this ancestral knowledge. In a workshop organized at RKC, women from the Tosa Traditional Cooks presented how to cook steamed red snapper (*mushidai*) and red bean stuffed rice cakes (*atarashiya*). Instructors and participants were overwhelmingly older women as they are the only inhabitants interested in and responsible for preserving tastes of the past. Uncommon ingredients, tastes that are hard to relate to and techniques that are difficult to master make the women leading these workshops the last practitioners of dishes that have almost disappeared. Although cultural objects like cuisine are bound to change over time, it is hard not to feel pangs of nostalgia for flavors that defined entire generations. These women are in effect the protectors of tastes of the past and the last chance for these dishes to be transmitted and are, in short, the guardians of regional memory.

Figure 25. *Mushidai* steam snapper

As the guardians of Kōchi regional cuisine, women are responsible for the conservation of this regional heritage. Broadly speaking, regional cuisine in Japan inscribes itself as part of the traditional craft culture. Craftsmanship in Japan is deeply imbued with nostalgia and is an essential element in the construction of the Japanese national identity (Creighton 2001). Craftsmanship, although also present in large cities, is strongly associated with the countryside, which is the carrier of the past in the Japanese imaginary. Craftwork, in particular work associated with gendered occupation, can be reclaimed by women in the construction of their identity (Creighton 2001). The celebration of craft culture in popular Japanese media is more than an admiration for the work of an artisan, it is a deep-seated respect for people that preserve the ways of the past. In a sense, conservation of traditional cuisine is as much about saving a disappearing taste as it is about preservation of the past. For example, in Kōchi, old women carry the honor and burden to preserve the ways of the past. In the mountain of Kōchi, red turnip (*aka kabu*) is still grown using slash-and-burn agriculture. Promotional events depict elderly women living in remote villages as the courageous agents behind the survival of this ancestral breed of turnip. Another illustration of organizations composed of older women promoting the conservation of traditional cuisine is the Tosa traditional food research group (*Tosa dentōshoku kenkyūkai*). Every few months, the group meets at RKC to coordinate their activities. The group plays a crucial role in shaping regional taste, publishing books (Tosa Traditional Cuisine Research Group 2007), organizing conferences and workshops. The group forms a collective, which constitutes a repository of food knowledge that has a considerable impact on the expression of regional cuisine.

Two members of the Tosa traditional food research group have had a lasting impact on my research. First, Hideko Mitani dubbed informally my “Kōchi mother” is the principal of RKC. Her responsibility is not only to shape countless generations of Kōchi cooks, but also to be the spokesperson for regional food in and outside the prefecture. She carries much weight in the politics of Kōchi cuisine with networks among decision makers in high and low places. Mitani was instrumental in giving me almost unlimited access to all things related to Kōchi cuisine. Second, Atsuko Matsuzaki dubbed informally my “Kōchi grandmother” is an Emeritus professor of nutrition and food culture at Kōchi prefecture public university. She is the reference when it comes to knowledge of food culture as she is featured on countless news

segment, magazine and newspaper articles (Japan Broadcast Association 2017; RKC Broadcast 2017; Kōchi Newspaper 2004). Matsuzaki was also the person I turned to when I needed in-depth information about Kōchi regional cuisine. Women like Mitani and Matsuzaki are more than influential tastemakers, they give substance to the region's cultural memory.[56] According to Jan Assman (1995:132), "the concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image." In Kōchi, the media, the government and entrepreneurs trust the expertise of Mitani and Matsuzaki because they contribute to sustaining the region's self-image that is on the cusp of being forgotten. As the cultural symbols through which a group represents the past is marked by issues of power on the lines of gender (Hirsch and Smith 2002), it is remarkable that in the case of Kōchi a central piece of its cultural memory, regional cuisine, is held by older women.

## 3. Loss of Identity

There is a deep-seated fear that the essence of Japan, its culture and its heritage, is slowly eroding under the assault of modernity. It is true that historically Japan has gone through tremendous sudden social and cultural transformations over the course of short periods. However as Fred Davis (1979:107–108) contends, "In the 'collective search for identity' which is the hallmark of this postindustrial epoch—a search that in its constant soul-churning extrudes a thousand different fashions, ecstasies, salvations, and utopia—nostalgia looks backward rather than forward, for the familiar rather than the novel, for certainty rather than discovery." This constant soul-churning is exacerbated by the increased urbanization and westernized lifestyle which explains at least in part Japan's resistance to internationalization (Creighton 1997). In "Discourse of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan," Marilyn Ivy (1995) argues that many in Japan are occupied by this deep anxiety about the loss of traditions of the past. Japanese cultural traditions are assumed to be in continuous need to be protected

[56] Both women garner tremendous respect and are addressed by the title of *sensei* (master).

because they are part of Japanese identity. In this context, nostalgia for flavors of the past becomes a quest for representation of what constitutes the essence of Japaneseness. This search for self-identification is apparent in Kōchi's obsession over saving traditional tastes. The impending loss of what makes Kōchi cuisine so special fuels anxiety that is perceptible in everyday life in the region. Newspapers and television feature daily stories about vanishing tastes that illustrate concerns Kōchi inhabitants have for the past. Moreover, the prefectural government has put programs in place to preserve food traditions suggesting that such heritage could constitute the source of economic revitalization (Kōchi Prefecture Agriculture Promotion 2017).

> Mais, quand d'un passé ancien rien ne subsiste, après la mort des êtres, après la destruction des choses, seules, plus frêles mais plus vivaces, plus immatérielles, plus persistantes, plus fidèles, l'odeur et la saveur restent encore longtemps, comme des âmes, à se rappeler, à attendre, à espérer, sur la ruine de tout le reste, à porter sans fléchir, sur leur gouttelette presque impalpable, l'édifice immense du souvenir.[57] (Proust 1919:chap. 1)

In the novel "A la recherche du temps perdu," Marcel Proust (1919) explores the role that taste plays in facilitating long lost recollections of childhood. For him, taste is the vessel of memory that, when all is gone, remains the last trace of what was. Taste of the past like green tea eaten with Japanese sweet (*wagashi*), a parallel to Proust's tea and madeleine, remains a popular traditional dish to display for young chefs at the RKC graduation fare (see picture bellow). Although these tastes remain a constant legacy that lives in individual and collective memory, few traditional flavors make the cut, as they are often hard to relate for those not accustomed to them. Some flavors have lost favor because they are so unconventional that they require a

[57] In my opinion, the English translation has lesser resonance in terms of its phenomenological content: "But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection."

particular social context for the consumer to get accustomed to them. In the mountains of Kōchi, *mushiyōkan*, steamed sweet potatoes and bean cake, is a dish that is slowly going out of favor. Relatively palatable to the younger generations, it is difficult to incorporate in most meals, as it does not fit the structure of the modern meal being neither a side dish nor a desert. In this case, loss of popularity engenders a rapid decline in the number of people willing to take the time to prepare these time-consuming dishes. As the techniques of preparation are forgotten so is the taste for such unusual dishes. Food preservation is so central to Kōchi inhabitants because when the past has departed, the enduring memory of these tastes remains a poignant reminder of the past.

Figure 26. *Wagashi* student display at RKC

Tastes of the past are tied to an ancestral way of life where fishing and farming was a central activity that defined people's lives (Kōchi Newspaper 2004). As these practices fade into obscurity, Kōchi inhabitants risk losing a way of life that defines their rural identity. The local newspaper features stories of vanishing eating and cooking practices. The stories are laced with tragic undertones that remind the reader that these accounts are in fact about disappearing lifestyles. In this manner, food nostalgia gives meaning to tastes bringing back recollection of the region's agrarian past. In Kōchi, country cuisine (*inaka ryōri*) and farmer's restaurants

(*nōka resutoran*) attract wide numbers of consumers in search of the rural experience. People enjoy this food because it is more than a taste of times past. Its taste incorporates a way of life that is remembered with clouded nostalgia by some and awaiting rediscovery by many. The popularity in Kōchi of country sushi (*inaka sushi*) made from mountain vegetables instead of raw fish exemplifies nostalgia that residents feel for life in the mountain village. This type of sushi tastes delicious because it reminds the consumer of days long gone when fresh fish was not available in the mountain and rice was a treat, as it did not grow readily in the mountains. Finally, *doburoku*, a rustic fermented rice drink once brewed illegally, symbolizes the rural lifestyle of Kōchi. The uncommon notes of mold and sourness present in every sip of the drink bring back memories, real and imagined, of life in the mountain village.

Traditional dishes are part of the collective memory which binds the people of Kōchi to a shared image of their past. In this scheme, regional food is portrayed as a tangible representation of the cultural heritage of Kōchi that must be salvaged and revived if it is to survive in the present. The use of heirloom varieties, even if motivated by commercial interests, taps into a mission to maintain an ancestral local heritage (De St. Maurice 2015). The annual Tosa traditional cook meeting that takes place in Kōchi city is a chance for traditional cooks from remote locations across the prefecture to share their regional specialties. The academically inclined, yet also festive event, is a chance for these groups to share their interpretations of dishes like plum pickled tofu (*tofu no umesuzuke*) bringing back to life memories of the past. As a result of the region's demographic and economic crisis, significant efforts are put in place to transmit an appreciation of these endangered flavors. School programs, cooking workshops and other attempts to reconstruct traditional food help to a certain extent to stem the tide only for an instant. As remembered recipes ineluctably fade into obscurity, the goal of heritage revival transforms itself from saving the past to salvaging memories of the past. The preservation and revival of these disappearing flavors through local products and traditional cuisine are efforts to reconnect with memories of a particular time and place from a bygone era. The characteristic taste of nostalgia is epitomized by this desire to reconnect with these lost memories.

Figure 27. Tofu *umesu zuke*

## Conclusion

Memories of taste and flavors are deeply sensorial, embodied and emotional experiences. A phenomenological approach also offers promising insight to focus on structures of experience that can, with careful introspective analysis, lead to a more thorough understanding of how other people experience taste. Past research suggests that complex mechanisms bind together taste and memory. When we eat, we recall a host of experiences that takes us, for a few fleeting moments, to a different time and a different place. Moreover, collective memory—how we remember as a group—is so intertwined with these personal experiences that it becomes hard to distinguish one from the other. The cuisine of Kōchi gives us a window on the region's historical consciousness, or how residents look at the past through the lens of seasonality or celebratory meals. Collective forms of food recollection are part of a larger imaginary that might have never been experienced. Still, they trigger pangs of sadness for a time when things were better. Food nostalgia is a powerful instrument that can service the economic revitalization of a disenfranchised rural region. Regional actors with few resources available to them will heavily draw on such emotional content to market food to consumers and attract tourists to the region. Urban consumers that often see themselves as uprooted

communities, find solace in knowing the flavor of childhood and the rural village are still there beckoning them.

In Japan, there is a strong-seated nostalgia for traditions of the past nourished by the changes brought about by the conditions of modernity and by countless reports in newspapers or on TV. This collective distress draws on fears that Japan is losing its identity. In the region of Kōchi, food is a salient element in this construction of selfhood. In this same region, the passage of time coupled with aging population and rural exodus has exacerbated this sentiment of impeding loss. Flavorful memories symbolize a great deal to Kōchi residents as they are fully aware that rural regions like theirs are defined in relation to a way of life that is agrarian and close to the land. Japan as a whole considers rural region as repository of regional taste, a place where hungry tourists can taste the past that is in perdition. The sources of vanishing traditions are more often than not rural villages that exist as a physical space as well as an imagined symbolic location. The home village or *furusato* occupies a privilege site in the Japanese imaginary acting as a conduit through which Japan is collectively remembered. In rural locations across Kōchi, old women play the role of gatekeepers transmitting and protecting these bits of culinary memory. Losing these flavors becomes like losing parts of the regional memory. In a region where the population is rapidly aging, individual and collective loss of memory is a real concern. When restaurants close, cherished recipes are gone and all else fades into obscurity, memory becomes the last remaining bastion for flavors that defined people's lives.

# Second Part. Flavors of Kōchi: Constructing Common Taste Preferences

## Chapter 3. Between Myth and History: The Role of Narratives in the Construction of Regional Taste

As I entered the hotel ballroom, I am ushered to the table closest to the speaker's podium. Older women wearing colorful aprons are busily arranging food on tables along the walls of the room. Professor Atsuko Matsuzaki, the most preeminent expert of Kōchi regional cuisine, has invited me to attend this year's "Tosa traditional cuisine annual meeting." The symposium and dinner event features 31 traditional cuisine groups from across the prefecture with each group contributing a unique local dish. One of the apron-wearing ladies approached my table with a smile. She was excited to learn my affiliation to Matsuzaki as the professor had done so much for the cuisine of the region.

"Matsuzaki sensei sure gave a great conference last year. Did you know that there's a link between the bullet train and the cuisine of Kōchi," said the apron lady making amiable conversation.

"She told us at last year's meeting. City culture takes a long time to reach Kōchi because we have no bullet train station. Can you believe that? So many people travel on the bullet train. They bring with them many things. That's why trends travel so much faster to cities that have bullet trains. But we are lucky to not have a bullet train station because it makes our food unique," she added.

The apron-wearing lady left the table to greet another guest. As I sat at the table pondering on the plausibility of what I had just heard, I wondered why she had chosen to tell me this story.

Food is intrinsically connected to the stories we hear, we imagine and we tell. These stories are incarnations of discourses that articulate, with different levels of authority, widely held beliefs. These transmitted tales take the form of myths of origin, historical accounts and life

stories. Regional cuisine lives through these narratives that are at times mundane at other times moving. Scholarly attention has been dedicated to examining how stories about food help build common national and regional narratives (Ceccarelli, Magagnoli, and Grandi 2013). I argue that these stories do more than affect discourse as they help symbolically enhance the value of the food by giving it context. These timeless testimonies are an essential piece in understanding taste as they convey culturally coded messages that carry meaning. In this chapter, I will examine how narrative discourses collectively shape the expression of taste in the region of Kōchi Japan. Virtually every famous dish in Kōchi has a story attached to it. Stories surrounding regional cuisine provide more than interesting anecdotes. They give meaning and symbolic value to local food culture helping to explain the rise of emblematic dishes and the affinity for these dishes. In the region of Kōchi, good stories can be harnessed for economic purpose by activating the imagination of the consumers. Moreover, these stories help understand, through the use of spatial and temporal storylines, the power of narratives in the social construction of taste.

# I. Tasty Narratives

## 1. Constructing Typicality

Geographical typicality—meaning that food from a particular place has distinct qualities—is a topic of growing interest for food scholars (Ceccarelli, Magagnoli, and Grandi 2013). Typicality is, more often than not, constructed through the association of place with taste (Ceccarelli, Grandi, and Magagnoli 2010; Trubek 2008). How can typical foods take on the taste of a region like Kōchi? Storytelling is a device that helps anchor particular taste in a region. Storytelling helps solidify the uniqueness of a taste that otherwise might be duplicated (Ceccarelli, Magagnoli, and Grandi 2013). In the construction of typicality, narratives can take many forms like recorded history, hearsay and personal experience in order to become a way to gage authenticity. However, these stories only start to matter when consumers symbolically incorporate the meaning inscribed within them. For example, Japanese cuisine is often defined by its respect for nature (UNESCO 2013). Therefore by consuming Japanese cuisine, one

incorporates tales of harmony with nature and respect for the natural state of products. In short, by eating this food, consumers appropriate these stories and make them part of who they are. This process, sometimes referred to as narrative induction, enable people to take certain stories and make them their own (Linde 2000). In short, people that eat the food of Kōchi incorporate through tasteful tales part of the region.

Why is a good story important to understanding the adoption and the celebration of a typical food? In "Camembert: A national Myth," Boisard (2003) intertwines politics and economics to explain the rise of the emblematic cheese. He dispels the various myths surrounding the origins of the success of Camembert but fails to recognize how important these stories were, and still are, in establishing it as the symbol of a region and a nation. The myth of Camembert is not only created to provide an alternative to a dry and complex historical analysis, it explains the rise of this foodstuff as a national symbol and contributes to why so many people love it. For tourism researchers, consuming regional cuisine and products is also consuming stories about place and time (De la Barre and Brouder 2013). Tourists are not the only ones that experience food trough narratives, as inhabitants of a food-producing region are not immune to the enticing power of a good story. The consumption and symbolic attribute of a food that are transmitted through stories is all the more palpable in the Japanese context (Creighton 1997; Peters 2012; Assmann 2010). In Japan for example, news stories about a regional specialty create a sense of authenticity that enhances the product's value on the market (Youn and Kim 2017). But these stories are not only marketing tools, they are also an integral part of the tasting experience.

Stories striving to become national or regional representations are in a constant struggle for symbolic domination. In the conflict of representations, groups with various levels of authority are pitted together in order to reap political or economic benefits (Bourdieu 1980). Following this logic, food stories, as symbolic representations, are vying for the right to become the most widely accepted narrative. Dominant narratives surrounding food not only participate in constructing people's perspective of the region, they are also competing perspectives of the past. Sutton's work on how food helps build visions of the past is perhaps one of the most important studies on the subject (Sutton 2001). He argues that stories and memories that

derive from these stories enable the inhabitants of the Greek Kalymnos Island to craft a "historical consciousness." In effect, the Kalymnians vision of the past is shaped by memories surrounding memorable meal and acts of food generosity. Although Sutton is most interested in how collective memory is built around the consumption, exchange and circulation of regional food, his study recognized the central role that stories occupy in transmitting and reviving the inhabitants' way of looking at the past. Ultimately, perspectives on place and time that live through these stories play a major role in shaping palates of the region.

## 2. Historic Narratives

As previously discussed, food recollections constitute a form of historical consciousness (Sutton 2001:2) that sometimes clashes with popular belief. While perusing through the shelves of the Kōchi prefectural library, I stumbled upon a four volumed history of the prefecture (*Kōchi kenshi*). The volumes are organized by period and by theme with entire sections dedicated to the history of Kōchi food culture. As I slowly read the section, a very different picture of Kōchi tradition unfolded in front of me. The section focuses on the mountainous region of Kōchi where food was quite different from what people imagine it to be. Mountain village subsisted on a diet that relied little on rice but instead on Japanese millet (*hie*) gruel more suited to the cold mountain climate. Peasants used to eat frequently with four separate small meals a day with different names across the region. Historic narratives like these are different from stories in that they constitute the dominant viewpoint on the past. These historical "facts" often intersect with stories to give them legitimacy. In this sense, historical discourse shapes people's perception of taste in a much more radical way than other stories.

Historical narratives are often tied to physical objects. In Kōchi, heirloom vegetables occupy a significant place in representing a taste of history. At the local gathering called "Let's enjoy regional vegetable meeting" (*kyodō yasai tanoshimu kai*), an entire meal was designed using heirloom breeds of local variety of vegetables. The importance of preserving historical taste was at the center of the event. The taste of forgotten vegetables like the Hirooka radish

(*hirooka kabu*) was in part celebrated because it was unique, it represented past traditions and it embodied the resilience of mountain elderly farmers. Promotional events like these attract master storytellers called vegetable sommeliers (*yasai somurie*). These so-called sommeliers are experts of taste, growing methods and history of rare vegetables. Their role is to educate and ultimately sell these rarities to famous restaurants and expensive department stores. The title requires a special course that culminates in a diploma. The idea is that special growing methods and historical knowledge will enable the sommelier to identify subtle differences in vegetable taste. These vegetable experts have striking similarities with wine sommeliers that also construct taste profiles through their knowledge of wine history.

Figure 28. Hirooka radish

As explained in previous chapters, the use of the term Tosa provide a sense of authenticity to stories about food in Kōchi. Far from being an economic powerhouse, the region is recognized for its rich past. This historical baggage is essential when one is to refer to the regional cuisine, *Tosa ryōri*. The term *Tosa ryōri* is ubiquitous in the region often being used to promote a traditional image of a product. Restaurants will display signs with *Tosa ryōri* written on them while souvenir shops will sell products that include Tosa in their name. The name Tosa helps conjure images of the past rooted in history, adding value, and taste, to the consumer good. Although no labeling agency is in control, there is a tacit agreement that Tosa products must

be specific to the geography and the history of the region. Through this association, Tosa-labeled foods become symbols of history and tradition that signify a unique regional culture and a characteristic taste. Kōchi is not the only prefecture to have tapped into its history to promote the sale of a local product. Following this logic, prefectures like Kagoshima labels its specialties as Satsuma, Kagawa uses the old Sanuki domain name and Ishikawa practices cuisine of the Kaga domain. Legitimacy and historicity is given to tales that include allusion to these feudal domains. For rural regions like Kōchi, historic relevance can be as much a source of regional pride as an economic opportunity.

## 3. Commodified Narratives

We began to discuss how narratives serve a purpose that is sometimes symbolic, as with meaning and beliefs, and sometimes pragmatic, as to generate income. As presented in previous chapters, the region of Kōchi is in economic decline with few opportunities. Kōchi residents have become experts in creating opportunities by invoking the past to sell their food. Stories that make reference to the events taking place in the ancient or not so distant past are used as so many bite-sized marketing devices. For example, the artisan that makes egg-shaped baked dough (*tamagoyaki*) told us the story about how he was the first to make this treat. Stories need not be elaborate as long as they transmit a message, and of course, sell a product. It appears that every food entrepreneur in the region must have a story, no matter how simple, if they are to attract a sufficient customer base. Unique stories enable a product to differentiate itself from the rest of the oversaturated market. Customers might not be aware of this but when they experience a taste that cannot be replicated, they in part taste the narrative of who made the food. Stories that connect dishes to historical or fictional events have significant impact on the consumers desire (Youn and Kim 2017). Thus, food narratives in the region are often elaborate with the intent of generating profit.

The best stories are the ones that include a heroic personage that everyone knows. Sakamoto Ryōma, or Ryōma, as Kōchi people call him, is perhaps the most emblematic historical figure from Kōchi. Stories about Ryōma enable the reconciliation of conflicting ideals like

democracy and modernity with reverence for the emperor and tradition. For Kōchi residents, Ryōma becomes a bridge between past and present, and Kōchi and the world. Ryōma is the source of many festivals in the region of Kōchi. It is the chance for local entrepreneurs to sell a taste, literally and figuratively speaking, of the iconic man that became a legend. The merchandising of his image has also been used to attract tourists. For example, his life story is featured in a dancing musical sponsored by the Kōchi tourism department. Souvenir shops are full of Ryōma memorabilia, tours of Kōchi always include visit of sites frequented by Ryōma and in the last few years the Japanese National Broadcast featured a series about his life. In Kōchi, Ryōma is king as residents often see themselves embodying the ideals that the legend represents. Ryōma becomes more than a person, it is the distilled essence of Kōchi that can be used, and sometimes abused, in order to sell a product. In a place like Kōchi where everyone sees himself or herself as a representation of the man, Ryōma becomes a resource that entrepreneurs can tap into to add value and taste to their product.

Figure 29. Ryōma and his wife Oryō greet you upon arrival at Kōchi station

Nature, history and food culture are among the most precious resources of the prefecture of Kōchi.[58] Both nature and history intersect in the food of the region. Historical representation, foremost figures like Ryōma, are actively sought out in order to sell a product. Emblematic dishes and souvenirs use his representation to add extra flavor to the dish. In effect, representations of past become an extra touch that not only adds value to dish but also taste. It seems food is all the more delicious if we link it to images of the past. Tourists in search of *omiyage*, souvenir gifts brought back from trips and given to people, will not fail to bring back "storyfied" consumables to their entourage. For people outside the prefecture Ryōma is synonymous with Kōchi and his representation is used with abandon in themed restaurants. These types of representations are important as they enable the diner to experience a different place and time with every bite.

## II. The Art of Storytelling

### 1. Myth of Origin

Once upon a time, there was a bear that was kept captive in a bar in a big city. One night, a customer got very drunk and approached the bear. As a joke he poured a little bit of his alcohol in a bowl and slid it to the bear. The bear sniffed it and then turned away. The other intrigued patrons of the bar began to offer all sorts of alcohol but the bear was having none of it. One late night, a man came stumbling into the bar. One could tell that he had been drinking and his accent betrayed that he was not from the big city. When he heard the story about the bear, he remember he had brought with him a jug of chestnut alcohol from his home village in the region of Kōchi. Unlike other customers at the bar, he uncorked the jug and gave the bear a whiff of the strong alcohol. The bear sniffed it lightly and turned away. As the night went on, the man forgot he had left the jug uncorked next to the bear. The bear sniffed it again and tasted a little bit. Suddenly, the bear took a hold of the jug and started gulping it down. All the

[58] The new prefectural website illustrates well these key resources http://visitKochijapan.com/.

people drinking in the bar were amazed at what just happened. At last, the bear finished drinking and fell asleep. The man from Kōchi came back to his home village with his story to tell. Today, Dabada hiburi is famous throughout Japan for producing some of the finest chestnut alcohol.

Dabada hiburi is named after two words in the hata dialect in western Kōchi. Dabada is a communal gathering place between mountain and village, while hiburi is a night fishing technique where fire is used to corral river fish into large nets. In order for a product like Dabada hiburi to become emblematic of a region, it must possess a myth of origin. This story is essential as it would be inconceivable for a dish to represent the identity and the history of a place if it had suddenly emerged out of nowhere. Myths of origin reflect quality but do not need to be factual:

> A typical food product sends us back to a myth, the myth of its origin, that is a *sine qua non* of quality. Every myth goes back to an origin in a far away time and becomes an idealised story of its origins. Every myth proposes its own special "truth": the idea that a myth could be "false" does not even come to mind. A myth proposes its own symbolic truth that actually gives significance to its whole storytelling and does not in any way require demonstration. In this, lies the true value of a myth. (Franchi 2013:55)

These stories are not only important because they help cement the dish as part of the collective shared local culture, they also clearly affect people's gustatory experience. Understanding the when-where-why gives a new dimension to a product or a dish. When preparation techniques are explained using a historical lens, they gain meaning and create a taste that in principle cannot be replicated. In the region of Kōchi, numerous food stories are associated with the consumption of a particular food. Some are widely known, in some cases outside the prefecture, other only circulate in local communities. The knowledge of such stories has a tangible impact on the experience of taste and ultimately the popularity of the food.

Part of the challenge of making a dish a representation of the region is to craft a myth of origin. In the town of Gomen, a group of entrepreneurs have played an active role in elevating *shamo*

*nabe* to the status of regional food. In its most basic form, *shamo nabe* is a hotpot made from local vegetables and *shamo*, an heirloom breed of poultry that used to be raised in Kōchi for bird fights. The dish is advertised in local newspaper and magazines as being traditional and local. It has gathered considerable visibility using mass media and word to mouth advertisement and is now accepted by most as a local food symbol. The dish is in fact of recent origin as it was created by the *shamo* hotpot research group (*shamo nabe kenkyūkai*) to bolster the local economy and to create a sentiment of pride for local residents. The research group, which is composed of local restaurant owners and poultry breeders, had undoubtedly a vested interest in enshrining the dish. However, the task at hand was far from easy. Tomoyuki Tachibana, president of the research group, explains that the group had to build the industry from the ground up as *shamo* livestock had disappeared from Kōchi. At first few people had a taste for this "new" dish, so the group set out to do research in order to uncover the origins of this culinary practice.

According to Tachibana, the *shamo* breed in fact had a long history in the region of Kōchi. Although animal blood sports are today against the law, *shamo* fighting used to be popular in Kōchi. In this story, the bird who had lost (i.e. dead) would be typically eaten by the hungry gamblers (or more likely people from the *burakumin* lower cast). The shamo hotpot was according to this tale a dish waiting to be rediscovered by Kōchi residents. Furthermore, rumor also has it that our legendary hero Sakamoto Ryōma loved *shamo* hotpot so much that he was making it the night before he was assassinated. According to Tachibana, there is historical evidence linking Ryōma to the dish but he could not provide me with any references. Regardless of its veracity, the association of the famous samurai and the hotpot helps solidify this dish as a tradition of the region. The characteristic flavor of the tough dark meat can hardly be disconnected with myths of the past. When I first tried it shortly before the end of my fieldwork with proud Gomen residents, it was surprisingly tasty. It did not matter anymore, if the dish was genuine or not because its taste had by that time affixed to my own story and the stories that were told to me.

Figure 30. *Shamo nabe* Ryōma promotional poster

The most famous dishes in a region often have more than one origin story. The lore surrounding *sawachi* cuisine, Kōchi's most famous traditional food, is rich in stories peppered with specks of historical facts. In his book, historian Eric Rath (2016:190) suggests that these plates were used during war campaigns and were relatively common across Japan. His analysis of scroll painting of the Yoshiwara Edo geisha district suggests that *sawachi* plates were commonly used items. After the Meiji restoration, the samurai class became obsolete and most wanted to distance themselves from traditions of the past. In Kōchi, indebted samurais sold their treasured heirloom plates to rich merchants. This new bourgeoisie would eventually develop a gaudy and flamboyant type of cuisine that would be served on these plates. Thus was born Kōchi *sawachi* cuisine, an extravagant display of color and wealth. The preparation of *sawachi* cuisine was traditionally a family affair that took several days to prepare. In the past, this type of cuisine would be served during religious celebration drawing relatives from miles around. Stories about the origin of *sawachi* intertwine ideas of tradition, history, community so that it can be readily consumed during celebratory events. As with many Japanese traditions, narratives ascribe a particular symbolism to the object it represents. In the case of *sawachi* cuisine, these stories are crucial in making the food all the more palatable.

Narratives that gravitate around this emblematic dish often take the form of hearsay, piece of trivia randomly doled out in casual conversation. According to Adam Chamness an American bartender expatriate in Kōchi, *sawachi* cuisine was developed by Kōchi women as a means to partake in traditional festivity. In most traditional rural settings in Japan, women were confined to a subaltern position preparing meals but seldom taking part in celebratory festivities. The use of a one-plate meal enabled women to eat and drink with men instead of being confined to the kitchen. This story perfectly fits in the regional narrative of strong Kōchi women who like to drink like men. For instance, the term *hachikin* (eight balls) is often used in the region to refer to women that can drink and are as strong as four men. According to an older man I met in a banquet, *sawachi* plates first came from China during the Muromachi period. *Sawachi* follows a number of precise Chinese rules of esthetic and numeral. For example, one should never include four dishes on a *sawachi* as the number four (*shi*) is a homonym for the word death (*shi*). A *sawachi* needs to include an uneven number of dishes with seven being the ideal number. Such a connection with China is important as it traces the lineage of the dish far back to Japan's cultural progenitor solidifying its historical legitimacy.

## 2. Anchoring Taste

On a hot and sticky summer day, I decided to go driving through the countryside with my friend Yasu. We periodically went on small trips to find the hidden food gems of the region. We finally arrived to a small-secluded coastal village in search of a shop that was part of a dying breed of handmade ice cream shops. The village was located on a large bay surrounded by green mountains. As we drove through the narrow streets of the village, we could not find any indication pointing to the ice cream maker. Were we lost or had it closed down? Eventually, two older women pointed us in the right direction. The ice-cream shop was more like a small garage with a freezer and a metal bucket with salt in it. We called out greetings but no one seemed to be there. A few minutes later, an old man on his moped drove up and asked us if we were here for his ice-cream. The old man explained that he had learned his trade from his father that had learned it from his father. His grandfather had been the first in

the region to study ice-cream making in France during the early Showa period (1926-1989). Today, no one makes this kind of ice cream anymore in France. I asked myself what were the chances of finding a forgotten taste of France in this secluded place. He handed us ice-cream cones refusing to take our money. As I bit in the distinctively airy and crunchy texture of the ice-cream, I wondered if I was indeed tasting a long lost flavor from home.

Stories about famous local dishes help inscribe a characteristic taste into the local culture. Whitebait bowl (*chirimendon*) is celebrated as the local dish in the coastal city of Aki in Eastern Kōchi. The dish is simple yet the different flavors used for the bowl are characteristic of the region. The dish combines locally grown rice, *yuzu* citrus soy sauce (*ponzu*), chopped perilla leaf (*aoba*), Japanese ginger bulb (*myōga*) and most importantly small dried whitebait (*chirimen jako*). Although these small fish were consumed on a smaller scale locally in the past, it is not until the beginning of the 19$^{th}$ century that the pair trawling fishing techniques were imported from the island of Kyushu to allow commercial fishing. Aki city is well known for its whitebait fishing and processing industry which is central to the local economy. As the fish go rapidly bad, they are only consumed raw locally (*dorome*), while the vast majority is sundried and tumble-dried to different level of dryness. The product is sold as a stand-alone product but it is most popular served in local dishes raging from rice bowls to soft serve ice cream topped with dried fish.

What makes the taste of this dish so unique to the city of Aki? According to Yukari Sento, the vice-president of Aki city whitebait bowl group, the particular ecology of the region makes the fish bountiful and most delicious near Aki city. The city's fishing port is located at the estuary of several rivers that find their sources in the mountains of Kōchi. These rivers carry nutritious mineral sediments upon which plankton feed which are the main source of food for the small fish. The estuary provides an ideal environment where the bounty of the mountain, river and sea intersect.[59] Although the bowl is the product of recent marketing promotion, the roots of this dish are much older. Sento explains that people in the region have used whitebait for as

[59] As discussed in the introduction, Kōchi cuisine is said to combine the bounty of the mountain, river and sea.

long as she can remember. The whitebait bowl trend would have evolved out of local home cooking. Ecology and history are both used to construct a narrative that make Aki's whitebait bowl stand out from the competition. The facts create a unique taste that is anchored in a particular time and place.

## 3. Life Stories

For anthropologist Brian Hoey (2008:136), "At its heart, ethnographic writing is a means of expressing a shared interest among cultural anthropologists for telling stories—stories about what it means to be human." This chapter has strived to demonstrate the importance of storytelling for Kōchi residents. In particular, life stories rooted in someone's quotidian remain effective tool to communicate taste in the region of Kōchi. Some of these life stories are grounded in memories of events that occurred at a certain point in someone's life. According to my friend Yasu Hamada, the 2011 Tohoku earthquake was followed by a small tsunami in the region of Kōchi. The tsunami destroyed little of the land infrastructure, yet it shattered much of the fish farms, which are widespread in the Western part of Kōchi. According to this narrative, many fish escaped the netted cages and reentered the local ecosystem. Hamada assured me that after the tsunami you could easily fish enormous quantities of fish in the water surrounding these fish farms. The fish were not only large catch, they also tasted exceptionally good as they had been fed a steady nutritious diet on the fish farm and been exposed to natural food in the wild. Although the popularity of farm-raised fish is increasing, most Japanese people believe that wild caught fish taste significantly better. The various messages contained in these stories opposing wild and man-raised tangibly affect the perceived taste of fish (Takahashi 2014).

Whale meat (*kujira*) stories are firmly positioned in the daily lives of Kōchi residents. Many older informants recall with less than fond memories the days when whale meat was served in school lunches. After the war, Japan could provide little protein to feed hungry school students. So they served low-grade whale meat to children across the nation (Arch 2016). This shared taste experience, although negative, binds Japanese of the postwar generation in a common experience they can all relate to. Moreover, in the region of Kōchi, the flavor of whale meat

cuisine is celebrated as a legacy of the days that never were. In those mythical days, Kōchi residents used to fish whale the traditional way with harpoons and light skiffs. Needless to say, today no one fishes whale in Kōchi, yet whale meat, which no one is sure where it comes from, is celebrated as a regional flavor in souvenir shops with whale curry, in local drinking joints as fried whale and in tourist inns as whale hotpot. The unmistakable beefy flavor of whale meat is therefore constructed through both narratives: one of perseverance in the face of hardship and one that inscribes itself in the continuation of an ancestral tradition.

## III. *Tataki*: A Regional Myth

Yochan, a successful yet eccentric chef with thick glasses and shaggy hair, threw some more straw on the fire. The flames rose up as high as a man, crackling as they licked the raw fish. The night's revelers, drunken shadowy figures, danced around the blaze in a primal ritual. Yochan shouted for more fuel as he circled the fire. With one leg balanced on the foyer as to imitate a victory pose, he held the forked grill that held the sizzling fish over the fire. As the flames erupted again, he roared, "here it goes" toward the starry night. By that time some of the onlookers noticed that he was literally catching on fire. Yochan cried out, "ouch it burns" as he attempted to stamp out the flames gnawing at his pants to the chuckles of the crowd. He deftly rotated the fish so that it would be seared on all sides. He raised one arm in the sky and the crowd went wild. He dropped the still smoking fish fillet on a metal tray and immediately transferred it to a cutting board. Then, he cut thick slices of the fish and threw a handful of coarse salt on top of it. The intoxicated audience cheered and clapped while they pulled out money to make sure they would get a taste of *katsuo no tataki*.

*Katsuo no tataki* is tied to my earliest memories of Japan. When I first came to Japan, I lived in a shared house with a cramped grimy kitchen. Most of my meals were either eaten out or bought already made from the local grocery store. Not being able yet to read Japanese, I one day bought what looked like seared tuna. The fish, which was in fact *katsuo*, was served with green onions and a little package of *ponzu*. I bit into the fish and spit it out. It tasted rank like it had been sitting in the sun for a day. In order to avoid this mistake, I made a point to tell

tuna and *katsuo* apart from that day on. Years later, on a visit to Kōchi, I was sharing a table at the Hirome food market when someone offered me to try a slice of *katsuo no tataki*. The fish was sliced thick and seasoned with coarse salt. A slice of citrus, fresh wasabi and, to my surprise, raw garlic was served on the side. I tried it with some reticence but it felt like someone had lit fireworks in my mouth. The fish was rich and salty, with notes of citrus topped with the bite of wasabi and the pungency of garlic. Simply put, *katsuo no tataki* is seared bonito tuna (*katsuo*) that is served sliced with various condiments. Preparations and techniques vary so much across the region that it is difficult to give a definite recipe. Kōchi residents commonly eat the dish, celebrate it with mascots and festivals and have very strong opinions of how it is best prepared and which shops make it best.[60] *Katsuo no tataki* is not only an important dish for people of Kōchi, travel books and TV shows have enshrined it as the symbol of the region, a must-try for tourists. The dish is tied to the regional folklore as many stories abound about the dish's origin and the memories it conjures. The characteristic taste of *katsuo no tataki* lives through the many stories that surround it. These narratives not only enhance the flavor of the dish, they are a necessary part of the tasting experience.

Figure 31. *Katsuo no tataki* from the Hirome market

[60] *Katsuo ningen*, a bonito head on a human body, is the unofficial mascot of Kōchi.

In Kōchi, many stories circulate about *katsuo no tataki*. Narratives often take the form of short anecdotes that explain how a dish was invented or how the dish became popular. These anecdotes are often pseudo historical in nature as they are largely based on what people hear. These tales recount the origin of the dish, how it was prepared and what makes it so delicious. Stories explaining the origin of recipes connect taste and technique to a localized imaginary. Needless to say, *tataki* is much more than sustenance for Kōchi inhabitants, it is something taken very seriously, the subject of endless discussions and entrenched opinions. According to Lévi-Strauss (1963:89), "We can understand, too, that natural species are chosen not because they are 'good to eat' but because they are 'good to think.'" However, unlike Lévi-Struass' totems, *Katsuo no tataki* is good to eat precisely because it is good to think. People enjoy food because it is tied to a story that makes sense to them. These explanations take the form of discourses of authority (scholars), everyday banter (residents) and widely circulated information (mass media). Accounts of times past help anchor these unique tastes in time and space. In a sense, these stories articulate a narrative of continuity allowing people to connect to the past (i.e. tradition) and to a local (i.e. home). When consuming this dish, one enters in communion with a community that extends beyond our immediate social group.

## 1. Scholars

"I do not know to what extent this is true but let me present a folk tale about *katsuo no tataki*," wrote the Japanese historian, Michio Hirao (1959) in a weekly column of the Kōchi newspaper entitled local history evening tale (*kyōdoshi yobanashi*). The article essentially focuses on a genealogy of the term *katsuo no tataki* rather than the contemporary version of the dish but still provides useful leads. According to Hirao, *katsuo no tataki* was first recorded as a donation to a festival in number of tubs (*taru*) in Shirahama shrine in Eastern part of Kōchi. As raw fish fillet uses a different counter in Japanese (*saku*), one can deduce that the dish was likely salt fermented, minced fish (*shiokara*), as this type of preparation was much more widespread in pre-refrigeration days. Hirao weaves in narrative documented evidence and tales of historical figures creating a believable yet contestable mythical chronology of

*tataki*. On a war campaign in present-day Shizuoka prefecture, the shogun Ieyasu Tokugawa in the 16th century was served *katsuo no tataki* (salt fermented version) and loved it so much he decided to spread it throughout the country. Still according to Hirao, in the Western area of Kōchi called Hata, people serve a dish called *katsuo no tataki* made of deep-fried minced *katsuo* meat and bone that is served in broth. At the end of the article, the author gives his readers a fleeting glimpse of the myth of origin of the contemporary dish. At the beginning of Meiji era, meat-eating Westerners were stranded on the Kōchi shores. Local residents discovered that an acceptable meat substitute for the survivors was grilled whale and grilled *katsuo*.

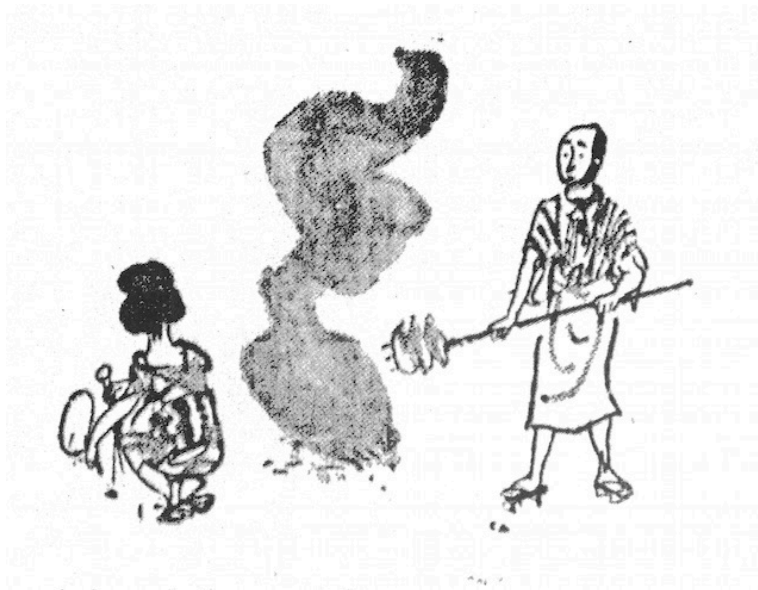


Figure 32. Local history evening tales illustration

Why does the writer seek to reconstruct the genesis of this dish in 1959? Hirao's exposé seems to respond to a growing interest to trace back the origin of *katsuo no tataki*. The date of this article is no accident as it coincides with the early stages of the transformation of Japan into a consumer society thereby anchoring its taste in narratives that go back far in time. Hence, the various anecdotes that are part of this article help locate the temporal and spatial source of the dish. Interestingly, the newspaper illustration above presents the readership with a bucolic vision of the contemporary *tataki*, yet, little of the article focuses on the actual dish Kōchi

residents know so well. Instead, a large amount of the article is dedicated to *tataki* as salt fermented, minced fish (*shiokara*). Throughout the article, it is unclear if this *katsuo shiokara* was in fact the precursor of modern *tataki,* or if it only has the same name. In the end, finding the source of the dish, even in name, is what matters most as it firmly grounds a dish into a shared heritage. Finally, it is interesting to point out that the author emits some doubts about the veracity of stories in the article. Perhaps a good story is more important than one that is entirely true as it gives meaning to a dish. Through these stories, meaning is incorporated within the emblematic food giving symbolic value and added taste.

In his book on Kōchi food culture, another food expert Genshichi Kawamura (1974) strives to give the reader an erudite explanation of the origin of *katsuo no tataki*. The story presented is one that is at first very much a historical look at the term *katsuo no tataki* which came to signify something different than its contemporary meaning (i.e. *shiokara*). The authors paint with great authority the practice of smoking fish to preserve it as the most likely origin of the *tataki* method. This interpretation certainly makes sense to the reader, yet it does not explain how smoking turned into searing and how the dish acquired its name. Still, Kawamura's explanation is a functional one where *tataki* originated as means of preserving fish. To make his point, he reminds us that other fish like mackerel are prepared in a similar way to prolong their shelf life. *Tataki* as a conservation technique is probably the most plausible explanation, yet it is not the most widely disseminated one. Food accounts that circulate about an emblematic dish are not necessarily the one crafted by experts or the one that are the most plausible. The stories that people share about food are the ones that give meaning to a dish anchoring its taste in more than a combination of ingredients and cooking techniques. The veracity of these tales matter little but the meaning they carry is of utmost importance. In a sense, stories that resonate with an audience are circulated much more broadly that factual and reliable explanations.

Scholars will successively build on these widely circulated tales to build their own reasoned narrative. The writer and renowned expert of the regional cuisine of Kōchi, Itsuo Miyagawa, contributed to this growing legend behind this famed dish. According to his story, Cape Ashizuri in Western Kōchi is the place of origin of modern *katsuo no tataki* (Miyagawa 1999).

In the past, hungry fishermen used to grill freshly caught *katsuo* on the beaches of the cape using driftwood as it was the only fuel they had on hand. The fishermen, too poor to afford soy sauce, would slap (*tataku*) the fillet with salt and eat it while it was still steaming hot. According to Miyagawa, few people follow the old way of preparing *katsuo no tataki*. This tale, however hard to verify, has had a lasting impact on the collective consciousness of the region. This story has spread to other Kōchi residents, been echoed in various online outlets[61] and in a widely read manga series called *Oishinbo* (Hanasaki 2004). Unlike other past explanations, Miyagawa's tale caught on among the broader public and is today the dominant narrative.  This story helps fixate the emblematic dish in a regional imaginary. The dominant trope is one of a rustic lifestyle where dishes emerged out of necessity and simple means. Thus, the story of the Cape Ashizuri fishermen is today the most widespread myth of origin of *katsu no tataki* in the region of Kōchi. When most people in the region eat the dish, they think about the story immediately connecting taste to a moment lost in time.

Figure 33. Oishinbo manga *katsuo no tataki* origin

[61] For example, see the Ikezawa fish shop website: http://www.tosamaguro.com/katuo-tataki-rutu.htm.

In the monograph "In Search of the Roots of *Katsuo no Tataki*" (*katsuo no tataki no rūtsu wo sagaru*), Miyagawa (1993) points out that the written record of *katsuo* no *tataki* is deceiving as it used to mean something entirely different. Instead, he argues that *tataki* originated through *seikatsu no chie* (lit. wisdom of life, i.e. pragmatic concerns) of Ashizuri fishermen. For example, it was pre-salted before searing to prevent the fire to cook the fish all the way through. Ashizuri has few rice paddies so they could not use the straw fuel we use today. Damp driftwood was selected in order to prevent the fish from burning. Furthermore, since dried, fermented bonito flake (*katsuo bushi)* was historically a precious commodity for the Tosa domain, few people could trade and consume *katsuo* freely. In Ashizuri, a technique called *yakikiri* consisting of searing the tough skin of coastal fish and then slicing the meat into thin strips preceded *katsuo no tataki*. The author argues that the "wisdom of life" of this early *yakikiri* technique is the most likely origin of *katsuo no tataki*. In short, for Miyagawa, practical experience of fishermen becomes the dominant narrative. This story is interesting because it celebrates the ingenuity of the commoners rather than crediting a single person or a single moment in history for the invention of *tataki*. By infusing fact and logic within a widespread tale, the author gives it more credibility. When I attempted to contact Miyagawa in 2015, I found out that he had sadly passed away a few years ago. Throughout his career, he had been a respected and influential spokesperson for what he referred to as *Tosa* cuisine. Miyagawa, a prolific writer, helped cement the concept of regional cuisine in Kōchi creating a sense of shared identity across a very diverse region. This story and many others to come demonstrate that his ideas remain in motion long after he perished.

In an interview for the Kōchi newspaper article, Atsuko Matsuzaki (2004) articulate in a similar way that *katsuo no tataki* was developed for pragmatic reasons. She explains that the fish was first grilled because its skin is too tough to eat raw. Moreover, the thin layer of fat that sits below the skin provides a lot of flavor once roasted. This cooking technique is anchored in the fisherman daily life as the fish is grilled directly on the boat deck and sprinkled with raw salt. Finally, *tataki* is used to preserve fish meat that spoils quickly. According to Matsuzaki, as the fat of the fish oxidizes, the fish begins to rapidly smell. In order to mask the fishiness, it is served with vinegar, soy sauce, garlic and onions, which are condiments that have remained a staple even in the days of modern refrigeration. Matsuzaki's

explanation is not based on lore but rather on reasoning based on practical experience. She admits that this myth of origin is not so much based on historical evidence but rather born out of the experience preparing the dish and understanding the fishermen's logic. Even if this story can never be fully proven or disproven, it remains a key piece of the puzzle to understand the logic behind preparing the dish a certain way. A dish that makes pragmatic sense to the consumer is one that his palate can all the more comprehend.

## 2. Residents

The curious old man was scrawny and wrinkled with a few hair combed over on his head. I had met him in a public bath, a place where the community comes to relax and gossip after a hard day of work. The affable senior pursued to give me a lesson in the origin of *katsuo no tataki* while soaking in the tub. A long time ago, a Portuguese vessel was shipwrecked on the coast of the Tosa domain. Having no other way to leave the island, the sailor settled to life in Japan. But as any good Europeans will attest, they missed the flavor of grilled meat. As one should never underestimate local hospitality, the residents presented our castaways with juicy grilled steaks. However, instead of meat, which was prohibited in Japan, they had used freshly caught fish from the Tosa bay. The old man splashed water on his head, rubbed his face with his two hands and admitted that the story was probably not true. The heat from the bath was going to my head, and I was feeling mildly uncomfortable having a conversation with a naked old man. However, the old man was not done yet, and in retrospect, I appreciate his relentlessness. He explained that back in the days, freshly fished *katsuo* was chopped on board of a ship in a very uneven way due to the moving motion of the boat. The dish would be sprinkled with onion and soy sauce and eaten as is on the boat. By that point, my power of concentration was seriously diminished, and I was not sure anymore if I would remember what he had told me. However, he continued telling me that none of this was probably true. The real reason was that people preparing *tataki* do not sprinkle salt on it but instead season the fish by tapping salt on it. From afar, it looked as if the cooks were slapping or chopping the fish hence *tataki*. The old man, red as a lobster, exited the bath with a satisfied smile.

Why do Kōchi residents tell stories about their food? For one, these tales transmit important messages about residents of the region of Kōchi. Kōchi is the land of hospitality. It is therefore in the mind of people quite acceptable that during the early days of the modernization, when much of Japan sentiment was vehemently xenophobic, Kōchi would be the place to provide this kind of hospitality to westerners. Through this form of passive defiance, commoners display resistance to feudalistic system to create an emblem of the region. These stories form the core of how the residents and cuisine of Kōchi is defined. In this manner, restaurant chefs also play a considerable role in spreading narratives about *tataki*. When I went to visit Hamacho,[62] a traditional and regional dining landmark, chef Takuda, explained that *katsuo no tataki* originated in Kōchi but the recipe had spread to other coastal cities in Japan. It began with people tapping salt on the fish fillet, hence, providing proof that the salt seasoned (*shio tataki*) preparation was the original. Chef's voices carry much weight, as they are the ambassadors of taste and cuisine in the region.

Among Kōchi residents, there is considerable contention about the original *katsuo no tataki* preparation method. Today, the most popular version of the dish is called *warayaki*. *Warayaki* can be translated as grilled over rice straw. This method has gained so much momentum that *warayaki* has become a synonym of *katsuo no tataki* in Kōchi, in other regions of Japan and even abroad. However, according to Yasu Hamada, the dish was originally grilled using pine needles (*matsuba*). For Hamada and many of his friends, the distinct smokiness of burning pine needles was a fragrance that one sought out as it is associated with times passed. In Cape Ashizuri where *tataki* supposedly emerged, the few rice paddies could have not provided enough straw to make *tataki* (Miyagawa 1993). Instead, fishermen had to make do with the fuel available to them whether it was driftwood or bamboo. A rapid survey of wood available on the beaches of Kōchi will indicate that the most readily common fuel is pine needles. Competing narratives about past preparation methods are important because they provide a

---

[62] The restaurant is famous for its *geisha* entertainers. See website: http://www.k-hamacho.com.

sense of authenticity. As discussed in chapter 1, the construction of authenticity matters for one because it helps sell a product. It also is of importance because these incorporated beliefs about tradition and identity shape the construction of taste.

Kōchi residents do not always blindly adhere to the most widespread myth of origins. For example, some residents have presented some reservation when it came to the story about fishermen being so poor they had to use coarse salt instead of soy sauce for seasoning. On a visit to a local sake bar, older patrons explained to me that this *shio tataki* (salt *tataki*) was a recent invention. When I told them the story about the poor fishermen, they seemed quite doubtful of it. On a different occasion, I had been invited to a traditional banquet called an *okyaku* in Aki in eastern Kōchi. According to some of the guests, *shio tataki* was a recent revival rather than an ancestral dish. Nevertheless, for the Japanese tourists in Kōchi, *katsuo no tataki* remains the emblematic dish of Kōchi. These tourists could identify *shio tataki* and/or *warayaki* as the most characteristic version of the dish. Good stories spread even faster than a good dish. The fame of this dish outside of the region of origin and articulated through the stories associated with them reinforces the ideas that people have about their own food. For example, if outsiders come to Kōchi seeking *shio tataki* or *warayaki*, it will help to cement in the minds of people of Kōchi the emblematic value of this dish. More than a mere marketing ploy, good stories circulate because they infuse these dishes with meaning, one that carries on in the choices and the palates of people that consume them.

Although my research goal was not to determine the veracity of a particular myth of origin, I felt compelled to ask myself if it could be possible that all my informants were in part right. It is conceivable that a dish as widespread as *katsuo no tataki* could have more than a single origin. Perhaps the various myths of origin are not contending for a single truth but rather multiple sets of truth, which circulate in the region. If these various myths are a driving force for the dish to propagate, different myths of origin can in a way contribute to the success and the dissemination of an emblematic dish. In effect, competing explanatory model can be simultaneously correct as they all explain the rise and fall of a dish. In this case, these stories could be examined as perspectives that seek to inscribe meaning and taste in a dish of symbolic importance for Kōchi. More importantly than the legitimacy of such narratives is

how these stories about time, place and character shape the preference and the perception of these dishes. I posited earlier that dishes spread and become popular because the stories they are tied to contribute to the social construction of taste in the region. Stories about *katsuo no tataki* matter today as much as they always did for Kōchi residents. They allow people to make sense of what they eat and why it tastes the way it does.

## 3. Mass Media

The flame flared up in a burst as I brandished the pitchfork holding the frozen filet of *katsuo* over the smoky straw fire. The camera slowly focused on my right eye as the heat of the fire became unbearable over my face.

"Do it again this time closer. I want to catch the twinkle of the fire reflecting in your eye," said Ikuchi Sugimoto the cameraman/director of the local NHK news segment.

This had been the third take, and I had become tired of pretending to sear a fish that would have been cooked all the way through had it not been frozen solid. Once the shot was in the box, Sugimoto asked me to sit facing the camera.

"What did you think the first time you tried Kōchi *katsuo no tataki*," he asked.

"Well, the unique characteristics...," I began to answer.

"Tell me about the taste explosion we talked about," he interrupted.

"When I tried Kōchi *katsuo no tataki*, it felt like an explosion in my mouth," I said pretending to be convinced of what I said.

Sugimoto had approached me a week earlier so that he could feature me in a local news segment. In preparation for the shooting, we met and talked for about two hours mainly about my interest in Kōchi regional cuisine. Shooting for the ten-minute news segment lasted three insufferable days. Sugimoto scripted the entirety of the segment bringing me to places I had never been and asking me to do things I seldom did in my daily research. Shots were repeated over and over again to the point I felt more like a failed actor than a foreign researcher being interviewed.

Figure 34. “When I tried Kōchi’s *katsuo no tataki* for the first time, the taste was like an explosion”

That televised news piece had a lasting impact on the residents of Kōchi providing me with some sense of renown and legitimacy in the community. My status as a foreign researcher helped solidify the idea that Kōchi cuisine was unique and worthy to be studied by a foreign researcher. I was once approached by Yurina Takeuchi, a reporter for the Kōchi newspaper in order to write an article about what I was doing in Kōchi. Although it served as a basic introduction to my research, the article was in my opinion a fateful representation of what I had said. The article titled “Tosa Cuisine Over *Kaiseki*”[63] plays on the regional pride that the term Tosa cuisine evokes for the local readership. Furthermore, one can read the bold headlines emphasizing “Shock: a westerner likes *tataki*” demonstrating the author’s and probably the readership’s astonishment to the news. Countless local news articles feature local food yet this one is different as it features a foreigner that studies it. Through this article, the food of Kōchi becomes ascertained as a world-renowned cuisine. Such stories told in the media can also be potent narratives that easily spread from one person to another (e.g. I know your story because my friend saw you on TV). It solidified the idea that *katsuo no tataki* is a

[63] Kaiseki is Kyoto’s traditional cuisine and a type of *haute gastronomie* for all of Japan.

representative dish that is unique to Kōchi. If a foreigner came to study the emblematic dish, it must mean that Kōchi is not only its origin but also the best place to sample it.

Magazines actively participate in the diffusion of such stories outside the prefecture. According to the magazine *Nipponia* that is published by the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, there are several theories about how *katsuo no tataki* began. The first explanation proposed was that in the early 17$^{th}$ century the lord of Tosa Yamauchi Kazutoyo had prohibited the eating of sashimi to prevent food poisoning. In response to this prohibition, the common folk would scorch the exterior and pretend it was broiled all the way through. The second so-called theory was that the dish only began in the early day of the Meiji restoration in order to provide westerners with a taste of something close to grilled steak. Instead of relying on undisputable facts, the magazine weaves in historical names to anchor this food in traditions of the past. One needs to take into account that these theories are different than most stories because they are diffused nationally by a representation of authority. Stories that circulate nationally provide an insight into Kōchi culture for outsiders. The magazine, *Nipponia,* was created with the intent of promoting cultural and economic interest abroad. As a large number of people are exposed to these stories, they become fact sometimes influencing people from the region they supposedly have emerged from. Furthermore, who tells the story is very important for its credibility. A state sanctioned publication like *Nipponia* will carry much more weight internationally.

Regional cuisine can also be shaped by information disseminated by the prefectural government. Tosa no Osakana, a booklet published by the Kōchi prefecture fisheries promotional section, provides different tales on the origin of the dish. (1) At the end of the Warring States period, Motochika Chosokabe finally managed to unify the island of Shikoku. On this occasion, he ate *katsuo* roasted over *kaya*, a Japanese pine tree. (2) In the middle of the Edo period, the Tosa domain forbade the consumption of raw food in order to prevent food poisoning. However, instead of fully roasting the fish they only grilled the outside of the fish. (3) The dish was developed on top of fishing boats because *ippon zuri* fishermen grew tired of eating only sashimi. In addition, the booklet makes an interesting distinction between origin (*hasshō*) and progenitor (*rutsu*). It explains that in some part of the prefecture, seared, sliced

and soy sauce seasoned coastal fish might have been a progenitor. The booklet's aim is to promote the Kōchi fishery by providing context to the fish it promotes. In adding value to a product, stories are sometimes blended with history. The "Ryōma" connection is also made in a popular yet very extensively researched sushi guidebook (Lowry 2005). According to the guidebook, Ryōma spent time in Nagasaki around large groups of foreigners and acquired a taste for grilled meat. He was the one who brought the technique to cook *tataki* back to the Tosa domain. This scenario is far from plausible since Ryōma spent little time in Tosa after his stay in Nagasaki and was more occupied by the political intrigues of his time than introducing new recipes. Although few people would make the historical association between the dish and the man, it remains that establishing a fictive connection between both helps anchor the dish in local tradition. Ryōma is important because he symbolizes the unique characteristics of Kōchi people: freedom, stubbornness and creativity. In the construction and legitimation of culinary culture, it is hard to imagine a better ambassador for *katsuo no tataki*.

## Conclusion

In Kōchi and elsewhere, stories about emblematic food allow consumers to connect taste to place. In order to give narratives about regional cuisine an air of authenticity, they loosely tie into the local historical context. These narratives help build a regional imaginary that is little concerned about veracity. What really is at stake here is for the target audience to be able to connect through stories that carry meaning. These stories can add value to a regional product. In the economic context of the region of Kōchi, these stories become important economic resources entrepreneurs can draw on. They can also transmit specific messages about the local culture. In this process, Kōchi residents eat certain dishes in part because of the meaning they convey. For instance, myth about *katsuo no tataki* are shared with others in order to contextualize and make sense of the dish. More broadly, "a myth is a sacred story, and it is a vital ingredient in human civilisation; a myth is not a useless fable but instead an active force that has grown with the passing of time" (Franchi 2013:55). In this manner myths of origin about emblematic food participate in the contemporary construction of the regional food. Using symbolic content, narratives help firmly anchor a particular taste within a specific

region. When we consume a dish, stories about past places and experiences enable us to travel through time and space in order to connect with something bigger than the dish we are eating. This narrative and discursive message associated with an emblematic dish gives it a distinctive taste that captures more than mere flavor molecules as it incorporate the culture, tradition and history of a people.

# Chapter 4. The Taste of Community: Commensality and Regional Cuisine in Rural Japan

Kōchi residents, proud to demonstrate their legendary hospitality, are more than eager to invite strangers for dinner. In doing so, they make a point to not only introduce newcomers to ingredients and dishes that are unique to the region but also to a particular set of values. Early in my fieldwork, Hideko Mitani invited me to her small mountain hamlet for a Kōchi traditional banquet. To get there, we drove up narrow windy roads and over slippery concrete bridges overrun by moss. The hamlet also known as Mitani was nothing more than half a dozen farmhouses tucked away on the slopes of a steep mountain supplied by a creek that appeared so clean one might have drank from it. As part of a local celebration, the elderly residents had gathered in the largest house of the hamlet. The screen door separating the individual rooms of the house had been brought down to create a large eating space and long tables that sat close to the ground were arranged in neat rows on the tatami floor. After formal self-introductions, we proceeded with the meal. We shared foods from large plates and poured each other drinks from the same bottles. No seats remained assigned for as long as people regularly rotated places. On that day, we ate, sang, talked and drank until the late hours of the night. That day, I started out as a stranger, an outsider on many levels, but was made to feel at home and a part of something bigger than myself. The food, a blend of locally sourced ingredients and traditional mountain recipes, is to this day something I can still taste.

Figure 35. Mitani Hamlet *okyaku* banquet

What makes a meal truly delicious? Taste is an experience that cannot be divorced from its social context. In this case, commensality, the act of sharing a meal, becomes a driving force that cannot be ignored. Commensality is often perceived as a tool used to solidify identity and strengthening social bonds within a community (Appadurai 1981). Little research has been done on how social context helps enhance the experience of taste. Communal eating practices are quintessential components of the cuisine of Kōchi. Food sharing is central to the self-definition of local residents as the traditional cuisine of the region is designed around commensality and conviviality. Why does the food of Kōchi taste better when it is shared? I argue that food in a given context incorporates local flavors as well as the local values of the people that prepare and consume it. Taste is far from an objective sensory experience as it is shaped by a multitude of cultural associations. These shared meals incorporated values of communion that enables Kōchi residents to connect with a wider community of people that is not bounded by space or time. In this chapter, I will first discuss why commensality is so important in the region. Then, I will examine how traditional cuisine embodies communal eating practices and how these customs are transposed to contemporary spaces and contemporary drinking rituals. Finally, I will explore how these values, which are held by the community, shape the region's palates and opportunities.

# I. Eating Together

## 1. Social Significance

Commensality is a practice that is argued to have in its early days emerged out of group survival imperatives. It can trace its roots back to a form of “generalized reciprocity” where food sharing is a form of transaction for assistance given (Sahlins 1974:233-234). In many social contexts, it still carries this purpose; yet, it has become a social event that defines belonging and has countless ramifications. The shared meal is a social event that nourishes the body and our appetite for social interactions (Sobal and Nelson 2003). Commensality has come to signify proximity in many cultural contexts. The intimate task of cooking and feeding guests turns sharing food into a token of trust where the private is made public. In certain society, having shared a meal creates bonds so strong that they are comparable to kinship and involve mutual obligations (Corbeau and Poulain 2008). Commensality is a gesture that is performed as a complex dance involving social relations and symbols. Group eating follow ritualized patterns with codes of behavior that are learned from an early age and change according to country, region and household. Sharing food creates empathy becoming a gateway to understand what it is to live in somebodies else’s shoes. The ritualized sharing of a common sensorial experience transforms these food-related practices into physical encounters with difference (Martin-Juchat 2004). For this reason, what people choose to eat and how they choose to eat it becomes a privilege site of inquiry when it comes to questions of identity and belonging. A shared meal turns the self-centered act of feeding into a collective social experience (Simmel, Frisby, and Featherstone 1997). Meals are of the utmost importance because they socially connect people to food. The structure and repetition of meals are units upon which memory can latch onto to create collective recollections of the past. More importantly, meals and food exchange are a metonyms for community values that are seen as eroding under the assault of modernization (Sutton 2001).

The image of the shared table is of paramount importance as it is the space where meals take place. For example in France, precise etiquette dictates the position of guests at the table

turning a physical space into a social space (Fischler 2011). Not all societies practice commensality around a table but all forms of food sharing is, regardless of cultural practices, regimented by precise conventions. In traditional Japanese banquets, tables are not always the norm as food can be served on low tables (*chabudai*). Yet, the spatial arrangement of the guests remains crucial to understand the social relationship between each guest. Old pattern of commensality can also be reproduced in contemporary spatial settings. In Japan where Western fast food chains are disrupting old eating habits in what is referred to as Americanization, cultural specific patterns of commensality are reemerging. For example in Japan, individual fast food portions can be consumed as shared family meals (Traphagan and Brown 2002) turning fast food restaurants into a new space for socializing (Ohnuki-Tierney 1997).

In order to understand commensality rules, one must understand that eating with others is also fraught with risk (Sobal and Nelson 2003). The potential dangers can be biological (e.g. hygiene) or symbolical (e.g. becoming the other) (Corbeau and Poulain 2008). Sharing meals expresses a spectrum of social relationships from close friendship to antagonism where commensality symbolizes a demarcation line, a sort of threshold, that delimitates the social order (Douglas 1997). For Jeffery Sobal (2003), commensality can be considered in terms of commensal circles which demarcate and shape people's social worlds. In this scheme, friends, coworkers and strangers occupy different levels of social proximity with meals occupying different social functions. Authors have argued that conviviality, or camaraderie around the table, need to distinguished from commensality which is passive, which just requires sitting around a table together (Corbeau and Poulain 2008; Fischler 2011). However, this chapter argues that commensality is far from apathetic as the practice of sitting at the same table in itself signifies much.

By sharing food and consuming together the same food, individuals forge the bonds of social relationship (Ohnuki-Tierney 1997). Commensal celebrations bring together geographically and generationally dispersed groups of people solidifying kinship bonds (Bloch 1999). Yet, a shared meal does not need to include conversation or social interaction to be commensal as eating together is perhaps one of the most potent form of socialization (Boutaud 2004). At the

other end of the spectrum, eating alone can be a clear indicator of social exclusion. According to Masson (2004), man eats not only to satisfy bodily needs but also to quench its need for sociality, hence, a meal can only be considered eating when it is done in group. For the !Kung, the idea of eating alone and not sharing is shocking as only animals could do such a thing. The sharing of food is used in this context as a mechanism to diffuse social tension (Marshall 1961). If eating alone is not eating in the social sense, the growing trend in industrial nation of solitary dining might not be considered eating at all. Fischler (2011) argues that such shift is important not so much because of its moralistic implication but rather because it can be linked to concerns over public health with the raise of the obesity epidemic.

Although commensality socially appears to be significant in most contexts, the rules that regiment it vary cross-culturally. In India for example, women and men eat separately with the former eating without uttering a word (Mahias 1999). Gender, social status and age determine who eats together and how people eat together. This is also true of so-called "Western societies" where in countries with relative similar development and geographic proximity commensality expresses itself in very different ways (Fischler 2011). Manners and table etiquettes are ways people learn to socially interact and locate themselves within society. Case in point, social differentiation is the result of increasing complex norms of behavior that often take place around the table (Elias 2000). Culturally ingrained habitus, structures of the mind that shape people's habits and disposition, govern not only social interaction but also taste preferences (Bourdieu 1984). The function of commensality becomes a sort of socialization process that teaches, enacts and reinforces values and preferences.

In the case of Japan, an important distinction can be made between everyday family meals usually eaten with minimal social interactions and banquets which tend to focus on communication sometimes stretching over hours (Jean-Louis Flandrin and Jane Cobbi 1999). Such contrast in types of commensality is a valuable reminder that sharing a meal can take many forms even within one society. In Japan, food sharing is regimented by complex ritualized codes that take in consideration many aspects of social life. For instance, children are taught from an early age to acknowledge the sociality of eating by saying formulaic sentences at the beginning (*itadakimasu*) and the end of each meal (*gochisōsama*). The daily

bowl of Japanese rice signifies the collective self thereby its consumption symbolizes a communion with people beyond your immediate commensal group (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993:101-102). Japan's commensality intersects with other cultural practices like exchanging food gifts, which put together constitute a central pillar of social life. Although commensality is a widespread practice in most societies, it is defined and expressed differently in a variety of cultural contexts. In the region of Kōchi, local forms of commensalism, while still fitting the Japanese cultural context, are seen as manifestations of a unique regional character that centers around values of family and community. Commensality in the region of Kōchi affects how taste is constructed and perceived by residents. What constitute good taste and bad taste, as a preference and a sensory experience, is far from universal. It is clear that food preference is subject to cultural values that are ingrained in us through our social surrounding. However, taste as a sense, the detection of flavors, is also subject to our cultural upbringing. Values of community and family that are expressed through the regional forms of commensality infuse the regional cuisine of Kōchi with a taste can hardly be replicated elsewhere.

Figure 36. Kōchi commensality makes food taste all the better

## 2. Community Feasting

The first time I participated in an *okyaku*, a traditional Kōchi banquet, I was not sure what to expect. A total stranger had read an article about my research in the local newspaper and had obtained my contact information from the same newspaper. We talked for a few minutes on the phone from which I gathered he was organizing an *okyaku* in Aki, a city in the eastern part of Kōchi. I came with my friend, Yasu, who had offered to drive me there. We were among the first to arrive at the large house where the banquet was taking place. Our host, the owner of the gas station across the road, appeared wealthy by Kōchi standards. As the guests started to arrive, I found out that the celebration was in fact the culmination of a local shrine festival. Once introductions were made, both Yasu and I were seated down at one end of a table. Tables had already been set with *sawachi* plates all containing an array of colorful food unknown to me and arranged at regular intervals on the low tables. Crates and coolers full of beer were stacked outside the screen doors so that one could lean over to grab the large bottles. As the meal progressed, our host moved us around to different seats giving me the chance to speak and drink with many of the guests. This experience was so novel to me with new people, new food and new eating habits that I was not sure how to exactly enjoy it. In retrospect, I must have lacked the cultural benchmarks to truly comprehend and appreciate what was happening around me.

Figure 37. Aki *okyaku* celebration

*Okyaku* is a word derived from the Kōchi dialect (*Tosa ben*) that refers to a traditional style banquet.[64] Other Japanese words exist for traditional banquets (*enkai*, *shukuen*) but they do not carry the same meaning as such banquets are unique to the region of Kōchi. *Okyaku* stands as a metonym for the cultural values of the region embodying the essence of Kōchi. The term is also a symbol that stands for the region with for example largest festival of the region is called the Kōchi banquet (*Tosa no okyaku*). In Japan, banquets that put the emphasis on food and large amounts of drinking are a common social practice in work companies and university cohorts (*konpa*). While these banquets have many similarities with an *okyaku*, these regional feasts find their roots in regional religious events and traditions of the past. The cuisine served at these events is one that is representative of the region with rules of socialization involving drinking etiquette that are believed to be unique to Kōchi. Although local variations exist throughout the prefecture, *okyaku* style celebrations are taken to be an enduring symbol of the region.

Although few in the region are religiously devout, religious practice of Kōchi are embedded in the region's traditional cultural landscape. It is by far the prefecture with the largest number of shrines per habitant with a total of 2170 shrines (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2016). According to Toshihiro Okabayashi, the deputy director of the Kōchi department of agriculture promotion, *okyaku* originated as rural shrine celebrations. These celebrations incorporate the use of *sawachi* cuisine combined with very localized religious rituals. Okabayashi insists that drinking is tied to *okyaku* shrine festivals. In an *okyaku*, guests frequently shift seating assignments in order to sample the various foods, share drinks and socialize with others. These regional banquets are a sort of a game of musical chair where people are expected to socialize through food and drinks. However, one must consider that *okyaku* have variation according to what part of Kōchi one lives in. According to the owner of Tampopo, a self-described country cuisine restaurant, *okyaku* feature not only

---

[64] *Okyaku* translates as guest in standard Japanese whereas in Kōchi: "The term *okyaku* finds its origin in an old Tosa word that signifies friendship."

different foods but also different drinking custom across the prefecture. In the west of Kōchi, the guests must wait for all to arrive before giving the opening toast. In the east of Kōchi, people start drinking as soon as they get to the *okyaku*, even sometimes drinking prior to the celebration in a drinking rehearsal (*nomu renshū*).

Historically, *okyaku* finds its root in Shinto celebration where food and drinks are consumed in a symbolic human and spirits commensal feast (*naorai*). In front of the gods, hierarchy that is such pervasive part of Japanese culture is circumvented with for instance woman and men allowed to drink together. It seems that sharing drinks and foods in these religious celebration enables communion with both the living and the dead. In this manner, Kōchi residents like to display their generosity and openness in Kōchi *okyaku* (Matsuzaki 1986). For example, in the western part of Kōchi, no seating arrangements are required whereas in the eastern part of Kōchi, it does not matter who you are and where you from when it comes to sharing drinks. The use of *sawachi* plates also goes back in time as it was used as an offering vessel for the local spirit at religious celebrations (Okabayashi personal communication 03/16/15). The large plates represent a community offering to the gods, a communion of sort that could later be consumed by the members of the celebration. By extension, the meal becomes a religious experience where eating from one plate symbolically becomes sharing with the gods. This is not unique to Kōchi as other regions partake in celebrations where men and gods partake in such communion (Bernier 1975). In Kōchi, however, *okyaku* events are loud and vociferous while foods require to be displayed in vibrant colors and shapes in order to show respect to the spirits.

In the past, *okyaku* were large celebratory events that were open to the local community. These feasts were opulent display of wealth indicating social and economic status:

> You see. This is how people normally lived. On days you had an *okyaku*, you were free to drink and eat [as much as you wanted]. *Okyaku* were public celebration days. [...] Some lasted 2 or even 3 days. Over there, there is a plain. Now, you have apartments there and a school here. Before, you had a large soy sauce merchant. There were so many large containers lined up here. [...] That person was extremely rich. Over at this

> mountain, you have the Ushio Tenmangu shrine for the Tenjin god. On the guardian spirit celebration day, Japanese style seating and so many *sawachi* would be lined up. It wasn't a problem to invite dozen of passerby to join and eat. That was a large and rich house. In the past, it was open like that. [...] Since my house was small, when came the Tenjin celebration, we would make sushi, sashimi and many other home cooked foods. We would pull out our *sawachi* and open our doors to our neighbors. Anybody would be welcome to eat. (Matsuzaki interview 03/24/15)

Today, local *okyaku* still incorporate a "Big man" component but they have become much more. Generosity and inclusiveness are persistent images tied to these celebrations and are seen as a key component of Kōchi regional culture. In her booklet on Kōchi food culture, Matsuzaki (2013:5) writes about traditional *okyaku* "Some people went home early, some people arrived late with some of the latecomers staying overnight. For the people that remained, there would be a small party the next day".

At an *okyaku*, what matters not only the cuisine served but how it is consumed. In order to fully appreciate this type of meal, one needs to be socialized in the ways of the region of Kōchi. There is a strong association between the social and the gustatory experience in these banquets. At an *okyaku*, it is expected to experience different tastes and social interactions with various people. People will move from one *sawachi* plate to another to enjoy varied food and company. The Japanese drinking etiquette fits into Kōchi's commensality as it requires people to pour and cheer each other. Every plate offers a unique assortment of traditional dishes. Thus, the necessity to rotate from one sitting position to another. Diversity of taste is highly valued in the Japanese meal but seldom are all these dishes presented all at once, as a whole, like in the cuisine of Kōchi. Moreover, the food consumed and its taste is infused with value of spatial and social proximity. The boundaries between insider and outsider, so important in Japanese culture (Allison 1991), are broken down through social interaction as well as through sensory experience.

Every second week of March, the center of Kōchi city transforms itself to accommodate the *Tosa no okyaku* festival.[65] Tatami and low tables are laid out in the central plaza and in the commercial arcades. Small food entrepreneurs set up hundreds of booths to accommodate the vast amounts of drinking and eating about to take place. The celebration, albeit only a decade old, is a prefecture-wide gathering that last ten days. The event is used as an opportunity for economic revitalization and helps create a sense of unity among Kōchi residents. *Tosa no okyaku* serves as a dominant trope for the broader Kōchi community where local politicians, athletes, TV celebrities all sit around the same table to share food, drinks and each other's company. In order to attract vast crowds, many special events are featured during the festival with a drinking contest, a streetcar banquet and a cuisine competition featuring famous chefs of the region (Andersen personal communication 08/23/14). The festival revolves around commensality and the enjoyment of good food and drinks. The 2015 promotional poster provides hints of what is to be expected: drinking, freedom and community notions that are so dear to the local residents. The point here is that by sharing a table with strangers you can become more than that. The festival is something that most Kōchi residents look forward to as it enables them to meet old acquaintances and make new friends.

[65] For a better grasp of the promotion behind the event see the official website: www.tosa-okyaku.com.

Figure 38. *Tosa no okyaku* poster

While doing fieldwork in Kōchi, I decided to attend the first day of *Tosa no okyaku*. I came to meet friends early enough to have a seat at the celebration. Half of the tables were being used for a special event, while the other half of the tables were almost all reserved by restaurants stalls. With nowhere to go, I ended sitting uncomfortably between two tables. The advertised spirit of inclusiveness seemed to have been brushed aside for more mercantile concerns. In retrospect, it is easy to see how this festival was as much a means to create economic opportunities for small entrepreneurs than a display of regional spirit. When taking into account large festivals in Kōchi, one must consider that tradition has monetary value and in a region where revenue is scarce, these traditions become a valuable resource. As the night advanced, the atmosphere became relaxed with more and more people inviting us to join them for food and drinks. By closing time, everyone seemed to have become close acquaintances. In a pragmatic sense, the consumption of alcohol might have been the main reason people became so friendly. According to Jonathan Laurent, my brother who also attended *Tosa no okyaku* during his visit, the festival was a unique cultural experience. Although he attended the festival on his own and did not speak Japanese, he still remembers to this day the many friends he made during the celebration. In his case, sharing food turned out to be more than mere

commensality, it became a gateway through which he could access a figurative taste of the community.

## 3. Community Cooking

> *Sawachi* is a Kōchi culinary tradition dating back to end of Japan's feudal age. This colorful dish highlights the harvests of the ocean brought to us on the 'black current' and the bounty of the mountains. The colorful presentation of *sawachi* reflects the heart and soul of Tosa. *Sawachi* is an arrangement of sashimi, *tataki*, sushi, and other seasonal foods presented on a large colorful porcelain platter. *Sawachi* is a way of eating, and more than that, it's a way of enjoying yourself at a party with good friends. Informal, warm and intimate—just like Kōchi! *Sawachi* is always the best of the harvests from Tosa's blue oceans and green mountains. (Greve 2008)

Figure 39. *Sawachi* in Tosa Bushi magazine

The specific rules of aesthetics and taste that govern *sawachi* cuisine enable the incorporation of a diverse group of dishes into an identifiable regional cuisine. The large plates are meant to be shared, offering a substitute to coursed meals something uncommon in traditional Japanese meals. For instance, *kaiseki* cuisine, a representation of traditional Japanese cuisine, which developed out of the tea ceremony, offers a succession of small individual dishes (Rath and

Assmann 2010). Chefs working in traditional Japanese establishments in Kōchi must make compromises when it comes to serving guests. They must choose to what extent they will incorporate *sawachi* in their meals since they are also expected to conform to Japanese rules of culinary aesthetic. *Sawachi* is a dish but also a cuisine consisting in an assortment of various regional dishes. The cuisine takes two different forms: (1) raw (*nama*) with a colorful assortment of raw fish or (2) combination (*kumimono*) of different typical regional dishes. The combination plate typically consists of 7 dishes that are usually representative of the region: poached Japanese langoustine (*ise ebi*), green vinegar jelly fish (*kurage*), salt grilled sweet fish (*ayu*), in-shell boiled strawberry conch (*chanbaragai*), sake cooked noble scallops (*chōtarogai*), mackerel stuffed with sushi rice (*sugata sushi*). When creating a *sawachi*, time and place matter. For wedding receptions, you might have sea bream *ikezukuri*[66] or *katsuo no tataki* whereas in summer it could be cold *somen* noodles. According to Hiroshi Yamashita, a chef who specializes in regional cuisine, volume and color are central to this type of cuisine. Although the dish and the flavors of the dish have changed a lot throughout time, the taste of this food is synonymous with traditions and community.

Figure 40. *Nama* raw *sawachi*

---

[66] Literally means prepared live. The fish is supposed to resemble its natural state.

The preparation of *Sawachi* is a communal endeavor requiring cooking collaboration. The head chef of Sansuien, Yasushi Kikuchi, explained that sharing food and drinks as well as group preparation is a key feature of Kōchi regional cuisine. At Sansuien, a traditional inn that caters to large parties, *sawachis* must be prepared in advance.[67] In an impressive display of speed and collaboration, half a dozen chefs prepared before my eyes 60 *sawachi* plates for the evening guests. The feat could only be achieved by a tight knitted group of cooks that could efficiently perform each task. Pragmatically speaking, each dish requires so much labor that it only makes sense for cooks to be responsible for the preparation of one dish in order to later "build" together a *sawachi* plate. According to chef Hidetsugu Takuda, all hands in the kitchen contribute to the elaboration of the dish. In this manner, a little personal touch coming from each cook goes into the taste of the dish. Atsuko Matsuzaki explains that the collective dimension of *sawachi* is anchored on the collective past of the region. She argues that such practice is based on community work, like house raising and rice transplanting, central to the notion of rural identity. Such organic solidarity is reenacted in the production of the dish. Therefore, *sawachi* cuisine is not only consumed collectively, it is prepared collectively. Participation in *sawachi* cuisine preparation helps solidify community bonds whether it is in the kitchen of a restaurant or in someone's home.

*Sawachi* cuisine is consumed on special occasions including the week after New Year's as a substitute for *Osechi Ryōri*.[68] According to the Sukumo city women cooperative, *sawachi* is a central part of the local cuisine and identity that is essential to any celebration. In weddings of the past, people from the surrounding areas would travel long distances in order to come together and feast for sometimes up to three days. These celebrations were an important moment for the community as it enabled people to stay in touch with distant relatives. For the Kawamura family living in Kōchi city, whole neighborhoods participated in *sawachi* cuisine preparation and celebration. In Japan, villages or neighborhood are social units that provide

---

[67] One of the most famous *ryokan*, or inn, in Kōchi, which offers *sawachi* catering. See http://www.sansuien.co.jp.

[68] *Osechi ryori* is food prepared to last seven day after New Year's when all the shops are closed.

cohesion to local communities (Takezawa 2012). On that subject, Atsuko Matsuzaki explains that the preparation and consumption of *sawachi* cuisine promotes community unity (*kessoku*) in Kōchi. According to her, *sawachi* preparation was organized as a rotation among various participants in the community in a system similar to communal rice reaping (*inekari*). She laments that as this form of group cuisine disappears, residents are losing part of what keeps the community united. Here as elsewhere, community values, that are strongly tied to food, are seen as a fundamental part of the regional culture.

The communal preparation of *sawachi* is a symbolic representation of the importance of community values in Kōchi. According to a Kōchi International Association (KIA) volunteer, people would travel long distance to attend *okyaku* celebrations. They would all bring with them local ingredients and dishes that would then be arranged in a coherent whole on a *sawachi* plate. Simply put, *sawachi* becomes a sort of potluck of its own where different dishes are brought together in a coherent whole. In addition, she reminds me that in the countryside, everybody, including strangers, is invited to partake in a *sawachi* feast (*okyaku*). These type of feasts were originally tied to local festivals celebrating the guardian sprits of the village and the ancestors (Didierjean 2006). During these celebrations, in Kōchi, the food would then be consumed in the communal form of a *sawachi*. By putting together different dishes brought from distant places, the cuisine symbolically creates unity out of diversity. The people partaking in *sawachi* consumption are incorporating a small part of this diversity into their bodies. Furthermore, the shared preparation includes these distant members into a symbolic community. In rural regions, reliance on the extended community was essential for farming survival. Activities like rice planting or harvesting that involved the whole community were always followed by a shared meal. This practice still endures in mountain villages across Kōchi where old people get together in the spring to collect mountain vegetables, process them and consume them in a great feast. *Sawachi* is a clear reminder of these days of communal living.

"[*Sawachi*] plates enable to serve side by side delicious foods that can be taken freely in small proportions, shared over the exchange of drinks where old, young, men and women can

collaborate in an essential feature of the cuisine of the region" (Kōchi Prefecture Education Board 2011).

As this quote attests, *sawachi* is not only the result of community collaboration; it is an idealized portrayal of values that emerge out of this same community. However, *sawachi* cannot be a loose arrangement of different dishes, as it must obey certain rules that create some sense of coherence in the representation of people of the region. In the information magazine for the international community in Kōchi, *sawachi* cuisine is described as "an essential part of any Kōchi banquet (Kōchi International Association 2012). Delicious meals such as assorted sashimi, sushi, boiled food, fried food, and desert such as *azuki*-bean jelly and various kinds of fruit are arranged artistically in a large ceramic plate." When making a *sawachi*, it is essential to make sense of the shear diversity of food using "artistic" rules of aesthetics. For Masato Odani, chef and instructor at RKC Culinary School, a well-constructed and representative *sawachi* should include the three bounties of Kōchi: mountain, river and sea. Chef Futoshi Machido explains that "for *sawachi*, fishermen bring fish, people living in the mountain bring mountain vegetable, everyone contributes with what they have. It is a community feast" (interview 04/14/15). The food must be brightly colored with the addition of exotic fruits and the use of aluminum foil to prop up the food. Although exotic fruits and aluminum foil are obviously a deviation from traditional plates, the respect of appropriate color and volume (*banransu*) trumps tradition in the construction of authenticity.

Today, few people prepare *sawachi* cuisine at home. Most people have it catered by specialized stores for special occasions. When people stop making *sawachi* cuisine, the dish loses its purpose as an instrument of social cohesion. In downtown Kōchi, *sawachi* has become cultural attractions for domestic tourism. Restaurants that cater to tourists offer small *sawachi* plates for two in order to accommodate travelling couples. Eating a *sawachi* for two makes as much sense as having a party for two people for Kōchi residents. What happens when *sawachi* cuisine gets divorced from its original function? The values of community and sharing that were originally incorporated in the dish, and were an integral part of the dinning experience, become disassociated with the regional social context that saw its rise. *Sawachi* becomes then something different with a different signification, a different purpose and even

perhaps a different taste. For Kōchi residents, it matters a great deal who cooks the food, how it is cooked and how it is eaten. A meal cooked by a family, or in some cases with several families, will taste better than one cooked by a restaurant or alone. Without *sawachi* making knowledge, the region not only loses part of its culture, it also loses a characteristic taste that defines its regional identity. Kōchi local residents are well aware of this fact. Significant efforts have been put in place by the prefectural government in tandem with schools and women's cooperative to conserve these cooking traditions and the cultural practices that are tied to them.

Once a year, the RKC Culinary School organizes a graduation fare where students display self-elaborated menus in an open exhibition. In February 2015, only two graduating students out of a hundred chose to present a *sawachi* themed menu. Although *sawachi* might be an enduring symbol of Kōchi cuisine, it seems to be losing popularity. The flavors of a traditional *sawachi* are difficult to relate to for younger generations. When I attended a traditional *sawachi* cuisine lesson at RKC, I noticed that few students were eager to try the food they had painstakingly prepared in groups. They explained that few young people enjoy the taste of traditional *sawachi* anymore. *Sawachi* preparation requires significant time investment, which most families do not have these days. As the preparation fades out of practice, so does the taste for it. *Sawachi* is to a certain degree chained to the regions past and not its future. As discussed in chapter 1, these traditional forms of cooking must balance tradition and innovation to remain alive. *Sawachi* cuisine is occasionally taught in middle schools in Kōchi. As few families prepare this cuisine any longer, women groups in tandem with local schools teach *sawachi* cuisine to students. Preparing this cuisine gives incentives for younger generations to eat it. As the students are being exposed to the food and its preparation, they gradually internalized a fondness for its taste. In the classroom, the preparation of *sawachi* is a group effort that allows students to bond with each other and with the older instructors and connect at a deeper level with a regional cuisine.[69]

---

[69] This interpretation was based on an analysis of participant observation and of thank you notes written by the students.

Figure 41. Middle school *sawachi* class

# II. Culture of Sharing

## 1. A Market Like No Other

Beyond the entrance's vinyl curtains, a new world presents itself. The place is lit with bright neon light, smells of food and cigarettes permeate the air and one can hear the constant buzz of dozen of conversations. Sixty-two small shops compete over the visitors' attention hawking their wares and displaying colorful signs advertising their food. As always, a long line snakes around Miyojimaru, the most famous *katsuo no tataki* shop in Kōchi. All ages are present in the market, from squirming small children to gossiping old ladies. At one table, retired women are sharing food and drinking non-alcohol beer. They are laughing, cheering and enjoying each other's company. At another table, three old men wearing identical light blue *happi* vest which on the back reads "blind drunk crew" (*deisuigumi*) are stumbling from table to table offering drinks to acquaintances and strangers alike. Large tables are crammed to occupy every inch of space in the market. In the market, it is bad etiquette to refuse the company of others so most tables are shared by different groups of people. Customers purchase dishes

from their favorite shops and place them in the middle of the table. Diners steadily pick at the food in between each sip and gossip so loudly that nothing remains a secret for too long. As the night progresses, the very young and the very old leave room to a youthful crowd of intoxicated patrons. At the closing time, the speakers chime “Auld Lang Syne” and the last stragglers are ushered out of the Hirome market.

Figure 42. Hirome dining room

The origin of the name of the Hirome market is shrouded in mystery. According to the former Hirome market website, the word *hirome* can be translated as the expression “to spread.” The three objectives of Hirome are therefore (1) to spread the culture of Kōchi that takes pleasure in the basic necessities of life, (2) to spread the knowledge, art and culture of Kōchi and (3) to spread the character of the region of Kōchi (Hirome Company 2014). These values taken to be central tenets of the region represents unique selling points for the market. On the welcome page of the website, where one can read: “Every day, customers from inside and outside of the prefecture gather to enjoy the food of Kōchi at the Hirome market” (Hirome Company 2015). The market provides guidelines on “how to enjoy the market” advising patrons to share tables, to socialize with the company of new people and to build meals from a variety of small dishes (instruction available at each table). In this manner, the Hirome market is presented as a regional cultural experience. It invokes the past with some level of nostalgia attached to it. At the entrance of the market, a large sign reads “Hirome market a current era romantic shopping arcade” (*heisei roman shōtengai*). In Japan, the romantic period corresponds to the Taisho era, a time when modernization and westernization became rapidly incorporated into a Japanese hybrid society. Interestingly, the updated version of the website now explains that the name

*hirome* in fact dates further back to the days of the Tosa domain giving historical legitimacy to the market (Hirome Company 2015).

According to Naoyuki Okamoto, president of the Hirome Company, the goal of the market is to create an environment of hospitality (*omotenashi*) that the region is famous for. The market was envisioned as a place reasonably priced and unpretentious. It was to feature local cuisine, like seared bonito tuna and moray eel, but more importantly, it was to be a space where people could share seats at the same table (*aiseki*) and communicate. According to the Hirome Company statistics, the market receives around 2.7 million visitors yearly which peaks on weekend with between 10 to 15 thousand visitors a day (Hirome Company 2014). Okamoto explained that the goal is to attract a local clientele during the week and tourists during weekend. Although most customers are in their 20s and 30s (42%), the clientele's age range is spread out with 11% of visitors in their 60s (Hirome Company 2014). According to Nahoko Taniguchi, an office worker from Kōchi, most shops at Hirome market are branches of larger established shops in Kōchi. She explains that the market was inspired by similar revitalization initiatives common 20 years ago (*yatai* village). Local revitalization is one of main objectives of the Hirome project according to the company's business outline. The market is expected to generate an influx of money as it has the potential to attract tourists from outside the prefecture while it encourages local residents to circulate money within the local economy when they consume at the market.

In Japan, social, as well as physical spaces, can be separated into public and private sphere. Sharing food with a total stranger rarely occurs as it is meant to signify social proximity where sharing food equals social ties. The Hirome market follows an unwritten code of behavior for diners that characteristic of the region. Food is always placed in the middle of the table in order to share it with others. Offering food to strangers can be used as way to initiate a conversation and indicate willingness for social interactions. In addition, people seldom buy drinks for themselves. Instead they buy rounds of drinks or share bottles of beer and sake. Hirome is so busy during peak hours that one has no choice than sharing seats with other patrons. As the night unfolds, these makeshift arrangements morph into much more than sharing a seat a table, as people will end up sharing drinks, food and conversation. A quick

survey of the tables at the market will reveal that the vast majority of people share food. According to Hideki Kawamura, it is a wide held belief in Kōchi that food is made for sharing. Pragmatically, sharing food enables one to order many different dishes adding diversity to a meal. Symbolically, the conviviality of sharing food enables to forge social bonds between diverse groups of people. I argue that food tastes better when it is shared because it helps bridge social gaps.

Sharing drinks is perhaps one of the most prominent features of the market. It is used as a social lubricant easing interactions between strangers. Conviviality is facilitated through the collective consumption of food and alcohol. Food sharing in the market is also done in the form of informal barter between shops. A shop might exchange drinks for a taste of another's shop *katsuo no tataki*. As the night comes to an end, many shop owners will be invited for drinks and a seat at the table of their regular customers. The most striking feature of Hirome is how natural it is to share space, food and drinks. When locals order food, he or she does not need to offer it but assumes that it will be shared by the whole table. This unique expression of commensality seems to come naturally to Kōchi residents, as it is a practice that makes locals feel comfortable. It is not uncommon to have chefs give free food to their regular customers. Sharing food this way creates a bond where favors are exchanged. On one occasion, I volunteered to help Kazuhide Yoshikawa, a Hirome chef, to make hundreds of *futomaki* rolls in preparation for an upcoming celebration. Needless to say, I was later treated to a meal and maintained a privileged relation with the restaurant. Exchange in food can happen the other way around where regular customers who are farmers and fishermen might giveaway some of their product to a restaurant.

## 2. Part of the Community

There is a tacit understanding that the Hirome market does not have the best restaurants in Kōchi. Yet, people keep coming back to a taste that is tied to an atmosphere. Although the market cannot claim to have a monopoly of taste, locals keep coming back because it is a space where Kōchi's characteristic patterns of food socialization can be expressed in an

unpretentious form. In the market, it is not regarded as odd if one goes around talking to everyone. Since everyone in the market could potentially be a person you might talk to, Hirome becomes a place where no one is a stranger anymore. It is key to understand that by choosing to eat at Hirome, one becomes a part of the extended community. At the market, one partakes in conviviality and camaraderie rather than passive commensality. Even the cleaning crew will come and joke and talk with people sitting around the table. On multiple occasions, I tried to position myself as an outside observer, taking notes and refraining from social interactions at the market. These attempts never lasted the whole night as sooner or later someone will drag you back within the market community by offering drinks, food or conversation. Meeting people is part of the nightly ritual where one might start the night alone but few end up by themselves the whole night.[70] In fact, remaining alone and isolated in the market is viewed as rude or showing a lack of respect for the people that are there to socialize. Far from being uncommon in Japan, withdrawing from everybody's presence at the dinner table is considered impolite at the Hirome market.

Rules of sociality are different in the market than in any other drinking establishment. Cheering strangers and starting a conversation with people you do not know is *de rigueur* in the market whereas it is a cultural *faux pas* outside the prefecture. Few tourists are prepared for this when they visit the market with many surprised by such warm welcoming. On one occasion, a couple visiting from Kyoto were so excited to be sharing food with strangers "Kōchi style" that they immortalized the moment with a staged pictures of them partaking in such picturesque commensality. On many occasions, the unparalleled convivial spirit of the market surprised my friends and family visiting from abroad. Shyness and social isolation is a recurrent theme in how Japan is perceived abroad. At the opposite, rural inhabitants in Kōchi and elsewhere in Japan pride themselves for their open and community driven spirit (Embree 1939). In Hirome, people tend to be gregarious, loud and straightforward because these qualities embody the ideals of a region. Hirome market is of crucial importance because it shapes the views that outsiders, as well as locals, have of the prefecture's culture.

---

[70] According to Hirome Company statistics 29% of customers come alone.

Figure 43. Making friends in Hirome

Kōchi values seem to permeate the culture of the market. This culture of sharing, whether real or imagined, plays a large role in shaping the contemporary expression of the social interaction at the market. The Hirome market is a major tourist attraction in Kōchi. Although the market is a bit over a decade old, it has become the default ambassador of the regional culture. For this reason, it is worthwhile for larger restaurant institution to posses a small branch in the market. The use of the term *Tosa ryori* (Kōchi cuisine) is ubiquitous in the market and is used as selling point to the tourists who flock to the market. However, limited traditional dishes are sold in the shops as shops and customers favor more contemporary food fares. For example, one shop's specialty is springy fried potatoes (*mochimochi poteto*) obviously a break with tradition. The traditional *sawachi* is nowhere to be ordered as its price is too high for the clientele and the logistic for such a dish would be complicated in an area with limited kitchen space. In addition, *okyaku* are also less and less common in Kōchi as they signify the past and a forgotten tradition. Traditional elements of Kōchi regional cuisine like *sawachi* and *okyaku* are slowly eroding as less and less young people choose to practice them. Do their disappearance signify the end of the regional food culture of Kōchi?

I argue that the Hirome market is in fact a modern reinterpretation of elements of traditional Kōchi food culture like *sawachi* and *okyaku*. Although certain aspects of this cuisine have changed over time, these culinary traditions conserve some continuity in time. The shared table becomes an analogy for the *sawachi* while Hirome market operates under the same rules as an *okyaku*. In Hirome, it is customary for people to gather their favorite food to construct a meal that will be set up in the middle of the table for everyone to share like a *sawachi*. Just like in an *okyaku*, it is expected for people to move from table to table to drink and share food with friends and strangers. All are welcome and drinking is expected. As argued in chapter 1, social structures that keep a community together like *okyaku* and *sawachi* do not all fade into obscurity; some are transformed and adapted to new social settings. Social transformations do take place but they are often mitigated by a system that strives for transmission and continuity of the same social structure. In contrast, north of Kōchi sits the prefecture of Kagawa and its capital Takamatsu. Eager to emulate the success of the Hirome market, Takamatsu entrepreneurs decided to build a market like the one on Kōchi (Okamoto Interview 05/26/15). After a few years of business, the market closed down because the locals just did not get why they should share drinks, food and company with total strangers.

While in Kōchi, I spent many evening at the Hirome market. On one of my early visits, I noticed a person I dubbed the old man of Hirome. The old man was very short with a tan complexion and a sad expression on his face. He always wore the same clothes: a black baseball hat worn backwards, a black aviator jacket, baggy yellow Japanese laborer pants and black rubber boots. Although he was inconspicuous, I could not help but notice him every time I came sitting in a corner and sipping on tea or coffee in a paper cup. He was always alone, and I never saw him order anything. Who was the old man? Why did he come into the market every night? Why was he not socializing? I never talked to him and never saw anyone else talk to him. He was like a ghost that no one ever noticed. Shortly before the end of my fieldwork, I saw him in one of Kōchi's shopping arcade. He was pushing an old rusty bicycle with what seemed to be all his belonging tied in blue and white plastic fabric. In Japan, homeless people are invisible outcasts. It seems that as a Kōchi resident, the old man felt the need to experience the market community every night but the physical space of the market was as close as he would ever get.

## 3. Drinking Culture

While in Kōchi, I was invited to attend a closing celebration (*uchiage*) for a regional festival. The organizers had reserved a large banquet room of a popular inn in order to accommodate the hundred guests. The Japanese style (*washiki*) banquet room with tatami mats had long rows of banquet tables set close to the ground. On each table were placed large open beer bottles at regular intervals. The opening toast (*saisho kanpai*) was announced shortly after I arrived. The serving staff, carrying hand-held wooden carriers each containing six large beers, expertly substituted the now empty bottle for fresh ones. As drinks are always consumed with food, on the central table, waitresses pealed off plastic wrap that was protecting the content of large serving plates with food. As the night advanced, the chaotic sight of a hundred people eating, drinking and talking all at once was curbed by the strict drinking etiquette. At all times, the revelers around me made sure to keep my glass full or take offense if I poured my own drink. A young man about to serve me more beer, stopped, looked at the almost empty beer and poured the remaining liquid in his own glass as it would be rude of him to give me the flat end of the beer. Beer is the default drink in Kōchi celebration as it is well suited for repeat toasting. Once the food is finished, the participants go on rounds from table to table pouring and cheering all guests. I was then ushered to the table where a group of men were drinking heavily. They introduced me to a regional drinking tradition called *henpai*. The principle was very simple: using one shared cup, you nominate someone to down a drink, which they in turn will do for you. Once the party was over, the announcement was made over the microphone and a hundred drunk people left the room in a surprisingly orderly manner while the most intrepid of the participants prepared themselves for further rounds of drinking.

Among elements of commensality, sharing alcohol appears to be central to Japanese sociality. Sake consumption is historically codified with drinking in Japan is used as a tool of social cohesion. The ritualized consumption of sake incarnates the desire to be part of a larger social group (Cobbi 1992). Drinking is a communal occupation that enables socializing among peers and winding down from the daily stress. However, drinking is serious business in Japan. On

one hand, the drinking industry is a lucrative business. The Suntory group, for example, is one of the largest alcoholic drinks conglomerate with sales that reach 12 billion dollars a year (Moeran 2002). On the other hand, social drinking is often a necessary step in a Japanese business transaction. Hideki Kawamura explained that an essential part of his job is to drink with partners and customers to establish bonds of trusts before making a sale. Japanese people also drink to solidify work relationships and create a space were they can, unlike other hierarchical situations, freely express themselves. This freedom of expression that occur during drinking outings has been referred to as *nominication*, a combination of *nomi* to drink and communication (Buzzi and Megele 2012). Drinking can be political as people might discuss decisions that will affect a village, a region and even the nation. At a political rally, Hideki Kawamura explained to me that a local politician was worthless because he could not drink. When I asked what drinking had to do with his political competence, he simply replied that drinking was the most important part of the job of politician.

Although the consumption of alcohol in Kōchi fits in the Japanese cultural context, a significant amount of evidence points to the fact that there are differences in Kōchi drinking culture. Kōchi is the largest consumer of beer in the nation with an average of 81 liters/person/year, that is, almost twice the national average (Statistics Japan 2016). Kōchi residents explain that beer is a good match for the boldly flavored Kōchi cuisine. In addition, beer is well suited to the large amounts of drinking required for Kōchi style banquets. Local sake (*jizake*) is also famous in the region of Kōchi. According to Dana Bert, employee at Kikusui brewer, Kōchi style dry sake is ideal because one can drink much more dry sake than sweet sake. In Kōchi, women are often called *hachikin* (women with eight balls), which alludes as much to their strong personality than to their ability to drink. In most regions of Japan, drinking is typically a man's occupation (Moeran 2002). However, most women in Kōchi take pride in their ability to drink. Moreover, many drinking customs unique to the region encourage socialization around the table. For example, *bekuhai* is a traditional drinking game sold in souvenir shops consisting in a treadle and different size sake cups (Bamforth 2005). Perhaps the most popular drinking custom in Kōchi is *henpai* where the participants take turns downing glasses of beers back and forth until someone gives up. When sharing a *sawachi*, you cannot decline a drink or else someone might shout at you "are you trying to

insult me" (Matsuzaki 1986). In Kōchi, drinking etiquette dictates that typical roles are inverted so that the person higher in the hierarchy will first poor a drink for people lower in the social hierarchy (Matsuzaki 1986).

Kōchi residents have incorporated the belief that drinking culture has been part of their sociality from times immemorial. According to Kazuyuki Takuma, professor of folklore history, a fermentation vessel found in Kōchi that dates back to the Jomon period is proof of prehistoric alcohol consumption in the region. Although it was most likely used for religious celebration, the vessel helps cement the ancestral presence of this unique drinking culture in the mind of the professor's local audience. In Kōchi dialect (*tosaben*), the expression "*shirafu no sake*" (lit. I am sober on sake) is used to mean that one has not drunken enough (Sumida personal communication 04/21/15). Moreover, rumor has it that at emblematic drinking establishments like Habotan, no one leaves sober helping cement drinking culture as a salient part of the regional culture.[71] According to the shop's website, "true Tosa spirit demands that people share drinks together." When I went to visit Yasuo Tokuhisa, a coral jewelry craftsman, I was advised to never turn down food or drink when invited (Kawamura personal communication 07/21/14). Having learned this lesson, the next time I visited the Sumida farming household, I made sure not to turn down the beer the patriarch handed me in the morning. I suspect that his gesture had to do as much with Kōchi hospitality than giving him an excuse to drink in front of his wife. It is widely believed that Kōchi farmers and fishermen like to drink as soon as they get up which is substantiated by people drinking in markets like Hirome as early as eight in the morning.

---

[71] Self-titled "Tosa ethnic *izakaya* Habotan." See website http://habotan.jp.

Figure 44. A Kōchi drinking party

Kōchi residents' proclivity for alcohol consumption is not a new one. Religious celebrations of the past involved much drinking where people showed their devotion to the gods by being intoxicated (Kōchi Prefecture Cultural Life Section 2011). Kōchi funeral (*sōshiki*) are intrinsically tied to alcohol consumption. According to Toshihiro Okabayashi, people drink and eat in honor of the person who passed away at funerals. The gathering is supposed to be a cheerful farewell to the soul of the departed. In particular, *okyaku* celebrations that were tied to local shrines were times of considerable alcohol consumption. Tales of drinking occupy a significant social space in Kōchi lore:

> Have you heard of the *haran* crew? This is the *haran* leaf. The garden is full of them. See you cut the leaf this way. It is not food but it is used for decoration on *sawachi*. They were leftover when the party was almost over […] When people indulged in too much drinking, they weren't able to go back. If they were drunk, they would not make it back home. Some people would drink until who knows when. When they went back, they passed out in the rice field irrigation ditch because it was a farming village. They would collapse in there […] When came first light, you would know how many people collapsed by checking on

> how many sandals were forgotten. That was usual for a farmer village *okyaku* (Matsuzaki interview 03/24/15).

Communion through alcohol is still very much alive in contemporary festivals. Although few Kōchi residents equate drinking to religious devotion, the communal sharing component seems to define how people drink at local festivals. For example, the *yosakoi* regional dance festival revolves around communal drinking. Members of the team drink before, after and between each performance.

Alcohol consumption is central to how Kōchi residents define themselves. Historically, as was said above, communal drinking was practiced as occasional displays of reverence and communion with local deities. At the same time, these drinking celebrations were a way to solidify bonds of trust and kinship within the community. Much more than a simple metaphor for community, commensal drinking events in Kōchi are a time and a place when people can perform their belonging to the community. The practice of sharing drinks and food constitutes a social distinction that differentiates Kōchi residents from other people. This type of commensality is professed to be in continuity with a long tradition of communal drinking. Food, drinks and socializing are so intricately woven together in the region that it becomes difficult to dissociate them. Although Kōchi's characteristic generosity might be the result of regional culture as much as alcohol intoxication, such camaraderie is a core value that Kōchi residents have embodied making it an intrinsic part of their identity. Drinking together makes individuals a part of an extended community that symbolizes the region as a whole. As the experience of socializing is fashioned through drinking practices, so is the socially constructed palate of the drinkers. Taste can hardly be dissociated from the social rituals that are essential to enjoyment where good food without drinks is not good food anymore. Thus, the social cohesion that result from drinking is a central part of the Kōchi meal that contributes to its overall enjoyment.

# III. Tasting the Community

## 1. Incorporating Regional Practice

When we eat, we not only feed our body with nutrients, we fulfill our desire to be social beings. Around the table, we learn rules of society, act out our social roles, develop empathy for the other and, by consuming the same food, literally and symbolically become part of a community. As we consume shared food, social values are incorporated into our being. Hence, the principle of incorporation coined by the popular saying "you are what you eat" apply both biologically and symbolically (Fischler 1988). Commensality can be thought of as a collective incorporation where members of the community choose to ingest the nutritional value of food and the value it socially represents. The meal and the cuisine of the region, that is shared with strangers, acts as an analogy where the guest is transformed into a member of the family (Oxfeld 2017:158). It is worth noting that in the case of commensality, it is not necessary that all individuals identify themselves to the same social group. What matters here is not only the action of sharing food but also that everyone eats the same food in order to absorb the salient features of the food (Fischler 2011; Fischler 1988). The incorporated features can be a tradition, a place and, in the case of this chapter, the regional values of the community.

The sense of togetherness one experiences through taste is contingent on community but does not resume itself to identity construction. As Jean-Pierre Corbeau puts it:

> "L'incorporation des nourritures ne se réduit pas à cette construction identitaire, elle est aussi—nous serions tentés de dire surtout—sources de plaisirs… Plaisir gustatifs qui s'oppose aux dégouts, plaisir d'affirmer un lien social (à travers une filiation ou dans l'ici et maintenant d'un partage), plaisir de signifier sa distinction" (Corbeau and Poulain 2008).

In short, the incorporation of food should not be reduced to identity construction but should take into account that it is the source of pleasures that are both gustative and social. I argue

that the shared incorporation of food symbolically representative of the group reveals how social and gustative pleasures are bound together. Thus, food tastes good because it is shared and because it carries the values of a community.

The practice of sharing food is deeply embedded in the regional habitus. In addition, to sharing food around the tables, most residents have incorporated food giving as second nature. Food gifts are not unique to the region of Kōchi as sharing food souvenirs (*omiyage*) are essential in Japan. These gifts are anchored in distant religious practice that create mutual obligation in Japanese society (Aymard, Grignon, and Sabban 1993). Such exchange systems are "total phenomena" that build social relationships between people (Mauss 1969). In order for such exchange to create social solidarity, it must be reciprocated (Mauss 1969). However, this exchange is not only based on pragmatism, as it is also emotional. In her study of rural Guangzhou, anthropologist Ellen Oxfeld (2017:183) suggests that "As food gifts circulate, webs of human feeling are both reinvigorated and produced." In Kōchi, food gifts might be a structured system of social obligation that is incorporated so that it is not the result of overt calculation but an act of sincere generosity.

## 2. Regional Character

Hideki Kawamura, a friend from university and a current Kōchi resident, often invited me for dinner at his apartment. On days his wife Keiko Kawamura would not be home, I would cook dinners for the both of us. After one of our meals, Hideki suggested we video call Keiko who was on a two week business trip in Tokyo. She showed us her dinner, which consisted of convenience store (*kombini*) food. I reminded her that she was in a city with some of the best food in the world and that most people also ate alone in Tokyo. However, she explained that the food in Kōchi tasted far better than anything she had in Tokyo because it was shared around a table. Sharing meals and food is at the heart of what makes rural communities like Kōchi different from urban centers in Japan. Commensality in the region is an incorporated form of habitus, a set of structuring structure organizes practices and representations in people's daily life (Bourdieu 1984). As Kōchi residents are proud and live by this regional

cultural feature, it is more than mere practice. It is a symbolic representation of the community that shapes the expression of taste in the region. To be part of the Kōchi community, one needs to share the common commensal imperative. A meal that is not shared would not be the same for members of this extended community. Regional values such as generosity, hospitality, warmness, conviviality, and proximity feed into the same vision of regional character.

> You know what they say about the disposition of the inhabitants of the four prefectures of the island of Shikoku? Say if they found a 10 thousand yen note on the street? The Kagawa resident would put it into a saving account. The Ehime resident would surely spend it on shopping. The Tokushima resident would invest it in his business. However, the Kōchi resident would spend it on top of what he already planned to drink with friends. (Akitsu personal communication 01/19/15)

> When sales people from other prefectures come to market goods to Kōchi, Kōchi people are not concerned about negotiating prices they just want to know how much it costs. People from Kōchi have weak money power (*okanezurai hikui*). They have good personalities but not much perseverance. […] That's why they would use that extra 10 thousand yen. However, in the end, when it comes to where it is easiest to live, they say it is Kōchi. (Matsuzaki interview 03/24/15)

Motoki Akitsu, professor at Kyoto University, is a former Kagawa resident married to a Kōchi native. Atsuko Matsuzaki, an emeritus professor at the University of Kōchi, is an expert on regional cuisine. Both anecdotes are used to convey set beliefs about how Kōchi inhabitants freely spend money. The metanarrative developed by both professors is one that emphasizes fundamental temperaments that residents share as a cultural group. Although these anecdotes can hardly be taken as evidence of the predispositions of residents, the circulation of such stories gives credence to the larger metanarrative. Ultimately, anecdotes about regional characters matter to Kōchi residents because they believe them to be true. Hence, regional narratives of generosity and largess are incorporated and performed becoming part of people's daily lives.

For Kōchi residents, food sharing comes naturally without an afterthought. In the early days of my fieldwork, a man in his fifties carrying a plastic bag full of groceries accosted me on the train. As we discussed fly-fishing technique practiced in Kōchi (*ayu tomozuri*), he reached in his bag and handed me a green onion. He explained to me that Japanese green onions and sake were great for colds. As we continued to talk, he pulled out another green onion and handed it to me. By the time he got off the train, he had given me nearly all of his stash. When I recounted this story to Atsuko Matsuzaki, she told me that this was normal for Kōchi people to try to make you happy by giving you food. When my parents visited Kōchi, they were offered food by strangers: bakery goods by a drunken man on the train, ginger cough drops by two young women we had just met and *sugata* sushi from a chef at the Hirome market. These instances are more than anecdotal, as they are a way of life for most residents. In order to cement bonds of friendship and community farmers and fishermen in particular make a point to give food to visitors. The gift of food in Kōchi is an indicator of social proximity, an invitation into the in-group that does not raise eyebrows, as it is the norm in the region. This type of behavior is widespread in rural setting, what differs in Kōchi is the belief that such practice is central to their regional personality. Case in point, the honesty markets (*ryōshin ichi*) or unattended produce stalls where people can pay by dropping coins in a box, are seen as "unique to Kōchi" (Kawamura personal communication 05/08/15) and "a cultural staple of the region" (Kōchi International Association 2015).

Figure 45.   A honesty market in Kōchi city

Commensality epitomizes incorporated practice of regional food giving. As culture changes across the prefecture and between generations, it becomes harder to define Kōchi regional cuisine. Kōchi residents might disagree on the definition of the cuisine of Kōchi, yet, all agree that sharing food is a fundamental aspect of the cuisine. In particular, chefs insisted that Kōchi cuisine was meant to be shared. For Hakaru Kikuchi, chef at the Sansuien inn, shared food and drink are the redundant features of Kōchi cuisine as it changes throughout the prefecture. Similarly, chef Hidetsugu Takuda of Hamacho restaurant concurred that sharing *sawachi* was an essential part of Kōchi food culture. Regional cuisine is hard to define as it is expressed differently across the prefecture and is constantly changing through time. In Kōchi, the one constant that all can agree on is its emphasis on sharing and commensality. However, this is more than discourse as residents have embodied this behavior as a cultural reality. In their mind, commensality is not only something people say, it is something that people live by. In the Kōchi context, sharing food is not only assumed, it is the norm to expect and anybody doing otherwise would, I am sure, be considered rude by the standards of the region.

## 3. Community as a Resource

Like many other rural regions of Japan, Kōchi prefecture is plagued with economic and demographics difficulties. As discussed in previous chapters, the prefecture's demographic and economic difficulties are not unlike those of other rural regions but they seem to be particularly exacerbated in Kōchi. As the national government seeks solutions to revitalize dying rural regions, it provides more autonomy to regional government to use their own resources and creativity all the while foisting an important part of the responsibility upon the local population (Love 2007). It is in this economic and political context that the theme of community reliance has emerged in the region. When few opportunities exist, intangible assets like family and community are invoked throughout the prefecture as the answer to these pressing problems. The governor of Kōchi, Masanao Ozaki, says it best:

> The most appealing part [of Kōchi] is its warmth. While drinking, you can befriend anyone. Neighbors and people you meet for the first time will take good care of you. In Kōchi prefecture, "the ties between people" that have been nearly lost in cities remain alive. In this manner, Kōchi prefecture is like a large family. By all means, come and have fun with the Kōchi family and feel the warmth of the family (Kōchi Prefectural Government 2015).

In Kōchi, community is an attractive resource that can be use to economically revitalize the region. The prefectural government campaign called "the Kōchi family" (*Kōchikei*) exemplifies the efforts to exploit regional cultural resources. The initial goal of the campaign was to respond to the decreasing birth rate and the aging population by promoting relocation plans to Kōchi. The logic was that the operation would attract young disillusioned urbanites in search of community to region (Okabayashi interview 06/10/15). Thus was born "the Kōchi family" with an easily recognizable logo and slogan "We are one big family in Kōchi prefecture" (*Kōchiken ha, hitotsu no daikazoku yaki*). Today, various manifestations of "the Kōchi family" are used to promote numerous aspects of the region that range from tourism campaign to Kōchi produced commodities. The theme song for the campaign successfully

manages to capture the sense of belonging so important to the region.[72] Values pertaining to community and sharing food and drinks emerge as a symbolic representation of the region and its inhabitants. The implications are that if you move to Kōchi or if you visit Kōchi you can become part of a large extended family. As all social interactions in Japan are modulated by in-groups and out-groups (*uchi/soto*), being part of the in-group (i.e. the family) is an opportunity few would turn down. In the age of urban anonymity in Japan, this message seems to resonate with a number of young urban professionals.[73]

In a context where resources are scarce, symbols alluding to the local community can become a means to promote commodities in and outside the prefecture. "The Kōchi family" campaign has since its inception morphed into different products that operate with different objectives. It is at times a tool for the promotion of authentic souvenirs (*Kōchikei no eemon*), a produce label (*Kōchikei no yasai*), a guide to regional cuisine (*Kōchikei no shokutaku*) and an introduction to the charms of Kōchi by highlighting members of its family (*Kōchikei all-star*). In the process, "the Kōchi family" has become more than a slogan to attract outsiders, it is a brand name that is easily recognizable. For example, Shikoku bank combines it in its advertisement "the Kōchi family" logo with the English slogan "Just like family!" The "Nippon positive project," a direct extension of the Kōchi family, seeks to harness the positive transformative power of Kōchi's main resources, food, nature and family, to revitalize and make Japan move forward. Representations of "the Kōchi family" often tie together emblematic foods places in a commensal setting. For example, promotional material depict all the stereotypical elements of the region: an old man drinking sake, a *hachikin* woman, a *yosakoi* dancer, people playing *bekuhai*, a fisherman eating *katsuo no tataki*, a young boy drinking *yuzu* juice, a young man dead drunk and at its center a *sawachi* plate. The message that materializes out of this illustration is that these activities and tastes so characteristic of Kōchi are an integral part of the community.

---

[72] Note the symbolic presence of people gathering around the round traditional family table (*chabudai*) https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=kJwrnuXscac.

[73] For example, Ikeda Hayato a Tokyo transplant holds a blog on the topic: http://www.ikedahayato.com.

Figure 46. *Kōchike* table illustration

Let me tell you a strange story […] I was coming back from Tokyo. At that time, my legs were still good. I was traveling back by railway. At Takamatsu, you can ride the Dosan line straight from Okayama. When I got on board, it was full of people speaking the Tosa dialect. In front of me, you had two young women of about university age. Facing them, you had an old man in his sixties. It was a four-seat arrangement. We left Takamatsu and then passed by Oboke and Koboke gorges in the middle of the Shikoku mountains.

"Wow, wonderful," exclaimed the two young women.

The old man stared in their direction.

"Both of you are coming to Kōchi for tourism," he asked with a thick Kōchi accent.

"Yes, that's it."

"Where do you intend on staying tonight?"

"We haven't decided yet."

> "What? You haven't decided. That's not going to do. There are plenty of scary people around. You will stay at my house."
> The old man had just invited them. Don't you think that is even scarier? Both women were in an uncomfortable situation. I wanted to explain to them. Young people see it as strange but he was being earnest. I told you earlier about the room that sits beside the dining room where you can put *futons* so that people can stay over at any time. They did not understand because they were from outside the prefecture but the old man was just being kind. […] I laughed to myself and thought that was really an old [Kōchi] farmer. (Matsuzaki interview 03/24/15)

As this quote attest, the concept of *omotenashi*, the spirit of selfless hospitality, is arguably one of the most salient cultural resources of the region. *Omotenashi* literarily means to entertain wholeheartedly; paying attention to the finer details in order to make every guest feel at home. This cultural concept is not unique to Kōchi as it became the catchword for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (Schreiber 2018). In a country where politeness dominates social interactions, the government is actively encouraging police officers, the travel industry and the hospitality industry to embody the ideal of *omotenashi*. This selfless hospitality intersects with ideas of family and community that are ever so present in the region. *Omotenashi* is a valuable resource that can contribute to tourism while at the same time shaping Kōchi residents' self-definition. The prefectural tourism department strives to harness Kōchi's *omotenashi* spirit. In 2013, a dramatized movie presents the story of a young employee of the section working to boost tourism in Kōchi.[74] The central theme of the movie revolves around how to revitalize the region through the use of hospitality. The real life prefectural section set up a number of fuzzy conceptual objectives in the hopes to attract visitors. Concretely, the section focuses on making Kōchi more hospitable to tourists with cleaner facilities and better tourist guidance.

Although selfless hospitality is not seen as unique to Kōchi, most residents of the region see themselves as the inheritors of a long tradition of hospitality. According to Hideko Mitani,

---

[74] For a trailer of the movie "Omotenashika" see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neWH1UQ55uA.

principal at RKC, *omotenashi* is key to understanding Kōchi as it is part of the regional culture. Kōchi's *omotenashi* finds its roots in the 88-temple pilgrimage across Shikoku. Pilgrims (*ohenro*) travel the road around the island in order to visit each temple on the road of enlightenment. In the past, these pilgrims would rely on the hospitality of temples and locals to be fed and sheltered (*gozettai*). People from Kōchi are fond of pilgrims often giving them food, drinks and sometimes even money. An important part of the appeal of the pilgrimage is being welcomed and supported by the local community. For Mitani, "food is central. It affects tourism. If you come to Hirome market, for example, everybody will eat together. All of these things create *omotenashi*. It always revolves around food." In Kōchi, hospitality is embedded in the regional food culture to the point where they appear as natural. Random acts of generosity towards strangers are part of an incorporated set of values that persist in the region.

## Conclusion

Notions of community articulated through the food culture of the region is at the same time an embodied practice, a taste experienced, an economic resource, and a link to tradition. The food of Kōchi is meant to be shared and would hardly be the same if taken out of this social context. Ways of eating, and by extension ways of being, permeate the cultural sphere becoming social structures that guide people's lives. This habitus is reproduced through patterns of communal preparation and consumption that persist beyond the changes in the foodscape. The recycling of old ideas, say in the commensality of contemporary market like Hirome or in drinking culture of the new generations, attests to the enduring nature of these cultural habits. Symbolic representations of the community and its values persist in food culture of the region. *Sawachi* cuisine and *okyaku* banquets are still to this day real life metaphors of the community and the values they carry. Regional taste, incorporated regional practices and the larger community are bound as one in the region of Kōchi and can hardly be dissociated. Partaking in these regional patterns of cuisine and consumption allow actors to symbolically interact with a broader community. Sharing this cuisine and this region's food comes to signify social proximity where sharing the food and sharing the love for this food creates bonds of kinship among

members of the extended Kōchi family. Sharing a meal—perhaps the most potent form of socialization—operates as a metaphor for the Kōchi community. In this space, social and spatial boundaries can be broken down, if not permanently, at least during the time of meal. To eat Kōchi cuisine, to partake in its commensal and convivial celebrations and to share its food, is to become the region.

The form that commensality takes in Kōchi is not only different, local residents believe it to be unique and a defining characteristic of the regional culture. The prefectural government and local entrepreneurs exploit the image of community as a pillar of the culture and the taste of Kōchi. Since few opportunities are present in the region, the articulation of a regional character, community and food is tapped into for economic gains. The mercantile use of food and community confirms that this cultural resource is valuable to local residents. However, the relevance of these foods related representations is more than pragmatic, it is personal and affective. As social beings, we enjoy the interaction with others and therefore enjoy eating together. Taste is in great part modulated by this social context. As a preference, this singular perspective guides the taste that residents have for the food of the region. The taste of the region is permeated by symbolic content alluding to the community. Kōchi residents not only incorporate the values of the region, they also savors a part of their community. In Kōchi, residents perform and consume much more than the distilled essence of the region; they experience pleasure. Pleasure to belong to a community, to live by cherished values and to taste food like no other.

# Chapter 5. Regional Food Allegiances: Identity and Taste in Rural Japan

The remote tip of the western coast of Kōchi is called the Hata district. It takes about half a day to drive down the jagged coastline from Kōchi city but it is worth it. The mountains directly plunge into a sea of clear turquoise, the kind that can only exist in pacific island postcards. The calmness of it all slowly seeps into one's state of mind giving hints at why people choose to remain behind in such remoteness. The usual signs of decline, empty villages and closed businesses, only seem to enhance the moment. As I arrive in the quiet, fishing village, an elderly woman gestures me to enter a rickety wooden warehouse. It is hard to imagine that the wooden derelict has passed any safety inspection in the last twenty years. The building belongs to a women's cooperative and houses the last remaining handmade fishcake operation in the region. Locally caught white fish are ground into a paste and steamed until firm. Looking at the antiquated equipment, I trust that the process is done here the old-fashioned way. For the elderly local residents, the cooperative's fishcakes are the best, as others simply do not taste right. For me, it remains an acquired taste, an imprint of a place I remain to this day fiercely loyal to.

Taste in food radically changes from one place to another. For many people, it is more than mere culinary preference. It is something they identify to—a significant part of who they are. This chapter examines how food in some region is a constitutive part of people's identity. As we consume typical food, we physiologically and symbolically incorporate characteristic of the region. Food scholars have paid close attention to the interplay between identity politics and food preferences. Yet, few have explored how multiple levels of belonging participate in the social construction of the sense of taste. Moreover, although there is a common food culture in the region of Kōchi Japan, localized taste preferences also persist across the region. Notions of right taste, proper seasoning and appropriate use of ingredients are shaped by the food one grows accustomed to eating. In this case, identity is not only defined by loyalty to a given group but also by a myriad of cultural markers. As these values are often unconsciously

embodied, regional identity does not only condition people's food choices but also their palate. This process serves to explain the formation of unique allegiances that reside in regional notions of taste.

# I. Cuisine, Region and Identity

## 1. Incorporating the Region

Food is intrinsically connected to issues of identity as it not only nourishes but also signifies group belonging (Fischler 1988). When one consumes food, one biologically, as well as symbolically, becomes the food. The nutrients contained in the food are transformed into the building blocks of the body while the symbols associated with the food help build one's identity. In the context of this chapter, I will be paying closer attention to the latter one, that is, food as a system of meaning. Food practices solidify identity at different scales of spatiality that can be national, regional, local or individual. As stated earlier, one metabolizes nutriments from the unique *terroir*, while at the same time one inherits the symbolic qualities of the region. Through the consumption of ancestral products of the region the memory of place and self is physically incorporated within the body (Leitch 2003). In fact, the distinction between biological and symbolic incorporation of a regional identity through the consumption of its emblematic food is not always clearly demarcated. Thus, consuming—as well as tasting—food simultaneously engages with both the symbolic and the physical world.

The practice of incorporating food is also performance of identity as the act of consuming certain foods demonstrate to the world which community one belongs to. However, displays of loyalty are not only framed in terms of regional membership. For example, Japanese consumer groups advocate domestic consumption to avoid tainted foreign foods while Catholics incorporate the divine through the Eucharist. Affirmation of food identity is not uniquely expressed as a phenomenon grounded in local production, it is also a process of adaptation of hybrid elements taken from close as well as distant locations (Mallol 2013). In former colonial empires, consuming so-called ethnic food is akin to incorporating the Other.

For example in Britain, colonial attitudes about Indian endure in the fabrication and consumption of curry (Narayan 1995). This is not to say that performances that demonstrate food allegiance are static as new elements are added and old elements are removed from this symbolic register. As local food habits transform, new definition of this culinary identity can rapidly emerge. For instance, in the Solomon Islands, the adoption of rice was swift since it fit neatly into the practical and cultural fabric of the islands (Jourdan 2010). In this regard, consumption of food representative of the larger group remains a potent manifestation of belonging.

Finally, incorporated tastes, that are embodied preferences, constitute a form of regional habitus. This system of embodied regional disposition structures the way we perceive and make choices about food. Thus, the difference between good and bad taste is not anymore the function of subjective criteria but something that can be readily identify when one has incorporated all the elements necessary to evaluate the correct regional taste. According to Claude Fischler (1988), incorporating a particular food inscribes the consumer into a cultural system where identity is tied to taste. Local ingredients, food preparations and seasoning choices participate in a broader system of cultural beliefs in which group belonging is associated with a proper taste. Hence, inhabitants of the region of Kōchi have incorporated gustative preferences that define, as well as are defined by, regional identity. Taste in relation to identity becomes more than a marker of allegiance to a given group, it becomes an incorporated belief that derives from an internal cultural logic.

## 2. The Politics of Taste

Political action has played a large role in cementing the link between food, pleasure and identity. The Italian-founded Slow Food movement framed the challenge of preserving regional culinary knowhow in using strategies that mimic the ones used in the conservation of biodiversity (Siniscalchi 2013). Using the prism of Slow Food, consumer politics participate in local identity production (Leitch 2003). The Slow Food movement promotes location-specific food that are “good, clean and fair” where the pleasure of the table are intimately connected to

traditions of the past (Andrews 2008). The organization is particularly active in rural Japan (Shimamura 2006). The larger goals of the movement are political and economic in nature, yet, the movement's "universal right to pleasure" (Andrews 2008) relies on the tacit assumption that local traditional food tastes better than global industrial food. Although the discourse behind such movement criticizes industrial production and worldwide standardization of diet, it still aims at working within the global system promoting local tradition in a transnational movement. In this manner, agricultural producers of Kōchi frequently invoke Slow Food as a marketing strategy to sell produce to big cities.

Among politicized use of regional cuisine, the concept of *terroir* seems to emerge as a dominant paradigm. The link between land and food culture is certainly not new, however, the *terroir* phenomenon has been considerably amplified by fears of globalization of food and cultural practices (Csergo 1995). For this reason, scholars have argued that the mechanism of protection and promotion behind *terroir* can be used to protect regional specific tastes with the twin goal of fostering economic development and protecting local patrimony (Trubek 2008; Barraud 2010; Bérard and Marchenay 2004). This position fails to reveal that *terroirs* are fabricated and are, therefore, not the result of ancestral and unchanging practices. Strategies of food culture valorization are in fact subject to hegemonic discourses of regionalism and can in some case become a tool of homogenization (Demossier 2011; Lindholm 2008; Fournier 2005). In the game of power and money, *terroir* implicitly associate concepts of taste, place and identity. On one hand, researchers have argued that *terroir* are tools of resistance and reaffirmation of localized identity (Poulain 1997; Demossier 2011). On the other hand, the question of how local taste and preferences are shaped by this system of regional patrimonialization cannot be ignored. After all, the goal of promoting food from a specific *terroir* is not only to encourage consumption outside the area but also to stimulate local pride and gastronomic affinity in the area where it is produced.

One can hardly overstate the politization of regional cuisine in Japan. Common knowledge of regional food reinforced by the media and popular discourse create a fertile cultural context where most places are associated with a singular dish (Noguchi 1994; Bestor and Bestor 2011). As in *terroir*, the dish is the product of a unique environment and a unique cultural *savoir faire*

that connects cuisine, region and tradition. Unlike *terroir* and other European geographical indicator, the process of officializing regional specific food is still in its infancy in Japan. The sake industry in Japan seems to be an ideal candidate to market itself as *terroir* specific (Gray 2006; Baumert 2013). Furthermore, the Japanese government started enforcing in 2015 a new law on geographical indication that aims to protect regional food specificity as a brand that can be quality-controlled and sold as authentic to the consumer (Kimura 2015). However, to this day, no product from Kōchi has been nominated. It is undeniable that the association between place and food, whether common knowledge or certified, links taste as the sum of all the elements that makes it unique (i.e. techniques, ingredients, seasoning), with a sense of regional belonging.

## 3. Regional Allegiances

According to Sidney Mintz (1997), since cuisines respond to the need for social and political unity, the only genuine cuisine is one that emerges out of common social roots. The cuisine of Kōchi is the product of the larger regionalist discourse allowing the categorization, the construction and the legitimation of a regional identity. Regional discourse—just as regional cuisine—is performative in that it legitimizes the new definition of regional borders in order to be recognized against the dominant definition that ignores it (Bourdieu 1982). Crafting regional food allows a region not only to sustain regional identity (Everett and Aitchison 2008) but also effectively participate in the process of place-making in the collective imaginary (Costa and Besio 2011). Regional food as a fundamental signifier enables the people who eat it to display their allegiance all the while incorporating the essence of the region that in effect will enable them to become the region (Poulain 1997; Fischler 1988). As consumers become a constitutive part of the region, they incorporate a regional habitus that structures perception and choices.

As stated earlier, food allegiances are not static and transform throughout time. For instance, the New World chili pepper (*capsicum annuum*) affected local conditions diminishing the need to obtain distant black pepper and remolding regional identity around its consumption

while at the same time it was symbolically and physically transformed to fit its new socio-economic European context (Katz 2009). According to Esther Katz (2009), chili peppers were seen as a poor man's black pepper expanding rapidly in places where people could not afford imported spices. On the plains of Hungaria where large scale production made it readily available, cattle herders added the spice to their beef stew (*goulash*). During the consolidation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, The Hungarian nobility drew symbols of identity from folk culture to differentiate themselves from their Austrian counterparts (Katz 2009). Here as in other places, a re-articulation of identity is elicited by the act of consuming food (Ceisel 2013). In this dual process of consolidation of food culture, Kyoto residents symbolically partake in their city by eating *kyō yasai* heirloom vegetables (De St. Maurice 2012a) while tourists in French ski resorts experience the Savoie region through the *tartiflette* cheese casserole. Food consumption is in effect guided by the intrinsic desire to make sense of a world that is full of conflicting categories.

These food preferences are so thoroughly incorporated that they appear natural. They are not anymore only a reflection of one's politics but choices that are based on one's palate. For example, Kōchi inhabitants prefer sweet seasoning not as an expression of a conscious regional identity but because they are used to sweeter food. Although gustatory preferences can be articulated in terms of localized identity, they are not always the result of identity politics. Food that one has grown up eating, that other members of the community enjoy and that makes culinary sense shape Kōchi residents' taste preferences and perceptions. The expression of this regional taste goes beyond mere proclivity for certain food preparations. Although in part forged by notion of shared identity, these tastes preferences come to define aspects of personhood. The difference between good food and bad food become both the source of individuality and the source of belonging. Kōchi residents are fiercely proud of their food preference regardless of if they exactly mirror regional consensus. Nevertheless, some level of agreement can be ascertained about common regional taste preferences. Such food allegiances occupy a large part in the social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi explaining how out of the myriad of possibilities residents choose to eat as they do.

The Kōchi residents certainly have strong opinions about their regional cuisine, a centerpiece of their public image. The Kōchi University student blog, "Life in Kōchi,"[75] gives us some insight into how locals perceive their food culture. The local cuisine and local product categories are full of detailed research posts about the culinary culture that gives an intimate perspective on the regional food. For instance, for the *sawachi* cuisine entry, the blog explains that the large traditional serving plate used to serve regional dishes "shows the character of people in Kōchi." It's a type of food that perfectly matches the "original eating and drinking culture of Kōchi" as its consumption well encourages "the changing seats and eating, everyone tries to talk to as many people as possible". As for popular entertainment, the Kōchi theme song takes the listener on a nostalgic trip to different part of the prefecture.[76] The lyrics of the song: "drink as much as you want with *sawachi* cuisine, eat bonito with garlic" promulgates an image that links identity to food culture. Hence, Kōchi residents are part of this collective because they embrace this food culture, but more importantly, they embrace this food culture *because* they are part of the collective.

# II. Elements of Regional Taste

## 1. Unique Set of Techniques

It is Friday night at the RKC culinary school. The school is quiet and almost empty except for a few school administrators still working in the shared office and a group of five dedicated students waiting to attend a special cooking demonstration. I am introduced to tonight's guest, Machido *sensei* Kōchi's Moray eel (*utsubo*) cuisine specialist (*senmonka*). *Utsubo* or moray eel, an emblematic dish of Kōchi, will be prepared raw (*sashimi*), broiled (*tataki*) and fried (*karaage*). Machido *sensei* pulls out a slimy serpent-like creature out of stir foam box and

[75] The English blog features many post about the regional cuisine (http://lifeinKōchi.net/the-writers/).

[76] Although the Kōchi theme song was written with the intent to promote the region, it has also carry symbolic meaning for residents (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJwrnuXscac).

slaps it on the cutting board. He explains to his captivated audience that *utsubo* is different from other fish as it captures its pray with a second set of extendable jaw within its mouth. According to him, the beast might look like a sea aliens, but its taste has no equal. As he expertly debones the eel of its hundred of tiny bones, he explains that although it is also consumed in Kyushu and Wakayama, Kōchi has the best eels and has developed the best way to prepare them. He urges us not to discard the gelatinous skin because it contains much flavorful fat and collagen. The *sashimi* is sliced so thin it is translucent and is delicately arranged in concentric circle. The *tataki* has crispy skin and soft meat and is served Kōchi-style with plenty of onions, garlic and *ponzu*. The *karaage* batter contains *aosanori* seaweed collected from the riverbeds of Kōchi giving it a peculiar green hue. Few in Kōchi can say they have the knowledge to turn such an undesirable food into a delicious meal.

Figure 47. Moray eel waiting to be prepared

Moray eel cuisine carries symbolic signification in the region Kōchi. Albeit, it does not have the popular traction that bonito cuisine (*katsuo ryōri*) enjoys. Moray eel, a very unusual fish to eat, is primarily consumed in the Kōchi, Nagasaki and Wakayama prefectures. These three regions share many similarities in their food culture as they are in proximity and have similar marine ecosystems. Moray cuisine requires years of expertise to master. Deboning techniques

are extremely sophisticated and it can only be prepared a handful of ways. For this reason, Moray eel cuisine (*utsubo ryōri*), due in part to its uniqueness, is celebrated as distinctive representation of the region. In a 2014 official Kōchi promotional video, the actress Ryoko Hirosue sets on a quest to find Kōchi's specialties.[77] The video dramatically concludes with two women arguing over bonito or moray eel as a symbol of Kōchi. The actress and current spokesperson for Kōchi unanimously decide that both can be emblematic of the region. The video embodies the battle that rages between symbolic food representations in Kōchi. In this feud, certain symbolic representations like dishes or regional cooking techniques emerge as hegemonic while other are cast aside as a legacy of the past.

What makes the regional techniques so special and by consequence a reflection of the prefecture's inhabitants' identity? Although the essence of Kōchi regional cuisine is difficult to precisely define, there is something unique about how food is made in the region. Aside from the emblematic nature of seared bonito tuna, two elements important to the preparation of the dish still need to be discussed. First, one of the byproduct of deboning bonito the Kōchi way is a ventral thin flap of meat called *haranbo*. This small piece is prized in Kōchi cuisine as it is rich in fats and there is very little of it on each fish. In Kōchi, salt grilled *haranbo* is a feature of most restaurant menus selling for a higher price than other parts of the fish. Second, Kōchi knife makers, purported to be among the best in Japan, developed a specialized bonito-cutting knife (*katsuo bōchō*). This knife is long and thin like a sashimi knife but much heavier and as a triangular point. According to Masato Odani, the youngest instructor at RKC, unlike a regular sashimi knife, the bonito knife can cut through small bones making it an ideal tool to breakdown bonito tuna. The point here is to present an example of a regional tool that has an impact on the preparation of an important dish. In Japan, cuisine techniques are guided by efficiency as well as by the search for delicious taste.

[77] The actress Ryoko Hirosue acts as an embassador of Kōchi in a series of promotional video. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgoIbG_2nxA

The techniques that constitute the unique repertoire of the cuisine of Kōchi can be incorporated into one's identity by many routes. In order for Kōchi inhabitant to establish a rapport and affinity with these preparation methods, one needs to consume the dish, hear or read about the dish or learn how to make the dish. RKC teaches students proper Japanese techniques with a curriculum that heavily emphasize Tosa (i.e. Kōchi) regional cuisine. The dishes that are taught at the school include of course, *katsuo no tataki* and *sawachi* cuisine as well as the less well known steamed sea bream (*mushidai*), vegetable sushi (*inaka zushi*) and rice stuffed mackerel (*sugata sushi*). The recipes for these dishes are also displayed on the school website solidify their presence in the regional repertoire. Regional cuisine is also present in public school curriculum. In the town of Gomen, junior high school students are taught how to make *sawachi* in cooking class. The rationale is that students should not only be exposed to a taste of traditional cuisine but also to the experience of making it. Preparing the food not only gives the students an incentive to eat traditional food, it allows them to construct their identity around the preparation and consumption of regional cuisine. This hand-on experience created a sense of proximity with food that would be otherwise forgotten. Thus, allegiance to regional flavors is something that can be nurtured by exposing students to regional food practices.

These techniques are transmitted and celebrated as representations of the region gaining authority from a variety of sources. TV shows and cookbooks provide fertile grounds for the expression of what makes a recipe traditional and regional. Hideko Mitani, the principal of RKC culinary school in Kōchi, has played a decisive role in cementing certain recipes as emblematic of the region. She appeared in the company of *katsuo ningen*, the unofficial mascot of the region with the head of a bonito fish and the body of a human, in a small cooking segment shown on Kōchi Broadcasting.[78] The segment called, "2 minutes cooking," features ways to prepare emblematic products like bonito, *yuzu* and mountain vegetables. The videos, in part promotional, in part educational, are visual instructions on how to properly prepare regional dishes. The legitimacy of these recipes is hardly questioned as most people in

---

[78] The serialized videos can be retrieved at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTXYdZtxquc.

the region have heard of RKC and the *katsuo ningen* mascot. As one of the ambassadors of regional cuisine, Mitani also contributed to one of the most widely circulated cookbooks about Kōchi cuisine called the, “Tosa Table” (*tosa no shokutaku*). This book informs the reader on the traditional ways to prepare local products. It is designed to be a reference for home cooks containing various cooking tips anchoring these recipes in the daily life routines. TV shows and cookbooks participate in the construction of regional culinary culture that belongs to the people of the region. This ensemble of techniques and recipes becomes a salient part of the regional identity that comes to life through a collective appreciation of a specific savor.

## 2. Blessed by Nature

The region of Kōchi is a rural region that relies enormously on farming and fishing to support its economy. Regional food identity is related to local food production as grown ingredients tend to be incorporated in the local cuisine. In an effort to promote regional agriculture, Kōchi prefectural government created mascots for each of its most important vegetables.[79] These vegetables feature prominently in Kōchi cuisine even though some are relatively recent imports. Fruits are also central to the prefecture’s agricultural production. Kōchi is the largest producer of eggplant, *shishito* peppers, garlic chives, ginger, pomelo (*buntan*) and *yuzu* in the country (Kōchi Prefecture Agriculture Promotion 2015). These agricultural products are widely consumed in the area they are produced as well as in the larger region. Interestingly, Kōchi fisheries harvest only 7.3% of bonitos (4th in the country) in the country whereas it harvest 14% of tuna (2nd in the country), a fish far less emblematic in the regional cuisine (Kōchi Prefecture Fishery Promotion 2015). More recently, some of the regional fishing industry shifted towards fish farming with Kōchi prefecture the third largest producer of farm sea bream (*madai*) and farmed amberjack (*kampachi*). It is worth noting that farmed fish occupy a large place in the cuisine of the local area where they are harvested or produced.

---

[79] These key vegetables include: Japanese ginger (*myoga*), garlic chives (*nira*), Japanese eggplant (*nasu*), musk melon (arusu meron), ginger (shyoga), green pepper (*pimen*), green onion (*konegi*), *shishito* pepper, Japanese cucumber (*kyuri*), American eggplant (*beinasu*) and okra.

Figure 48. Kōchi vegetable mascots

Kōchi Vegetables are a source of regional pride as well as an important economic resource. The prefectural government organizes countless events to promote the brand image of the region's vegetables in the hopes to increase exports to large cities. On one particular event, I was invited to a promotional event organized by the prefecture in conjuncture with a local farming cooperative. Women affiliated to the cooperative had prepared a tasting of the various ways to prepare American eggplant (*beinasu*) the most produced variety in the area. The tasting blended the new (e.g. pizza eggplant) with the old (e.g. miso paste grilled eggplant) into an acceptable representation of regional cuisine. In an interview with Toshiro Okabayashi, the director of the department of agricultural development, he explained that regional cuisine is not created by the local government but rather by the people that know their products best (i.e. farmers). Chef Hiroshi Yamashita also corroborated this take explaining he had learned many techniques like preparing raw mackerel (*saba*) from the fishermen themselves. Taste preference comes from the bottom up and is a function of regional identity and material limitations.

The tourism industry actively promotes the image of a regional cuisine immersed in a beautiful nature. Tourist pamphlets and brochures play a central role in shaping views of the

regional cuisine outside of Kōchi. The common theme that reverberates in those bite size narratives is a region blessed by an incomparable natural environment and unique food traditions:

> "The warm climate and rich natural environment of Kōchi has made for great bounty in the sea, hills, and rivers." (Kōchi prefecture sightseeing map)

> "We are proud of the food culture of Tosa, created by nature and our tradition." (Kōchi tourist information guidebook)

This tourist documentation is tailored to include the emblematic (e.g. *katsuo no tataki*, *yuzu*), the traditional (e.g. *inaka zushi*, *sawachi*) and the gimmicky (hat bread, space sake). The descriptions are carefully crafted to attest of the uniqueness of the regional treats. The emphasis is put on "representative dishes of Kōchi", "unique to Kōchi", "most famous in Kōchi", adding legitimacy to such discourse. These publications never fails to mention that Kōchi food was voted number one in the category "delicious food" in Jaran a popular Japanese travel guide. Time and time again, the reader is reminded that the Kōchi has been "blessed" by such bountiful and delicious food making it in the eye of the outsider, an inherent characteristic of the region.

In the region of Kōchi, the abundance and diversity of citrus makes it an essential part of the regional food culture. They are used as zest on *sashimi*, as vinegar in sushi or sold processed to consumers in and outside the prefecture. These diverse citrus are location- and season-specific. For example, *bushukan*[80] grows in the Western area and is in season in summer whereas *yuzu* primarily grows in the eastern mountains and is a winter fruit. According to the widespread Tosa wind (*Tosa no kaze*) promotional brochure, Kōchi residents simply cannot do without *yuzu* vinegar (*yuzusu*). Kōchi is the largest producer of *yuzu* in all of Japan and sells it

[80] Kōchi people refer to *bushukan* as a type of small green lime. It should not be confused with Buddha's hand, which is called *bushukan* in the rest of Japan.

for the highest price, which explains its emblematic status in the region.[81] Participant observation in people's homes reveal that inhabitants of *yuzu* producing areas in Kōchi will have a bottle of pressed *yuzu* handy. They can use it for cooking, making mixed drinks and as table seasoning. Citrus, among which *yuzu* reigns supreme, are anchored not only in the cuisine and the agriculture of Kōchi but also as a symbol of the people of the region. The yellow citrus is a seasoning than is synonymous of Kōchi cuisine and a flavor that one learns to love.

Figure 49. Sample of Kōchi citrus (*yuzu* bottom left)

Kōchi relies much on fishing which is for many in the prefecture a symbol of the region's way of life. Fishing community and fishermen lifestyle occupies a privilege space in the regional imaginary. Fresh seafood and fish are emblematic as the industry is an important sector in the economy of the region and in its cuisine. According to the Kōchi prefecture fishing brochure "Tosa no osakana," in Kōchi, "freshness is different, taste is different, once you try it, you will be hooked." Fish is not only promoted for economic opportunities, a quick survey of Kōchi

[81] Kōchi produced 48% in 2011 followed by Tokushima with 18% (Kōchi prefectural trade association). According to Kawashima, a Kōchi *yuzu* wholesaler, *yuzu* prices oscillate through out the year but remain superior to Tokushima *yuzu* prices.

cuisine using various books (Kōchi Life Improvement Association 1994; Miyagawa 1999; Matsuzaki 1986) and restaurant menus will reveal the central position occupied by fish, in particular fresh fish, in the cuisine of Kōchi. Although this is of course not unique to the region, the reputation that precedes Kōchi seafood is well known in most of Japan making such food a powerful representation of the region. As every year fewer fish can be harvested from the seas, fish farming has become a viable alternative for Kōchi residents. In place where the local economy is centered around fish farming, dishes featuring locally raised fish have become lasting symbols of local cuisine. In the Otsuki Western peninsula of Kōchi, countless large nets surrounded by buoys in neatly arranged rows dot the seashore. Thus, the dish of sea bream rice (*tai meshi*), which is raised in those farms, is now famous in the area. In this case, it appears that the consumption of sea bream rice was in part reinforced by transformations in the local industry.

Certain seasonal flavors are essential characteristics of the region. As presented in chapter 2, the ritual of going to the mountain in spring to pick *sansai*, or at the very least eating them, is ingrained as part of the regional identity. Hundred of varieties of *sansai* exist across Japan but they do not all have the same value, nor the same name, from one region to another (Cobbi 1978). To be comestible and palatable each mountain vegetables requires particular processing using magnesium chloride (*nigari*) or boiling in rice bran (*nuka*). Mountain vegetables are in effect as much part of the regional identity than they are part of the natural environment reflecting the similarity and the specificity of Kōchi food culture. According to Akihira Hirota, Nankoku city environmental manager, Kōchi people love Japanese knotweed (*itadori*) so much that kids eat it raw on their way back from school whereas in the adjacent prefecture of Ehime it grows in abundance because no one dares to touch it. Contrary to what this statement implies Japanese knotweed is eaten in other regions (Bernier personal communication 05/24/16). The widely held belief that Koch residents are the only one to consume certain mountain vegetables might not be effectively true. However, it is presented as a tool of symbolic distinction, a taste that only Kōchi can appreciate.

Figure 50. Learning how to process mountain vegetables

## 3. Regional Flavoring Principle

On a bright crisp morning, I make my way to a roadside farmer's market outside Kōchi city. Once a week, the restaurant on the second floor of the market opens its kitchen to groups of elderly women so that they can prepare regional food for scores of hungry customers. When I arrived at 8 am, the kitchen is already bustling with activity. Inside, every inch of space is taken over by pots or septuagenarians. The smell of *dashi* fish broth and soy sauce permeates the air as the sounds of chatter and the banging of pans resonates in the sterile workspace. Without hesitation, they put me to work slicing bamboo shoots, crumbling tofu, and mixing liquid batter. To my surprise, a gray-haired cook pulls me aside to try some of the food to make sure it tastes "right". As the customer start lining up, I am warned there will be two services today. I am quickly ushered to the frying station, two large cast iron pan filled with cooking oil are already in place to fry some chicken marinated in vinegar (*tori nanban zuke*) and battered *shishito* pepper. The first customers are ushered in and a few minutes later the madness begins. The sound and the smells of a dozen dishes being made simultaneously, old women running back and forth from the walk-in cooler and a seemingly never ending stream of empty serving plates brought back to the kitchen, bring me closer to sensory overload. "One

more *tori nanban zuke*," shouts the kitchen leader. I am desperately trying to catch up with the orders but food can only be fried so fast. Local journalists, representatives of the agricultural cooperative, even the mayor of the city come by the kitchen to personally thank us for the important work we are doing. The coterie of elderly cooks are not simply playing restaurant, they are operating the hottest restaurant in town today, one that offers a taste of Kōchi on the menu.

The taste of a region constitutes an elusive, yet often invoke, source of culinary distinction.
In her study of chili pepper, Katz (2009) suggests that a taste for spicy food in Mexican cuisine helps solidify a cultural border with the US where hot peppers serve as marker of national identity. She recognizes that within the confines of the nation-state exist regional, social and ethnic variations of hot pepper preferences. In this hierarchy of pepper consumption where city dwellers of European origin eat less spicy, disenfranchised ethnic groups like the Mixtecs of Oaxaca take tremendous pride in eating spicy food. In the French context, Basque compare the red of their Espelette pepper to the color of their flag, while distinguishing themselves from the Bearnese neighbors that do not eat spicy peppers. The idea of flavoring principle first articulated by Elisabeth Rozin (1973) suggests that cuisines have core techniques and flavors that define their character. These flavor signatures, reflections of habits and identities, ease the introduction of novel food in one's diet. For example, pizza and pasta is Japanized to fit the country's palate. In the case of the regional cuisine of Kōchi, there exists a typical flavor profile that people can understand and identify. What is this profile, how is it created and how does it relate to the regional identity?

Flavor profile of a cuisine can be difficult to pinpoint but there exists some common characteristics that make a taste typical of a region. In an interview for the Kōchi newspaper, I was asked why I liked the cuisine of Kōchi so much. I responded that "Westerners like me were inclined to like the strong flavors of the cuisine of Kōchi which heavily relies on ginger, garlic and yuzu" (Kōchi Newspaper 2014). Few would argue that Kōchi residents do not prefer bold flavors as they are the only region to my knowledge that consumes raw garlic with raw fish. According to informants present at a monthly local food research meeting at the

*Sama Sama* cafe, the isolation of the region has contributed to this unique "flavoring principle" where bold flavors dominate the palate. According to Shigeru Yamaguchi, chef at the regional cuisine restaurant *furari*, Kōchi people like strong flavors because most people in the region are laborers and blue collars. The point here is not to try to explain the origin of such flavor preferences but rather to point that these culinary affinity are perceived as emerging out of something that is unique to the region. In Japan, regional identity is often articulated through notions of regional character (*kenminsei*). Such emphasis on regional character nourishes internalized beliefs about how residents should behave. In Kōchi, a cuisine that favors bold flavors appears to match the other dominant narrative about its inhabitants as they are said to have strong personalities and be heavy drinkers.

When I first tried Kōchi traditional food, I could not tell if a dish was good or not because I had no point of reference towards its flavoring principle. Sugar is commonly used seasoning for savory food in Japan. However, food in Kōchi tends to be particularly sweet. Kōchi cuisine carries many traditional dishes like sea bream in sweet bean soup (*tai zenzai*) and vegetable on sweet sushi rice (*inaka zushi*) that can be mistaken for desserts. Even today in Kōchi, in pickles at the farmers market, in *udon* noodle broth and in RKC instructions, sweetness is key. According to chef Hirosihi Yamashita sweetness was a marker of social class where richer people could afford to use more sugar in their food. For Satoko Furuya, manager of the regional cuisine restaurant Nishimura shoten, the sweetness of the local cuisine was a device to attract visitors that lived in the mountains. The now obsolete sugar cane industry has more than likely played a role, just as in the cuisine of Kyushu, in establishing a sweetly seasoned cuisine. This explanation illustrates not only a real preference for sweet food but also an incorporated belief that distinguishes Kōchi taste from the rest of the country. As time passed by in my fieldwork in Kōchi, I also began to prefer food that was distinctively sweeter than when I first arrived. Incorporated flavor profiles matter because they provide the basis to discriminate regional taste from other cuisines.

## III. Local Taste Diversity

## 1. Diversity within the Region

Kōchi regional identity shapes the residents' taste preferences in the form of cooking techniques, ingredients and seasoning. At the scale of the region, there exists a fellowship of taste that most can agree upon. However, this loose agreement does not signify that taste is completely homogenous throughout the region. Localized variations of dishes and taste preferences that are inscribed in specific areas of the prefectures become symbolic markers of identity. Local identity is anchored in a specific place rather than an imagined group. Such food tastes are shaped by the cuisine one has most experience in as is community based. According to Sidney Mintz, "a cuisine requires a population that eats that cuisine with sufficient frequency to consider themselves experts on it. They all believe, and *care* that they believe, that they know what it consists of, how it is made, and how it should taste" (Mintz 1997:96). In doing such, Mintz articulates the primacy of regional cuisine over national cuisine as it emerges out of common social roots, yet he forgets that regional cuisine itself is a construction that aggregates various local cuisines. Indeed, focusing on the region runs the risk of silencing the region's own internal diversity (Pérez 2013). This is precisely what I seek to avoid in this following section. While looking at taste preferences using the lens of regional identity, one must remain vigilant at not ignoring the multiplicity of localized tastes.

As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, the Tosa Traditional Cooks (*Tosa no ryōri denshōbito*) are a self-described group that uses local knowledge of area-specific traditional cuisine to promote and preserve the cuisine of the region. The organization is partially funded by the prefectural government and plays many different roles including economic revitalization, conservation of tradition, cultural promotion and local entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the 80 local groups of older women that constitutes the Tosa Traditional Cooks span across the prefecture. Each traditional group holds the monopoly over one distinctive dish in the region solidifying local allegiances. The process of making a dish the official representation of a place is subject to internal politics but not totally disconnected to the local food reality as successful applicants must be approved by local and prefectural authorities. For instance, Shimanto city will be recognized for its river shrimp dishes while Nyodogawa town will become famous for its

mountain vegetables dishes. Certain dishes like country sushi (*inaka sushi*) are present in different areas yet it is implicit that the taste differs in each place. More importantly, such preservation groups are a poignant reminder that although traditional taste is framed in the context of the region it is not homogenous throughout it.

Alcohol, among which rice wine sake (*nihonshu*) features prominently, is central to Kōchi food culture. Although Kōchi residents prefer their food sweet, they like their sake dry as it enables them to drink more of it (Dana Berte personal communication 02/12/15). As discussed earlier, the consumer market is ripe for location specific sake (*jizake*) (Baumert 2013). These local sakes are an important part of Kōchi food culture and identity. In Kōchi, there are 18 sake brewers which offer a wide range of taste that are supposed to be location-specific but do not follow codified appellation rules. According to Akihiko Takemura, president of Tsukasa Botan brewery, clean water, which is 80% of the final product, and *kokoro*, that translate as heart, mind or spirit depending on context, makes sake specific to area. The notion that sake maker imbue their essence into a product resonate with winemaking lore. Moreover, according to Dana Berte, part of the development team at Kikusui brewers, as most local sake are made from imported rice that is not from Kōchi, local-specificity emerges out of innovations of smaller breweries. Both dismissed the idea that their sake was brewed with the intent to match specific local foods as it is with French wines. Although Kōchi sakes are not what one would call *terroir* specific, they are different from one location to another. Most breweries can trace back their origins hundreds of years back, which helps to anchor them in the local tradition of the area. Kōchi sake breweries also attempt to differentiate themselves through active marketing of their name brand. This results in Kōchi residents developing localized taste allegiances to specific breweries.

## 2. Localized Diversity

In Kōchi, local food production initiatives are tied to the expression of local taste. The "locally grown, locally consumed" movement (*chisan chishō*) initially emerged as a grassroots movement but was rapidly taken over by prefectural governments and large Japanese

agriculture cooperatives (Kimura and Nishiyama 2008). According to Hisanori Sugimoto, manager of the "Locally grown, locally consumed" department at the Kōchi prefectural office, the main objective of this initiative is to encourage economic revitalization using Kōchi consumers by closing the "consumption loop". The Department not only supports the Tosa Traditional Cooks group, it also promotes the presence of direct point of sale space in the supermarket (*chokubaijo*) where local farmers can sell their products under their own name. Road stations (*michi no eki*) are also other point of direct sale where farmers can sell local specific products labeled with the name of the farm. To help consumers identify local tastes, the "Locally grown, locally consumed" Department created information booklets where consumers can find out where food is grown and where to purchase it. In any given local area, residents tend to be aware of their specific production. What the "Locally grown, locally consumed" department is trying to do is to educate consumers with the ultimate goal of revitalizing the local economy.

As food culture emerges out of local ingredients' availability, understanding area specific food production is important to account for the diversity of taste preferences. The central area surrounding Kōchi city is the largest producer of Japanese cucumber.[82] This has in many ways impacted the local food culture. Living in Kōchi city, I once met cucumber farmers at the Hirome market. They insisted on sharing with me some of the dishes made with their products. Another example is how the area surrounding Nankoku city is famous for its bamboo sushi (*shihōchiku zushi*) of which it produces the largest amount. Although the majority of the agricultural production is exported to larger cities, one cannot divorce food preference from local availability. This is evident in school lunches that emphasize seasonality and locality in their daily menus. For example, the Kahoku school in the mountains of Kōchi cooks everything from scratch and sources all its school lunch's produce locally making extensive use of ingredients like konjac (*konyaku*), a local produce. School lunch menus in Kōchi are particularly rich in information about where they source their ingredients. Although this is primarily to alleviate parental concerns, some of which are famers, it shapes future generation

[82] According to Kōchi agricultural department, Koch city produces 45.6% of all the prefecture's cucumber.

of taste buds. Furthermore, RKC teamed up with the Kōchi prefecture education board to create a school lunch recipe book to provide inspiration to schools across the prefecture. The idea was to provide healthy meals that would promote local culture and food production of the area. As the recipe provides ample information about when and where to source the ingredient, it is an essential tool for school lunch nutritionists across the prefecture.

Figure 51. RKC cookbook seasonal school menus

In poor rural regions like Kōchi, the promotion and creation of local cuisine and food specialty become an essential resource (Knight 1994a; Shinohara 2003). The commodification of food might be recent but these dishes seldom emerge out of a cultural vacuum as they have already been a part of the local identity. The invention of tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Vlastos 1998) is a force to reckon with in the creation of taste that symbolically represent the region while providing a source of revitalization. Recent inventions like the Susaki claypot ramen (*nabeyaki ramen*), Aki smelt rice bowl (*chirimendon*), Shimanto pork rice bowl (*poku donburi*) and Nankoku shamo claypot (*shamo nabe*) have two functions. First, they provide economic opportunities in the form of tourist consumption and exports for local entrepreneurs in the community. Second, they become representations of an area, a source of pride for local residents that can be physiologically and symbolically incorporated. In addition, local food specialties like Umaji *yuzu* drink (*Gokkun*), Tosa shimizu dried thazard flakes (*soda bushi*),

Kure fried fish cakes (*kureten*) and Otoyo fermented tea (*goishicha*) can also be branded and exploited by creative entrepreneurs. Still, members of the local community will feel an attachment and a taste for these products as they become anchored in geographical and social spaces.

Local residents explain the variation of specialty products across the region in a variety of ways. In the Western area of *Hata*, which is historically, culturally and linguistically different from the rest of Kōchi, taste preferences are marked. According to Akira Nomura, the main food researcher at Tosa Shoku Food Company, the preference for sweet flavor is sharply marked in the Hata area. While Kōchi has a clear preference for sweeter seasoning, residents of the western Hata area are infamous for their sweet inclinations. Nomura explains that fishermen at sea prefer sweeter foods as the salt in the water overwhelms their taste buds. However, the preference of Hata inhabitants for sweet soy sauce (*amakuchi shōyu*) was born out of exchange with Kyushu, which adds considerable sugar from its sugar cane production to its soy sauce (Komatagawa 2015). But Hata is not the only region with this proclivity, the mountainous isolated regions of Kōchi also prefer sweet seasoned foods. Atsuko Matsuzaki explained that sugar was rare in the mountain making sweet food a treat. Although taste preferences might be born out of historic and geographic circumstances, how can one explain this continued persistence? According to a storeowner in the fishing village of Kure, the answer is simple: food that are not produced and consumed locally can be unpalatable for people not used to them. She offered me some smoked wild boar explaining that the meat tasted too strong for most people in her coastal village. This resonated with what older inhabitants of the mountain area told me about certain fish tasting too strong. Taste preferences and taste aversions link identity to daily eating practices specific to an area.

## 3. The Diversity of an Emblematic Dish

As people came to know about me in the region, I began to receive invitations to partake in local food research conferences. Those events made me feel more often than not like a prop on a movie set rather than an expert on regional cuisine. I would sit quietly in the audience

waiting for the moment when I was asked to introduce myself to the crowd as the foreign researcher who studies regional cuisine in Kōchi. On one particular event at the RKC Culinary School, I was asked to present my views of Kōchi cuisine as a person from France. The audience attentively listened to my monologue without interrupting. When the time for questions came, an elderly woman inquired on where was the best area and preparation technique for seared bonito (*katsuo no tataki*). Most of the audience, which I had assumed had been half asleep, went from quiet to roaring. The public, deferential until that point, was now loudly arguing in a disorganized shouting session. In the cacophony, I could hear voices shouting: "Kuroshio city…Kure town…coarse salt seasoned is number one." I had experienced spirited debates late night drinking with Kōchi locals but nothing of that sort in such a formal setting. Was seared bonito so important that Japanese people would forget the most fundamental cultural norms? Later that day, RKC principal Mitani provided context to such an unexpected reaction. She explained that the audience felt compelled to voice their opinions because they had much confidence to speak about something they knew about and felt strongly about. And in Kōchi, the best seared bonito is certainly a topic of endless controversies.

Figure 52. Salt *katsuo no tataki*

The proper way to prepare the regional dish of seared bonito is the topic of endless debate in Kōchi. The Kōchi author and food expert, Itsuo Miyagawa has proposed to classify *tataki* seasoning into three areas in the region of Kōchi. The Western area would be predominantly soy sauce *tataki*, the central sweet vinegar *tataki* and the eastern area would be yuzu juice *tataki* (Miyagawa 1993). For the authors of the book, *Tosa no Aji* (Flavors of Tosa), the recipes should be instead divided into two major areas. In the Eastern area, it is seared using straw, cooled down in ice water and sprinkled with *yuzu* juice. In the Western area, it is served over thinly sliced onion, garlic leaf and *konatsu* (*citrus tamurana*) rind (Kōchi Life Improvement Association 1994). Although food experts enshrined these categories in writing, there is much disagreement over these limiting definitions. In reality, residents of Kōchi will remind you that every city, village, shop and home has its own interpretation and opinion about the proper way of preparing the dish. For example, disagreements emerge over the type of fuel used to sear it, the kind of seasoning tapped on the fish, the slicing method, the garnish added to the dish, and if it should be served hot from the grill or chilled in iced water. The endless permutations possible for a single dish is representative of the region allows local residents to express their differences through their food choices. This consideration epitomizes the importance of place, preparation and identity.

In the region of Kōchi, the three towns of Kuroshio, Kure and Nakamura compete over seared bonito hegemony. Although none of the towns are major candidates for the origin of this dish, they have managed through clever marketing to associate themselves with the dish. As seared bonito has become more popular in recent years, the town that becomes the definite place for the dish will attract more tourists and also get brand recognition to export its products. Laying claim to the emblematic dish provides a sense of community pride and will enable outsiders to put the towns on the map. The towns have distinct characteristics that enable them to compete for seared bonito domination. Kuroshio is the most active in promoting its image. It is home to the largest fishing fleet that fishes bonito using line fishing (*ippon-zuri*). The remote town does not attract as many tourists relying much more on exporting its image (e.g. restaurants, frozen vacuum pack). The second contender, Kure a bucolic fishing village, seeks to attract people from within the Kōchi region. It has the small, touristic fish market where one can eat freshly seared bonito and the bonito festival (*katsuo matsuri*) is celebrated there every year.

Finally, Nakamura is the town with the largest population and therefore the most resources. The town located on the Shimanto river is the second most touristic region after Kōchi city (Kōchi Prefectural Government 2014). The town that recently became a part of the larger Shimanto city uses its sizable tourist influx to support its local businesses. It recently marketed itself as the salt seared bonito town (*shio tataki machi*) with 40 restaurants to choose the dish from. This power struggle for seared bonito domination is to this day subject to the vicissitude of public opinion.

These communities not only differentiate themselves through marketing, they also have distinct preparation techniques anchored in local tradition. In the Western region of Tosa, in Kure, a different technique is employed to conserve the flavor of the fish. Instead of dunking *katsuo no tataki* in ice water, which would cause it to lose much flavor from the seared fat and the ash, it is served hot from the grill (*yakitate*). The fattiest cuts of bonito are particularly good when still hot but must be immediately consumed, as the hot flesh will go bad quickly.[83] Yoshinori Nishimura, a Kōchi restaurant owner originally from the city of Kure, confirmed this assertion. When we visited the Kure Taisho market, Nishimura made sure to request the head fishmonger to prepare us a freshly grilled and still piping hot seared bonito. When I asked why, Nishimura simply answered "that's just the best way to eat it." This specific taste is firmly anchored in the identity of the people of the area. Once particular preparations are incorporated into local identity what is at stake is not so much the local practice but simply what tastes best.

In Kōchi, the taste of the seared bonito is a benchmark upon which one can judge the quality of a restaurant. Most shops will build their reputation on how they prepare the emblematic dish. For example, the restaurant Miyojin Maru was voted the prefecture's best restaurant two years in a row with a reputation that precedes it in and outside the prefecture (Kōchi Prefecture Tourism 2015). However, most local connoisseurs (*tsu*) will disregard these results and instead have a very personal preference. Yasu Hamada once told me he preferred to go to small local

---

[83] The ventral fillet of the return migration bonito (*modori gatsuo*) is prized for its fattiness.

shops. He explained that restaurant like Miyojin Maru had an entire fleet of boats that fished as far north as the Fukushima coast. Small independently run restaurants have their own interpretation of the dish. According to Kazuhide Yoshikawa, owner of Yoshisho restaurant, the original version of seared bonito was not salt as people today claim but rather soy sauce. His restaurant serves soy sauce seared bonito to which he adds his own twist: squeezed soy sauce lees. He explained that the soy sauce lees left after fermentation were often discarded, yet, they were rich in *umami* flavor.[84] Narratives of originality and difference matter because customer loyalty in Japan is as much a function of human relationship than one of actual quality of the food. In this manner, social ties within a community help solidify taste allegiance for seared bonito.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I set to demonstrate that although past scholarly attention has focused on how identity is expressed through food choice, these decisions are shaped by regional taste allegiances. Such preferences are not always conscious choices as they are incorporated through local practices. Mechanisms behind regional taste are inscribed into the core of our being, enabling us to ascribe value to a dish (i.e. "right" or "wrong" taste). Food allegiances constitute at the same time social markers of identity and internalization of regional eating habits. In other words, I like the taste of this dish because it represents who I am and also because I have internalized the habits of the people that surround me. Issues pertaining to regionalism are not only important because they contribute to building politicized identity but also the formation of this identity is incorporated in everyday behavior. In Kōchi, food regionalism is also used as a tool of economic revitalization. Regional cuisine and regional brand are part of a symbolic system that enables residents to tap into the regional imaginary in order to sell a product. Furthermore, I argue that in the case of Kōchi, one should not confine identity to a regional construction as it runs the risk of silencing the diversity of local identities

[84] For more details about the fifth taste of *umami* see chapter 7.

within the region. When it comes to taste in food, it is essential to recognize that identity can be constructed on different scales. Kōchi inhabitants' affinity for local tastes can exist at the scale of a village, a household or a restaurant. Still, the scale of the region conserves some relevance as it is an important administrative, economic and cultural social construction. As food is a crucial marker for these distinctions, regional taste continues to guide the food choices that are made in the region and the expression of prefectural identity.

# Third Part. Tasting the Nation: Building the Japanese Palate

## Chapter 6. Crossing Boundaries: Scales of Taste in Japan and Beyond

Across Japan, a bright, yellow, oblong citrus called *yuzu* is celebrated as a unique taste of the country's cuisine. The region of Kōchi is the largest producer of the fruit and its unmistakable fragrance is a key feature of the region's cuisine. Over a decade ago, gastronomical restaurants around the world started featuring *yuzu* on their menus. The citrus has slowly but surely gained prominence outside of Japan. Why has *yuzu* become so readily adopted throughout Japan and the world and what does this signify for the region of Kōchi? The region produces after all an abundance of various types of citrus but none fare as well as *yuzu* on the national and global market. Notions of culinary nationhood and economic factors must be taken in consideration if we are to understand the acceptance of *yuzu* outside the boundaries of the region it is produced in. As geographical and cultural borders are transgressed, *yuzu* goes from becoming the symbol of a region to a symbol of a nation. Concurrently, when demand outside the region increased, so did the price of *yuzu* transforming it into a cash crop for remote rural communities. This success has had notable reverberations in Kōchi where national and international recognition helped cement *yuzu*'s place in the food culture of the region. As *yuzu* gained prominence outside of Kōchi, it became a taste of Japan, one that cannot any longer be mobilized by Kōchi alone.

The goal of this chapter is to examine why certain tastes transcend regional and national boundaries while others never make it past the margins of the context they emerged in. Moreover, it seeks to reveal how these mechanisms filter different ways of representing region and nation. As ingredients, dishes and eating practices radiate outside of Japan, they alter the definition of the national cuisine. In the same manner, the adoption of food across regional

borders carries implications for the cuisine of Kōchi. The region of Kōchi will be the starting and finishing point for an investigation of regional, national and global scales of taste.[85] This chapter will first look at how the diversity of regional eating practices emerged a common, national cuisine. As the food produced in the region of Kōchi feeds the large urban cities of Japan, it crosses geographic and cultural boundaries becoming Japanese food. Moreover, Japanese cuisine, a homogenous national construct, is legitimized via international certifications that transform regional diversity into a shared heritage. The second part of the chapter discusses how Japan came to embrace a taste for offal cuisine. Offal eating constitutes an interesting case study to examine how food from a disenfranchised minority became part of the national food culture. The third section of the chapter explores how diaspora, soft power and other promotional efforts emanating out of Japan were essential tools in the success of Japanese food culture abroad. Finally, it will close the proverbial loop by addressing how Kōchi residents respond to the inclusion of their regional food practices within the fold of Japanese cuisine.

# I. From Region to Nation

## 1. Feeding Japan

Auberge Tosayama is a small hotel resort in the mountains of Kōchi. The Kōchi prefectural agricultural promotion division chose this location to organize a special tasting event. The constant stream of prefectural officials, agriculture cooperative representatives and food buyers feel closer to a summit than a luncheon. As guests walk in, they pass a table displaying a cornucopia of sweet *furutsu* tomatoes, large nodes of ginger, manicured eggplants and perfectly shaped melons. The view from the dining room is breathtaking. Rolling mountains, terraced hills and crystal clear rivers make it easy to understand why this place was chosen for

[85] In doing so, I acknowledge Anna Tsing's (2000) challenge to scale-making projects, yet recognize its usefulness as an analytical category.

the event. The prefectural government spent lavishly hiring Chef Dominique Corby, a celebrity ambassador of French cuisine in Japan. Corby is a round faced man with grey stubble on his chin wearing a white toque and a double breasted white jacket that looks like its about to burst open. With the help of Auberge Tosayama staff, Corby has prepared two dishes using local ingredients. The first dish is a tomato melon gazpacho topped with thinly sliced *aka ushi no tataki* beef. The dish is clean and simple but hardly satisfies the appetite. The second dish is pan-fried local eggplant in a tomato and *piment d'espellette* sauce. The light, spicy notes are well suited to sophisticated palates. After the degustation, a microphone circulates so that people can share their impressions. As the microphone passes around and praises are sung about the dishes, it eventually reaches one of the agricultural cooperative representatives. The man, an elderly eggplant farmer, is one of the few people not wearing a suit.
"I don't see why you had to use all that sauce on it. I can't taste the flavor of the eggplant," he complains.
The assembly freezes in an uncomfortable silence unable to find a way to proceed.

Figure 53. The bounty of Kōchi

Prefectural, promotion schemes like this demonstrate a concerted effort to promote Kōchi food outside the region. The resource spent on the idyllic location, the hiring of a prominent chef

and the gathering of important decision makers is revealing in itself. In this case, the prefectural government promoted the most important resource of the region with little regards to the actual food producers. This attempt to make Kōchi products more cosmopolitan was targeted to gourmets in large cities in Japan. The gazpacho with beef and eggplant in *espelette* sauce both illustrate deference to fashionable European flavors. The goal of the prefectural government was to manufacture desire for Kōchi products outside the prefecture. This well intended top-down approach was a clear attempt to rebrand the food of Kōchi in ways that hardly made sense to the producers of this food. In Japan, place branding is particular important as it ascribes a reputation that will reflect on regional food as a whole (De St. Maurice 2015). Regional brand is a crucial gauge of quality and safety for the Japanese consumer. For example, the Fukushima nuclear disaster has helped seed consumer distrust (*fūhyō*) causing permanent harm to the regional agricultural brand (Watanabe 2011). In this context, the regional brand can be conceived as a "bundle of meaning" that gives value to a product (McCracken 1993). The tasting event described above inscribes itself in a broader regional branding effort to elevate the reputation of the food of Kōchi outside the region.

The Kōchi brand is renowned for its food in large part because it is a fishing and agricultural region that produces much of the food necessary to feed the larger metropolitan areas of Japan. Much of its fish, fruits and vegetables production is not consumed in the prefecture itself. Instead, food produced in the region is neatly packed and directly shipped to urban consumers. According to Mathieu Le Boulch, a French marketer turned green pepper farmer in Kōchi, this type of production is widespread and is referred to as truck farming. In this system, cities depend on agricultural regions to feed them while rural residents depend on the influx of money from urban consumers to make a living. This transaction has left a clear imprint on the economy and the landscape of Kōchi. Fishing and farming production are today some of the few viable industries of the region. However, it is a difficult line of work subject to the

vicissitude of the market with little hope for upward mobility for younger generations.[86] New farming technologies were developed to make this production available year round to the urban consumers, a population that is not as much in touch with product seasonality. Greenhouse farming and farm fishery now dominate the landscape of a region that is famed for its natural beauty. Feeding the growing masses of urbanites has also had an impact on the food culture of the region with the abundance of eggplant, sea bream and citrus becoming dominant feature of the local cuisine. Farming communities focused on particular production developed a rich cuisine blending traditional and innovative preparation methods to put to use the profusion of these ingredients.

The year-round availability and low production price have created a steady agricultural output in the region.[87] The greenhouses and fish farms of Kōchi supply fresh produce and fish to the consumers in urban Japan but are often sold as generic products and seldomly reflect the specificity to the region. Instead, the Japan Agriculture Cooperatives (JA or *nōkyō*) sells in bulk to various distributors around the country. Although this exchange helps reinvigorate the Kōchi economy, it does not necessarily have an impact on the regional brand as urban consumers rarely know the provenance of their produces. In large cities like Osaka and Tokyo, however, antenna stores provide the opportunity for urban consumers to purchase emblematic foods that include fresh and transformed food products from agricultural regions. These specialty stores serve the dual purpose of promoting tourism and serve as a shopping display for the region's food (Thompson 2004). In Ginza, Tokyo's most affluent neighborhoods, antenna shops, like Marugoto Kōchi, sell their ware to upper class customers. A life size statue of the famous samurai Sakamoto Ryōma greets visitors at the entrance of the store. The shop is designed with the intent to provide a guided culinary tour of the region of Kōchi with map displays, product descriptions and lists of the most popular products (see picture bellow). The

---

[86] Farmers like Le Boulch explain that their income is entirely dependent on the current market price of their production. Furthermore, 2015 talks surrounded the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement introduce a heavy dose of uncertainty into the livelihood of Kōchi farmers.

[87] Developments in greenhouse farming and aquaculture have enabled Kōchi farmers and fishermen to produce throughout the year with higher yield than standard agriculture and fishing.

basement of the shop serves the dual purpose of being a tasting room dedicated to regional sake (*jizake*) and a tourism office for the region. Food products featured in the antenna shop represent a minuscule portion of the region's agricultural output. Yet, these shops showcase the food of the region in a way that helps build the regional brand outside the prefecture.

まるごと高知とさ市BEST20（12月）

※青果物含まず
●2014年12月1日～12月31日●

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1位 | 四国健商 | 万能おかず生姜　130g |
| 2位 | 坂田信夫商店 | ゆずがり |
| 3位 | 南国製菓 | 巾着塩けんぴ　240g |
| 4位 | 馬路村農協 | ごっくん馬路村　180ml |
| 5位 | はちきんの店 | 安部さんの囲生姜 |
| 6位 | 野村煎豆加工店 | まじめミレー |
| 7位 | 明神水産 | 藁焼き鰹たたき1節　250g |
| 8位 | 坂田信夫商店 | 寿司がり |
| 9位 | 旭食品 | おかず生姜　おかず生姜 |
| 10位 | 旭食品 | ゆず飴 |
| 11位 | ヤマテパン | ぼうしぱん |
| 12位 | けんかま | すまき |
| 13位 | 野村煎豆加工店 | まじめミレー　高知家Ver |
| 14位 | ウェルカムジョン万 | だしが良く出る宗田節 |
| 15位 | 野村煎豆加工店 | まじめミレー　6P |
| 16位 | 馬路村農協 | ポン酢しょうゆゆずの村　500ml |
| 17位 | 南国製菓 | 巾着芋けんぴ |
| 18位 | 野村煎豆加工店 | 健康ミレー |
| 19位 | 旭食品 | ゆずづくしチップス |
| 20位 | 坂田信夫商店 | 生姜湯 |

Figure 54. Top twenty Kōchi products

In addition to antenna shops, the cuisine of Kōchi is also featured in regional restaurants in large cities. In Tokyo, restaurants like Okyaku and Neboke[88] offer the possibility for Tokyoites to experience Kōchi cuisine. In these fine-dining establishments, guests are served coursed meals by *kimono*-clad waitresses in a representation that clashes with the more down to earth fare available in Kōchi. In a sense, offering a more refined experience to urban food gourmets is a strategy that might be necessary for such a restaurant to survive. Few in Tokyo know the cuisine of Kōchi, which provides the freedom to restaurant owners to interpret the cuisine as they see fit. Representation of Kōchi cuisine can in other cases appeal to a casual clientele in search of a cheap bite. In Tokyo's working class neighborhood, Naka-Meguro, the

[88] Neboke a store that first opened in Kōchi has three locations in Tokyo (www.kazuoh.com/company/).

restaurant Ootaru features washed out pictures of Kōchi on its walls and a menu featuring regional dishes aimed to give the place an air of authenticity. The main attraction of the restaurant remains its cheap beers served by its Nepali staff. In Osaka's busy Shinsaibashi shopping district, the restaurant Shuyu Ryōma (lit. Ryōma's drinking buddy) chooses to represent the region in a festive manner. The restaurant features a statue of Ryōma holding a sign that all dishes at 300 yen and above, lanterns with silhouettes of Yosakoi dancers and all you can drink alcohol deals. Once taken out of its context, Kōchi cuisine appears to be represented in ways that suit every budget. Thus, representations of Kōchi cuisine that make it outside the prefecture are fluid and adaptable. More broadly, the food and cuisine exported outside of Kōchi become a flexible regional brand that seeks to fit the needs of a broad national consumer base.

Figure 55. Ryōma drinking buddy izakaya

## 2. Diversity within a Homogenous Nation

Rural regions like Kōchi feed the growing appetite of urban centers for fresh produce and regional cuisine. These rural regions are considered the repository of Japanese culture, a way of life forgotten by the urban masses but supposedly still practices in the periphery.[89] During World War II, Japanese ethnologists were tasked to record rural food ways throughout the country. Historian Eric Rath (2016:140) argues that "the ultimate goal in this and similar research projects was to understand the interiority of the rural citizens, which provided a means of understanding the subjectivity of the country's past." The diversity of regional cuisine that ethnologists sought to salvage is still to this day celebrated in Japan.[90] Each region takes great pride in its regional culinary techniques and dishes that are famous within and outside the region. Taste preferences can also be markers of regional variations that help distinguish one region from another. Unlike other parts of Japan, Kōchi residents take great pride in the consumption of raw garlic in their cuisine, which they argue is a reflection of their personality. In Japan, regional taste preferences are part of the many regional traits that nourishes a system of representations that ascribe different personalities and habits to each prefecture (*kenminsei*). These so-called regional personality traits play an important role in explaining how residents choose to represent themselves. Popular beliefs such as men from Kōchi prefecture drink a lot, Shiga prefecture people are stingy and wives of Gunma prefecture rule their families, help fuel regional identity (Yusuf, Wu, and Evenett 2000:111). Regional cuisine, which is for most Japanese an important part of regional culture, occupies a privileged space in this system of regional representations.

Discourse and belief cultivate the notion that each region in Japan possesses distinguishable cultural and personality traits. In contrast with these regional distinctions, enduring ideologies of national homogeneity have also coexisted in Japan. Expression of cultural nationalism often take the form of discourse about Japanese uniqueness referred collectively as *nihonjinron*

---

[89] Nostalgia for regional cuisine feed into broader desires of urban consumer to connect with their past. For a more thorough discussion of rural regions as carrier of the past, see Chapter 2.

[90] In a master class I attended, sociologist Adrian Favell argued that popular media exaggerate the regional diversity of Japanese cuisine. I do not subscribe to this point of view and argue in Chapter 5 that identity is transmitted by a myriad of markers of which food is particularly salient.

(Befu 2001). This shared national identity was necessary for the construction of a modern nation-state having an impact on how Japanese people choose to define themselves (Burgess 2010). How does linguistic, culinary and cultural diversity become compounded into a homogenous national ensemble? It appears that most people I have spoken to have no qualms with this apparent contradiction.[91] Compartmentalization is key to understanding how regional and national identities can shift according to context. The distinction between insider/outsider (*uchi/soto*) regimenting social and linguistic interactions helps illustrate the various levels of belonging that change according to context. Family, region, nation can be conceptualized as a series of overlapping circles where differences and similarities are relative to any given situation. For instance, Kōchi residents will choose to represent themselves as fiercely different from the rest of Japan. At the same time, most recognize the authority of the centralized state to impose homogenizing cultural norms, thus, making them Japanese.

The creation of a national cuisine appears as a necessary step to legitimize the nation-state. More specifically, the nation-state deploys national cuisine as a tool for the construction of a national imaginary. As nation-states are composed of a range of people that is far from homogenous, the governing body must create a sense of unity in order to rule effectively. Moreover, the citizens that composed these states cannot in effect have everyday interactions with all the members of their larger community. Yet, they still choose to imagine themselves as part of a larger, national construct. The sovereignty of a nation is based on the tacit assumption that members are bound together in communion, regardless of the internal inequalities and differences (Anderson 2006). Cuisine, and in particular cookbooks, played a large role in legitimizing the commonality of this national discourse (Appadurai 1988). The choices and changes made when crafting a national cuisine plays a significant part in the establishment of these shared imaginary as a constitutive part of one's identity (Katz 2009). This cuisine, like other elements of national culture, is a representation of national identity

[91] For example, a Tokyo resident living in Kōchi complained to me how Kōchi residents behaved very differently from Tokyo people. However, when I agreed with him and told him I was a critic of *nihonjinron*, he retracted and told me that all Japanese people were in fact the same.

assumed to be unique to each nation-state. National cuisines are constructed in opposition to the cuisine of foreign nations even if they incorporate similar elements. For instance, the basis of Japanese cuisine (e.g. soy sauce) was for the most part first developed in China but it became over time associated with something quintessentially Japanese. In short, national cuisine, in the same way as language, serves as a form of symbolic representation that binds a diversified group of people into a homogenous cultural ensemble.

Social and political unity is achieved in part by assembling various regional culinary practices into a national cuisine (Mintz 1997). Incorporating regional elements in the broader definition of nationhood helps reconcile regional food diversity with national homogeneity. In France, the culinary discourse recognizes regional diversity only in that it is subsumed under the national whole (Ferguson 2006). French cuisine is not the exception but rather the norm. Japanese popular media provides many examples of how regional foods are conceived as being part of a common national heritage.[92] As such, the Japanese consumer's appetite for regional cuisine is in great part fueled by the search for Japan's identity. In this process, representations of culinary traditions are carefully selected or omitted to produce an idealized picture of traditional cuisine. In the region of Kōchi, particular ingredients (e.g. *yuzu*) and techniques (e.g. *tataki*) are enduring symbols of the region. However, once these culinary elements cross the boundaries of the region, they are appropriated as tastes that are uniquely Japanese. In conjuncture with the appropriation of regional practices, Japanese cuisine has also successfully absorbed foreign elements into its fold. Thus, Japanese cuisine is a fusion between imported foreign influences and native regional elements that is the source of an imagined national identity and cultural homogeneity (Cwiertka 2007).

National identity is based on the premise that the population inhabiting the national territory shares traditions, cultural elements and language that are homogenous and discrete from other nations. If Japanese cuisine is central to the definition of national identity, it must therefore be

---

[92] The TV program *Wafu Sohonke* (Turunen 2016) and the manga *Yoshinbo* (Brau 2004) are two excellent examples of the construction of Japan's national culture through the appropriation of regional culinary practices.

represented as uniform and distinct. For historian, Katarzyna Cwiertka, (2007:417), "many Japanese assume that food habits are fundamentally related to 'national character' and they reflect people's social and cultural values." Japanese cuisine is a tool that serves the purpose of the state but by no means is an accurate representation of what people eat on the national territory. Eric Rath (2016:9) explains that "cuisines are ideological, in that those who promote them are attempting to create the very relationships between people, food and places that their cuisines purportedly describe." National cuisines are more often than not prescriptive rather than descriptive in that they do not capture what people are eating but rather what they should be eating. For example, Japanese rice acts as a metaphor of the Japanese collective identity (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993) while it was only until recently primarily consumed by urban elites (Francks 2007). Rice, miso soup, fish, central elements of Japanese cuisine, are not what Japanese people eat everyday but rather what they should be eating as Japanese. They are in effect ideological representations that reinforce the cultural hegemony of the nation-state that provide a sense of permanence, commonality and distinction with the Other.

## 3. The Making of *Washoku*

In December 2013, *Washoku* or Japanese cuisine was added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) list. This event did not go unnoticed as it was celebrated across the spectrum of Japanese media as a major cultural achievement and a chance to market Japanese cuisine abroad. The UNESCO ICH was first devised as a collective convention to safeguarding local traditions in the face of globalization (Kurin 2004). Strategies of safeguarding its cultural heritage were not new to Japan. Prior to the UNESCO ICH, Postwar Japan had already developed a robust nationalistic program oriented as cultural and social policy upon which many countries around the world modeled their own program to safeguard their patrimony (Cang 2007). Since the establishment of the convention, Japan has been an

active participant in the process being second only to China for the most ICH registered.[93] In the case of Japan, such global recognition inscribes itself in preexisting local and national systems of recognitions (Foster 2011). Scholars have expressed some reservation at the ability of the convention to preserve the transmission of cultural practices that are often represented as static missing the holistic nature of cultural elements (Cang 2007). With the nomination of national cuisine, the ICH operates more as elite driven global competition where countries with more preparation and resources get more readily nominated than a tool for cultural safeguard (Matta 2016).

The ICH nomination of *Washoku* is part of this contemporary effort to consolidate the idea of a shared national culture. *Washoku* as a ICH can be distinguished from the orginal definition of the term *washoku*. The term *washoku* itself was first used to distinguish Japanese dishes from Western dishes (*yōshoku*) when the country opened to the rest of the world (Cwiertka 2015). However, the process that led to the creation of the present-day *Washoku* ICH category was one that was built on the myth of a common, unchanging and unique Japanese culinary heritage. Following the UNESCO nomination, promotional events like the *Washoku* day helped transform a commonly used idiom representing Japanese food into a brand name referring to traditional Japanese cuisine (Cwiertka 2015). The first rendition of the *Washoku* application dossier focused on cuisine, a high-class traditional cuisine famous in Kyoto.[94] Upon the rejection of Korea's application for its royal cuisine, the application was modified to define *Washoku* instead as a social practice that encompassed all Japanese. In addition to fostering national cohesion, the subsequent nomination of *Washoku* served multiple alternate interests. It was presented as a solution to Japan low food self-sufficiency caused by low

---

[93] China comes first with 38 inscribed ICH, Japan with 22 and Korea with 19 (see https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists). The respective governments of these three East Asian countries have put much importance on the ICH dedicating significant resources to this endeavor.

[94] Kōchi chef Hiroshi Yamashita explains that Kyoto cuisine is the basis of Japanese cuisine. For more about Kyoto cuisine as the source of *Washoku*, see De St. Maurice (2015).

agricultural output and changing diets[95] (Assmann 2010). The logic was that promoting the consumption of so-called Japanese food would help support Japanese agriculture and limit exports (Cwiertka 2015). Moreover with *Washoku*, the Japanese government sought to reaffirm the safety of food internationally in light of the 2011 Fukushima disaster (Rath 2012). Finally, large Japanese food corporations like Ajinomoto established the Washoku Association of Japan to promote their commercial interests[96] (Kohsaka 2017).

According to the definition of UNESCO, an ICH must be community-based meaning that it must be recognized as heritage by the group that practice and transmit it (UNESCO 2018). The nomination of *Washoku* implies that Japanese people are a cultural community that shares the same food practices. In order to get approved the dossier submitted by Japan emphasizes food cultural practice like the New Years celebration, remaining vague about the actual elements that compose it (e.g. natural, local, seasonal). Of particular interest, the section on geographic location and range of the element in the nomination file (UNESCO 2013) reads:

> The element is practiced all over the territory of the State.
> The element has basic common characteristics but has great diversity from Hokkaido in northern Japan, to Okinawa in southern Japan, responding to the wide range of geographical conditions and the differences of historical background. Use of diverse kinds of seafood, agricultural products and edible wild plants in the element created regional diversity, where local people have fostered the kind of traditional dietary culture unique to each region all over Japan.

This section of the ICH application encapsulates the contradiction of Japanese cuisine as a national common heritage. The nomination dossier must present Japanese cuisine as practiced

---

[95] Japan produces less than 40% of the food it consumes importing large quantities from abroad. See Kako (2010). Self-sufficiency of products for human consumption is closer to 50%. Dependence on outside sources is particularly strong for animal feeds.

[96] Ajinomoto is the largest producer of monosodium glutamate in Japan. For a more thorough discussion of how the company used tradition and science to pursue its self-serving agenda, see chapter 7.

all over the territory while recognizing the shear regional diversity of the cuisine. Japan's diet is presented as homogenous, but basic common characteristics are difficult to pinpoint. The specific mention of Hokkaido and Okinawa is not accidental as both islands are at the cultural periphery and relatively recent additions to the Japanese national territory. It is a deliberate attempt to include regions that are well known for their singularity into the fold of Japanese culture. The full nomination name, which is "*Washoku*, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year," betrays this inconsistency. Framing *Washoku* as "dietary cultures" enables to address the issue of regional diversity while singling "the celebration of New Year" enables to create a sense of shared heritage.[97]

The Japanese media and Japanese consumers at large embraced the ICH nomination as a confirmation of the international significance of *Washoku*. However, although the term *washoku* technically includes regional cuisine, it is seldom used in peripheral regions like Kōchi. This can be explained by the fact that *washoku* is a category constructed by opposition to foreign foods. *Washoku* as a culinary category was created to distinguish the native from the foreign, giving little room for the construction of alternate categories. In our case, the opposition of foreign and native is a process of configuration whereby a sociocultural reality is defined by its opposite (Sakai 2000). Such categorical polarization facilitates the appropriation of regional cuisine under a hegemonic national cuisine. In this manner, the nomination of *Washoku* situates even peripheral elements within the umbrella of Japanese cuisine. With the ICH nomination, *washoku* becomes more than simply a category by opposition. It becomes a collective symbol for a national culinary tradition, one that is all encompassing and homogenizing. As this system solidifies, the boundaries that separate regional and national become porous facilitating the absorption of regional tastes into a national ensemble. In this scheme, cooking techniques like *tataki* and ingredients like *yuzu* no longer belong to the region of Kōchi, they become part of the Japanese culinary repertoire. Not all regionalized food practices make it on the national stage but the ones that do can circulate with added ease

[97] The food practices of New Year's Day (*osechi ryori*) are only homogenous in name as they vary greatly in substance and symbolism throughout the Japanese archipelago.

across geographic and cultural boundaries. In the next section, we will examine how against all odds an unusual local eating practice became widespread in the rest of Japan.

## II. How Offal Cuisine Became Japanese

For most people, Japanese cuisine conjures images of raw fish, rice and sake and not heart, liver and tripe. Although offal cuisine (*horumon ryori*) started as a very localized and context-specific eating practice, it is today widespread throughout Japan. This section examines how offal cuisine transcended social and regional boundaries to become part of Japanese food culture.[98] Although offal cuisine emerged out of local material limitations, it has come to signify something different in Japan where a marginalized group has helped transform these rejected items into something people seek and desire. Offal in Japan fetches today a price that is comparable to desirable cuts of meat and is consumed by a significant portion of the population. In order to do so, offal cuisine has successfully crossed sociocultural boundaries and in the process has converted itself into a symbol of Japan. As the taste for offal cuisine diffused beyond the milieu that saw its rise, it took on new meaning for the consumer. The love of, or disgust for, offal cuisine was not inherent or unchanging in Japan but was instead socially constructed within specific historical and cultural contexts. Food hierarchies that are assumed to be true for all are far from universal if we are to investigate the case of offal eating in Japan. The propensity to consume food that might be discarded elsewhere is a very personal choice nonetheless influenced by a host of sociocultural values. These ingrained values collectively participate in shaping our palate–our preferences and the way we collectively experience taste.

---

[98] An earlier manuscript of this section was published in Offal: Rejected and Reclaimed—Proceedings of the Oxford Food Symposium on Food and Cookery 2016.

Anthropologists in particular have demonstrated a keen interest in explaining why cultural customs proscribe certain foods from being consumed (Douglas 2002; Harris 1998). Although disgust for offal bears some resemblance to the mechanisms that enforce food taboo, one can cite few examples where they are completely prohibited. Other studies have offered interesting models examining how the emotions that relate to food disgust is shaped through a process of cultural values acquisition (Rozin and Fallon 1987). Although disgust and avoidance of certain foods has been the focus of much of the scholarly investigation, few studies have attempted to articulate the opposite (i.e. what makes food delicious). The boundary between what is good and what is bad is one that is constructed (Cantarero et al. 2009). Several authors have paid attention to how society's changing values affect people's desire to consume offal. According to Vialles (1988), people who consume offal are implicitly recognizing the animal provenance of meat, while people who do not consume them do it because they do not wish to be reminded that they are eating a living being. Other scholars have argued that offal consumption is driven by mechanisms of differentiation between social classes (Bourdieu 1984; Strong 2006; Lloyd 2012). Sudden changes in national political discourse seem to also play a role in transforming these unwanted leftovers into desirable food (Ducann 1986). In a more general sense, the appeal for this cuisine seems to manifest itself as the creature of evolving social norms where social connotations associated with non-meat animal parts are seen with desire or repugnance (Elias and Mennell 2000; Mennell 1995).

## 1. Disenfranchised Minority

Tsuruhashi neighbourhood, Osaka's Koreatown, is home to dozens of brightly lit restaurants serving grilled offal (*horumon yaki*). Customers are waiting in line in front of a restaurant with a bright, blue awning called *Sora* (sky). The clientele is equally divided among men and women with even a few children. Entering such restaurant is an experience that overwhelms the senses. An almost impenetrable smoke curtain hangs like a cloud over low tables encircled by knee-high stools. The sound of the smoke ventilators hovering above each table coupled with the numerous patrons squeezed together in loud conversation forces hungry customers to shout their orders out betraying the restaurant's working class origins. The smell of grilled

offal has impregnated the walls. Servers efficiently take orders and drop off stainless steel plates of raw offal. The small pieces of offal are laid on a grill at the center of table, periodically flipped over and dipped in a special sweet, soy sauce (*yakiniku tare*). Each small portion is far from cheap but patrons are eager to order more. It appears that in offal restaurants, variety always trumps ordering a large portion of one type of offal. Customers make the greatest effort to order many different kinds of offal in order to enjoy the many tastes and textures that this cuisine has to offer. Honeycomb tripe (*hachinosu*) is chewy and tastes of its soy sauce and sesame oil marinade while fatty intestine (*shiro*) is rubbery and tastes of seared fat. The food is almost always accompanied with strong liquor and vociferous dialogue. Offal eating is loud, popular and profane embodying the essence of the place that gave it birth.

Offal eating in Japan emerged out of a particular historical and social context. Animal products have not always been part of the Japanese diet. Although outcast groups marginally consumed meat, it was long proscribed in Japan for religious reasons (Cobbi 1989). After the Meiji restoration of 1868, the country's leadership actively promoted meat consumption in an attempt to emulate Western powers (Takada 2006). Although meat was consumed in larger quantities after the modernization of Japan, offal was not considered a delicacy outright. The contemporary practice of offal eating in Japan started as a very localized one that spread throughout the country. Offal cuisine finds its roots among ethnic Korean colonial subjects in Japan. In 1910, Japan annexed the Korean peninsula, which would lead to a massive exodus of poor Koreans towards Japanese urban centers. These exploited immigrants lived in abject conditions, yet, still managing to do the best with what they had. By the late 1920s, Korean labourers were opening the first offal cuisine restaurants using unwanted meat scraps to feed growing urban customers (Cwiertka 2007). As many Koreans opted to migrate where opportunities were available, Osaka became the cradle of offal cuisine. Through the culinary negotiation of a disenfranchised people, offal cuisine gained popularity as result of World War II food shortage (Toshio 1999). Moreover, the Japanese word for offal, *horumon*, is said to be derived from *horumono* a word in Osaka dialect that signifies discarded things. Thus, offal

cuisine is part of the cultural heritage of Koreans in Japan, standing as an enduring symbol of the community.[99]

Although most Koreans migrated back to the peninsula after the war, an estimated 600,000 Koreans remained in Japan facing discrimination until today. The link between offal cuisine (*horumon*) and Korean permanent residents in Japan (*zainichi*) is still apparent in Osaka's Korean town. Gambling dens and offal restaurants in ghettoized parts of town are some of the limited recourse for a population that was never truly assimilated into Japanese society. Grilled offal restaurant constitute essential element of Korean neighbourhood's ethnic economies (Ishikida 2005). In spite of this, Korean-owned offal restaurants are today popular across Japan to the point that many now considered this cuisine Japanese. The appropriation of offal cuisine in mainstream Japanese cuisine remains, however, problematic for two reasons. Economically, it hurts members of the Korean community the most, divesting a vulnerable population of an essential stream of revenues. Symbolically, it conceals the fact that the Korean minority has tremendously contributed to Japanese society and culture. At the same time, as offal cuisine gained popularity, it also became dissociated with its modest origins. Dishes like grilled offal (*horumon yaki*) and offal hotpot (*motsunabe*), initially a blue-collar, male-centered fare, rapidly became popular across gender and class. These dishes remain associated with working class drinking establishment but also enjoy remarkable success among women and *salarymen*.[100]

## 2. Acquired Tastes

---

[99] The Korean community journal called "Offal Culture" (*horumon bunka*) attests of the symbolic importance of this food (Chapman 2006).

[100] *Salarymen* are white-collar office workers that most Japanese men aspire to become. Ironically, few Koreans living in Japan can hope to attain such positions due to systemic discrimination.

The construction of a hegemonic national cuisine, one that seeks to absorb desirable elements in its fold, has helped solidify Japan's taste for offal. In order to understand the success of offal cuisine in Japan, one must appreciate that a national cuisine is more than recipes written in a book. It is a cultural ensemble—taste preferences, cooking techniques, and symbolically ascribed values—that defines a given group. In Japan, taste is as much a function of flavour as it is of texture. The Japanese language contains hundreds of words that describe texture, illustrating its nuanced importance within the Japanese cultural framework (Yoshikawa et al. 1970). Sticky, crunchy or gooey are but a few of the ways that Japanese use to describe their food. The Japanese palate is trained from an early age to be adventurous and to seek flavour, color and textural diversity (Freedman 2015). In this respect, offal is an ideal ingredient to use to add texture to a meal. Outside of Japan, texture is seldom included under the umbrella of taste, yet it is evident that both are not mutually exclusive. Recent studies reveal that texture can affect the mechanics behind taste perception (Harker et al. 2006). Offal cuisine is desirable in part because people seek these unique textures that are difficult to reproduce. A meal of offal is anything but boring as, for example, braised tendon and grilled cartilage usually also carry bits of flesh and fat making each bite unique. In light of this, offal fits within a cultural system that values mouth feel as an integral part of the eating experience.

Another factor that eased the adoption of offal cuisine is that certain foods in Japan are often endowed with health attributes. Offal is touted as helping to build physical and mental "stamina" (*sutamina*). Certain foods are particularly suited to relieving tiredness infusing new vigour in the person that consumes it. Foreign foods, and in particular meat, were adopted in Japan as part of the imperative to modernize, to increase the strength and endurance of the Japanese population and its army (Cwiertka 2007). Offal cuisine would later inherit these same characteristics providing sustained levels of energy to the exhausted Japanese workforce. For this reason, offal cuisine was initially a popular food for working blue-collar Japanese men. Most recently, products containing collagen have been extremely popular amongst Japanese women. Although the link between beauty and youth and collagen consumption has been undermined by scientific research (Matsutani 2009), most Japanese consumers associate the elasticity of the skin with its consumption. In the region of Kōchi, the traditional dish of broiled moray eel (*utsubo*) is sought out for its skin, which is purported to contain much

collagen.[101] Offal cuisine has attached itself to the recent popularity of collagen-rich foods becoming a favourite for young urban women. The Japanese media plays a large role in helping spread dubious information about the age defying and weight loss properties of these foods. For example, fermented soybeans (*natto*) was sold out in groceries stores following false news reports that its daily consumption made you lose weight. The media is tapping into the already widely held cultural belief that certain foods possess powerful health qualities making less desirable foods more desirable.

Offal cuisine in Japan arose as much in a context of necessity than as a function of Japan's specific cultural views on waste. Unlike in Europe where offal had been considered a poor man's food, Japan only adopted meat eating at the end of the 19th century and in smaller quantities so that a distinction between different cuts of meats never fully cemented itself. In the Japanese kitchen, a paramount rule is to never let any leftover food go to waste. Cross-scoring the base of bamboo shoots to make them less tough or deep frying fish scales to use as toppings are a few of the ways Japanese cuisine recycles unwanted parts because not to do so would be considered *mottainai*. The term *mottainai* is used in Japanese to convey a sense a regret concerning wastefulness (Didierjean 2006). For example, wasting time idling or throwing away leftover food is considered *mottainai*. The expression has its roots in the combination of religious beliefs of Buddhism and Shintoism that value the sacredness of all things material. Nowadays, *mottainai* has come to signify much more as it is believed to be a traditional cultural attitude unique to Japan (Sato 2017). The *mottainai* attitude is firmly ingrained in Japan and is relied upon to explain why Japanese people are better at recycling or eating every last grain of rice in a bowl. The spirit of *mottainai* is a form of ideology that expresses itself in the form of culinary cultural nationalism. In Japan, discarding unwanted foods is not only wasteful; it is seen as irreverent. Offal eating not only fits the cultural expectation of not wasting, it embodies an almost spiritual respect for inanimate objects.

---

[101] In an interview Futoshi Machido, an expert of moray eel cuisine, explains that one of the selling points is that the eel skins contains much collagen.

The association of offal with trash is most relevant in the English language as it carries a different meaning when translated into another language[102] (Mennell 1995). I argue that the distinction between meat and offal is one that is not as pronounced in Japan. Although in Europe attitudes toward offal have changed over time (Lloyd 2012; Mennell 1995), the separation between meat and non-meat remains clearly demarcated. This is not the case in Japan where both categories emerged out of a very different historical context. Until the modernization of the country, meat and offal was butchered and consumed by a social caste considered impure (*burakumin*). When animal consumption was introduced to the daily diet, it was consumed in such small amounts that a clear separation between meat and offal never fully materialized. In contemporary Japan, offal does not seem to suffer from lower status. Grocery stores do not segregate offal from other meat on their shelves. In Kōchi, it is quite common to find what looks like small orange grapes, in fact chicken ovaries (*chōchin*), sold next to regular cuts of poultry. Unlike Western cuisine, Japanese offal cuisine does not attempt to transform offal into something different using elaborate sauces or preparation techniques. Instead offal is served in there simplest form, often grilled or in hot pots, with no attempt to camouflage them. Offal meats are therefore not seen as cheaper cuts that have to be tinkered with in order to make them palatable, but rather as delicious on their own.

Figure 56. Chicken ovary on instagram

---

[102] The word "offal" shares its etymology with several Germanic words the mean "waste" or "garbage."

## 3. Regional Adoption

Out the window, sparsely populated luscious green mountains and valleys stream past in succession making me forget I am still in Japan.

"You like meat?" asks Yasu the driver.

"I love meat. There isn't much I can't eat," I boast remembering my breakfast of smelly *natto,* fermented soybeans.

We soon arrive at a small shop in the Kōchi countryside. I learn that the shop, a Japanese-owned Chinese restaurant, is famous for serving *Kubokawa* pork, a specialty of the region. We seat ourselves at a Japanese table so close to the ground I can barely fold my legs under it.

"Give us a full course and some of the raw as well," orders Yasu.

The waitress comes back balancing a flat iron griddle on top of a portable gas burner. My mouth waters at the idea of eating grilled skewers, braised pork belly and thinly sliced loin. However, I can barely hide my distress when I see what comes out of the kitchen. The dark brown liver is sliced sashimi style and served with a salty citrus sauce. Honeycomb tripe is also served raw with a side of spicy sesame oil. On the griddle sizzles a sectioned heart, curly intestines and unidentifiable fat-coated organ meat. As Yasu begins to eat with relish, he notices my reserve.

"What's wrong? Don't you like meat," he asks with a puzzled look on his face.

As offal cuisine was added to the range of what Japanese people ate, it travelled far and wide reaching the most remote parts of Japan. Today, pork and boar offal are commonly consumed in the region of Kōchi. In the town Kubokawa, local restaurants have turned the by-product of the pork industry into an enticing cuisine described above. What is remarkable is that raw pork offal dishes feature prominently in this cuisine, something unthinkable in any other cultural context. Offal is not cheap in Japan, yet I am told that shops in Kubokawa town are cheaper than anywhere else which helps justify the appeal for such a cuisine. In the mountains of Kōchi, wild boar population is a plague as it damages agricultural land. Today, the regional government subsidises the hunting and promotes the cuisine (*gibier ryōri*). When butchering

freshly killed boar, little goes to waste. The internal organs are removed through a ventral incision and the liver is set aside to be grilled later. Most of the meat is frozen in order to later be consumed in hotpots or, for the most adventurous, in thin raw slices with the skin on. Unlike packaged supermarket cuts of meat, offal consumption can hardly distance itself from the fact that it comes from an animal with organs that appear almost human (Vialles 1994).

Figure 57. Cleaning the boar before butchering

Once offal was accepted at the national level, it broke down barriers that facilitated its consumption in regions like Kōchi. At the Kōchi cooking school, students sit quietly facing the instructor, a special guest from a famous establishment. He stabs the live softshell turtle in the neck and collects its blood in a bowl that he mixes with alcohol and hot water. He calls on tasting volunteers, but the classroom remains ghostly quiet. He points at me, the only foreigner in the classroom. I slowly walk up to the front of the class, look at the small cup with crimson liquid in it and down it in one gulp. Softshell turtle blood collected in this manner is usually the first dish of an elaborate stew. Drinking the blood is not only a delicacy; it is supposed to awaken a man's sexual drive. In Kōchi and Japan at large, there seems to be a link between offal eating and drinking. A popular item in grilled chicken skewer shops (*yakitoriya*) is chicken sternum and knee cartilage (*nankotsu*). The crunchy and charred snack is often accompanied by Japanese distilled liquor (*shōchū*). Beef tendons braised in soy sauce (*gyūsuji*

*nikomi*) is another popular dish in Kōchi drinking establishments. The tendons are cut into small pieces and cooked for hours so that they have a soft gelatinous texture. The saltiness of the soy sauce makes it a perfect companion for drinks. Drinking establishments are in this manner tied to the consumption of blood, cartilage and tendons in this particular social context.

The connection between alcohol consumption and offal eating is still apparent in restaurants that specialize in this cuisine throughout the regions of Japan. However, although restaurants that specialize in offal initially tended to attract a certain clientele in poor urban centers, offal cuisine is nowadays enjoyed in many venues by a broad spectrum of Japanese consumers. The popularization of offal eating across class, gender and age, enabled its geographic dispersal from the urban centers to the rural periphery. As offal cuisine emerged within economically disenfranchised communities in large cities like Osaka, it eventually spread throughout the country once accepted by the dominant group. In order to answer how it became so widely accepted, one must examine the construction of the offal category in Japan. A hierarchy of animal cuts never fully cemented in Japan in the way it is socially stratified in Europe or America. Foods that would be considered unfit for consumption in other contexts became valued in the Japanese one. Offal in Japan are not only considered edible, consumers value them. Textures, health attributes, attitudes about waste and definitions of meat are all part of a value system that contributed to the spread of offal cuisine across the various region of Japan. Offal cuisine is sought after because Japanese conceptions of taste are anchored in a web of ascribed values. These set of values that were incorporated into the hegemonic culture manifest themselves in the form of a nationwide taste for offal cuisine.

## III. Going Global

### 1. Food Diaspora

Off the Kōchi Tosa Higashi highway, the restaurant Kunitoraya is nestled between mountain and sea. The family owned institution serves some of the best *udon* soup in the region. The simplicity of dish is deceiving. The handmade noodles require years of practice before

mastering but what makes Kunitoraya *udon* soup so unique in the region is its cloudy savory broth. The blend of miso, sake lees (*kasu*), sake, sweet wine (*mirin*), dried thazard flakes (*soda bushi*), dried mackerel flakes (*saba bushi*) give it an unmistakable deep taste. Ten thousand kilometers away, on a street corner of Paris' *premier arrondissement*, sits another Kunitoraya. Thirty years ago, Masahumi Nomoto the prodigal son of the Kunitoraya shop moved to the City of Lights to pursue his love of jazz. As living as a musician is hard in a place like Paris, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his family trade. He renovated a small century-old bistro turning it into a Japanese restaurant. The classical Parisian wood façade, ornate train station clock and the wall lined with antique mirror give the impression that one has stepped through a time portal. The restaurant became so popular that Nomoto opened a second location two doors down dedicated to Kōchi style *udon* noodles. Regardless of the time of the day or the weather, Parisians and tourists alike line up in front of the shop for a taste and experience that is assumed to be typically Japanese. Few of the customers slurping on the noodles are aware that these flavors are not widespread throughout Japan. Nomoto built its success on dishes developed using memory and family recipes that remain reminiscent of the region.

Places like Kunitoraya in Paris help spread Kōchi cuisine beyond the border of the prefecture. This taste of the region must however transform and adapt to local sets of conditions. Local ingredients, different consumers and a changing social context all play in shaping the expression and the adoption of this food abroad. While Kunitoraya in Paris made rural flavors fashionable in a cosmopolitan city, it did not necessarily elevate the status of the regional cuisine. Once abroad, regional cuisine becomes subsumed under the umbrella of Japanese cuisine. Just as pizza became a representation of Italian cuisine, *udon* has become a representation of Japanese cuisine. The Kōchi diaspora has in effect contributed to pave the way for Japanese cuisine as a whole. In the North suburb of Toronto, Taro Akiyama's fish market and sushi counter, Taro's Fish, plays a similar role helping spread Kōchi food culture in Canada. Although the food is packaged as Japanese to its customers, it retains elements anchored in regional practices. For instance, Taro's Fish makes and sells *ehōmaki* for good

fortune during the *setsubun* holiday.[103] Both Nomoto and Akiyama are RKC graduates and keep close ties with the school. The school frequently entrusts graduates that seek experience abroad to Kunitoraya or Taro's Fish. In this manner, these successful businesses are shaped by the links that they maintain with the region of Kōchi. However, in order for these foods to be accepted outside of Japan, they must be packaged as typically Japanese culinary experience. In the global arena, the smallest common denominator is the nation-state.

Communities of Japanese migrants from rural areas have historically helped establish a foothold for Japanese food culture outside of Japan. Japanese laborers working on the sugar plantation of Hawaii or on the coffee plantation of Brazil brought with them their food practices laying out the early groundwork for the internationalization of Japanese cuisine. As many migrant workers end up staying, both the foodways of the diaspora and of their new home was permanently transformed. In such places, the large Japanese diaspora left visible traces on local food practices.[104] As these dishes became accepted and incorporated in local food culture outside of Japan, they had to adapt to the local techniques, ingredients and consumer preferences. *Okazuya* delicatessen still can be found serving Japanese homestyle meals in Hawaii's (Yano 2007). Although these restaurants are a nostalgic legacy of the Japanese diaspora, most will freely serve Chinese stir-fried noodle, Korean barbecue short ribs, Filipino chicken stew and American macaroni salad (Yano 2007). The inclusion of other Asian foods in a Japanese deli signals that from the local perspective these food have been integrated as one cuisine. Neither Asian nor American the food served in *Okazuya* becomes its own form of regional cuisine. This cuisine was adopted in Hawaii because it carried shared meaning for the diverse diasporic communities.

---

[103] *Setsubun* is a holiday in Japan that announces the beginning of spring. In the Western part of Japan, it is customary to eat an uncut sushi roll called *ehōmaki*. The communal practice of making and consuming these rolls is particularly important in the region of Kōchi. See chapter 1.

[104] Hawaii's *spam musubi* or rice topped with a sliced of canned ham and Sao Paolo *hot roll* or deep fried sushi roll stand out as Japanese adaptation that are part of both local foodscapes.

Transnational links that have existed since the start of the Japanese diaspora have facilitated the adoption of Japanese food beyond the cultural and political boundaries of the nation-state. In the early days of the Japanese diaspora, the vast majority of migrant workers came from poor rural regions like Kōchi. In times of need, various village and regional clubs that shared the same dialect and life experiences would provide aid and fellowship to each other. These informal communities of economic and social support would transform into prefectural associations (*kenjinkai*). Chapters of the Kōchi prefectural association can be found across the world.[105] Although they are informal organizations, they provide a bridge for the diaspora to stay in touch with their regional roots by promoting cultural practices of the region. The ties that these organizations retain with the prefecture of origin are articulated in great part through their relation with regional food. For example, the Miyazaki *kenjinkai* of Southern California provides active support to help Miyazaki food producers to penetrate the American market. Although prefectural associations are attached to such regional specificity, once the food permeate foreign territory it is often presented as Japanese rather than regional. When food travels abroad, differences are erased to give renew primacy to the nation-state.

## 2. Japanese Soft Power

Poor rural immigrants that brought with them simple food fares that were tied to highly regional practices first introduced Japanese cuisine outside of Japan. Very soon thereafter, national representation of Japanese cuisine began to radiate beyond the borders of Japan. As early as 1905, written evidence suggests that Japanese cuisine which included sushi had been introduced to the United States (Miller 2015). Japan had recently established itself has a modern nation-state and had begun to look to its neighbors to assuage its colonial ambitions. The year 1905 marked the victory of the Japanese imperial navy over the Russian navy, the first time a non-white country defeated a white power. Thus, the recognition of Japanese

---

[105] The Paraguay Kōchi prefectural association organizes a yearly Yosakoi dancing festival, which feature Japanese food. See their facebook page: www.facebook.com/Kōchi-Kenjinkai-del-Paraguay-587751634725374/.

cuisine abroad was meant to symbolically legitimize the Japanese nation. The worldwide craze for Japanese cuisine would have to wait until the post-war economic ascension of Japan. This so-called "economic miracle" sparked increase in Japanese exports that ranged from electronics to cuisine. Sushi was not always popular outside of Japan but by the seventies, it grew in popularity to become a sign of class and education (Bestor 2000). The rise of Japanese cuisine is due to a complex combination of diaspora, economic power and culinary trend. With time, the Japanese government would seek to nurture this success and deploy it to fulfill its own agenda.

In order to understand why the Japanese government is so concerned about its national cuisine, one must explicit the concept of soft power. Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye popularized the notion of soft power. As a foreign policy concept, soft power is the ability to co-opt other countries through non-coercive means rather than military force or economic incentives (Nye 1990). It is used to make other nations amenable using culture, political values and foreign policy. However, soft power was only made possible with the establishment of a global system of neoliberal principles emphasizing individualism and consumerism.

Soft power, particularly the idea that national culture can be used as currency to influence other countries, was readily embraced by East Asian countries (Wang and Lu 2008). As Japan's economic and political influence has dwindled over the years, it has increasingly turned toward its cultural assets to exert influence on other countries and derive economic profit. The Japanese government embraced this concept in a set of cultural and economic policies called "Cool Japan" (Valaskivi 2013). Japanese food in the form of B-class gourmet food[106] is included under the umbrella of "Cool Japan" (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry 2015). The term has gained broad exposure in politics and the media with the catch phrase "Japan's gross national cool," a reassuring assessment that Japan's cultural influence is growing despite its economic recession (McGray 2002). Japan's foray into soft power has

---

[106] B-class gourmet food (*B-kyu gurume*) is in Japan a category of affordable food like *ramen* well suited for mass consumption.

been criticized as a squandering of money and as misguided form of cultural nationalism (Snow 2013). Yet, the idea that Japanese culture is an important asset that needs to be diffused abroad has put Japanese cuisine at the forefront of the quest for global recognition (Assmann 2017).

The efforts to promote the "Cool Japan" campaign and the *washoku* ICH nomination demonstrates how cuisine is a constitutive part of Japan's diplomatic agenda. This new form of cultural policy involving the global diffusion of Japanese culture is often referred to as gastrodiplomacy (Bestor 2014). Government officials see the use of Japanese cuisine as key to reasserting Japan's position in the world and the source of much needed economic growth bolstering food exports and attracting tourists. These efforts to promote an essential resource have led the government to ascertain in various ways ownership of Japanese cuisine abroad. The case of the so-called "sushi police," an authenticating agency for Japanese restaurant abroad, is an example of an attempt of a nation-state to reestablish ownership of cultural symbols that have travelled and transformed (Sakamoto and Allen 2011). These mechanisms of certification are responses to the growing concern that the global success of Japanese cuisine comes at the cost of losing control over emblematic foods. Sushi stands as a prime example of how Japanese cuisine became deterritorialized and declassified in a food to fit the palate of masses (Bestor 2000). Control of representations of Japanese cuisine expressed in the form of discourse of cultural nationalism is part of a larger goal to redefine national identity and promote national interests in the context of globalization (Allen and Sakamoto 2011).

As the Japanese government embraces the soft power paradigm, the promotion of Japanese cuisine turns into an opportunity that serves various purposes. The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries capitalized on this soft power fever to promote its agricultural products (Assmann 2017). The *Washoku* nomination was born out of this general effort to promote Japanese food culture. In order to better understand why Japan has actively branded itself as a culinary nation, one must examine goals rather than outcomes of such policies. Brand nationalism might appear as naïve in the era of transnational cultural production and consumption, yet, such policy have considerable impact on public funding (Iwabuchi 2010). The successful branding of Japanese cuisine around the world has had an

impact on how Japanese people perceive their food in the global hierarchy of taste. Moreover, the elevation of Japanese cuisine on the international stage has contributed to its consumption domestically. The Food Action Nippon initiative illustrates how international recognition is made to assuage national concerns. The initiative seeks to encourage Japanese citizen to consume local food to reduce the reliance of Japan on foreign food[107] (Assmann 2017). In addition, the government funded food education program (*shokuiku*) that promotes traditional eating practices in schools are tied to the global recognition Japan seeks for its cuisine (Assmann 2017).

## 3. Global Market of Taste

The recognition of Japanese cuisine in the rest of the world has led to the increase in the demand for Japanese food abroad. In the last few decades, Japanese cuisine has undergone a transformation from a rare exotic meal to a fashionable form of dining (Cwiertka 2005). Efforts to promote Japanese cuisine have not been in vain, with Japanese ingredients, techniques and flavor profile gaining tremendous traction outside of Japan. Today, haute gastronomy is not only influenced by Japanese considerations, growing numbers of recognized chefs seek to train in Japan. This favorable appraisal has added economic and symbolic value to this cultural resource. Japanese restaurants can charge more than other types of restaurants and Japanese food imports fetch a higher price on the market. Japanese dishes like sushi have in effect become global commodities with prices that fluctuate according to consumer desire and demand around the world (Bestor 2001). In "The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective," Arjun Appadurai (2009) positions that as commodities circulate in different regimes of value, their value is externalized through historical forces that regulate taste, trade and desire. Japanese cuisine market value is tied to these historical forces that converge in the present moment into making it the object of global desire.

[107] Decreasing agricultural output and changing diets have both contributed to the Japan's low food self-sufficiency.

The economic values of Japanese dishes that circulate on the global market are not only the reflection of market forces but also a reflection of externalized social relations. For example, *ramen,* a dish brought to Japan by Chinese laborers, was easily incorporated and appropriated into the Japanese repertoire (Fukutomi 2014). Economic and food policy decisions of the post war led to *ramen* emergence as a key staple in the Japanese diet, one that transcended class, gender and generation (Solt 2014). It has so well adapted and has become so popular that it has become a national food of the people of Japan (*kokuminshoku*) (Aoki 2001). In turn, national identity, myths of timeless traditions, and branding have contributed to the consumption and circulation of this dish abroad (Kushner 2012). Outside of Japan, *ramen* became a symbol of Japanese culture accessible to the masses transforming for the needs of its new consumer base (Solt 2014). As *ramen* travels across geographical and cultural boundaries, it adapted to fit the expectations and the palates of consumers around the word.[108] The story of Momofuku Ando illustrates how *ramen* was commodified into an adaptable and accessible experience. Born Pek-hok Go in the Japanese colony of Taiwan, Ando migrated to Japan in 1933 in search of a better life. As the country suffering from post-war food shortage, Ando developed a technique to mass-produce instant *ramen* noodles. Ando's Top Ramen brand would take over the world offering suitable flavors for its global consumer base.[109] Instant *ramen* accessibility and adaptability would pave the way for the acceptance of *ramen* outside of Japan.

Desire or disgust for food shapes its value on the market and how readily it is accepted across boundaries. Whale consumption has been at the forefront of an international controversy. Although whaling has a long history in Japan, it remained for the longest time a very localized practice. When resources became scarce after World War II, whale meat was introduced in

---

[108] *Ramen* also had to adapt when it crossed regional boundaries in Japan giving rise to regional styles. *Nabeyaki ramen* was developed in Kōchi to reflect these regional adaptations.

[109] For example, the company offers *galinha caipira* flavor a typical country chicken stew in Brazil and *mazedaar masala* flavor a bland of spices in India.

school lunches as a cheap protein source (Arch 2016). Memories of whale meat served at school lunch have bound a generation in a shared experience. Although most people remember whale meat with little fondness, school lunch helped solidify whale consumption as a national culinary tradition. Unlike other more successful forms of Japanese cuisine that were readily accepted outside of Japan, whale cuisine is today a major point of contention. When nationalists and politicians defend the right to eat whale, they see it as point of national pride, an act of defense of Japanese culture against foreign influence (Burgess 2015). Whale meat is an enduring symbol of the region of Kōchi, a display of regional pride nourishing a national imaginary.[110] Whale cuisine in Kōchi caters in large part to domestic tourists that want to experience the authentic taste of the Japanese nation. While in Kōchi, I was served whale a handful of times, never truly acquiring a taste for it in part because its consumption did not trigger any nationalist sentiments. The stigma associated with whale consumption makes it doubtful that it will ever enjoy the same international success as Japanese food like sushi.

Figure 58. Whale *sashimi* at the Hirome market

[110] While whale conserves symbolic importance in Kōchi, it is fished in distant seas and consumed by a minority.

The story of *yuzu* from Kōchi could not be any different. The citrus has easily crossed regional and national taste boundaries. A product that first emerged in China, *yuzu* was likely brought over from China via the Korean peninsula by Buddhists monks. Today, *yuzu* is recognized in the world as an essential ingredient of Japanese cuisine rarely associated with China or Korea. As a Japanese ingredient, it carries the weight of refined culture and is celebrated by chefs around the world (Ishida 2012). Although the reputation of *yuzu* from Kōchi precedes it,[111] Kōchi farmers do not readily capitalize on this global recognition. Most *yuzu* that make it to western tables is either grown in other prefectures or bought from Kōchi farmer and processed in adjacent prefectures. Jean-François Chemouni, an exotic fruit buyer operating out of the Rungis market, explains that Kōchi has the best *yuzu* quality but farmers are unwilling to try to expand their market outside of Japan. This reluctance to look beyond the national market was corroborated by other sources. For instance, Umaji village the most famous *yuzu* producing region, ships anywhere in Japan but has no interest in expanding their sales abroad.[112] Umaji village's direct competitor in Kōchi, Kitagawa village, does not carry the same brand recognition in Japan. In order to remain viable, it has done something uncharacteristic of the region focusing on sale outside of Japan.[113] Yuzu travelled outside of Japan in large part thanks to it being a representation of Japanese cuisine. In the process, it became disassociated from the region of Kōchi with farmers of the region losing in the transaction.

*Yuzu* citrus and whale meat provide examples of why certain foods cross boundaries with ease while others are prohibited to go beyond the region or the nation. Kōchi residents are well aware of the various dynamics that facilitate or impede the circulation of its cuisine outside its

[111] Kōchi Yuzu is now a trademark in the E.U. For example, the Parisian ice cream maker Berthillon sells ice cream made with *yuzu* from Kōchi.

[112] Umaji village produces a drink that sells an idealized image of rural Kōchi. Yet, to respond to growing demand, they must source honey from China. China is the largest producer of honey in the world and notorious for selling adulterated honey (Leeder 2011).

[113] Kitagawa village maintains strong ties with France with their claim to fame a reproduction of the Monet Giverny garden. France has become a window through which the village sells its *yuzu* products to the rest of the E.U. (https://www.yuzuoukoku.jp/feeling/feel3.html).

boundaries. The Kōchi Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) actively promotes Kōchi products it believes will be successful outside of Japan. *Yuzu* is put on the forefront of its English brochures with a title that reads “Yuzu is one of the fruits that represents Kōchi. It is essential for Japanese cooking.” While JETRO promotes food exports, RKC cooking school promotes Kōchi cuisine outside the region. In 2015, the school participated in a culinary exchange with a Marseille cooking school in order to promote *sawachi* cuisine in France. As it is often the case in Kōchi, the prefectural government was reticent to fund a promotional event outside of Japan. The person in charge of the project, Miwako Frotscher, expressed considerable frustration towards the lack of international outlook. Still, the project ended up being funded and gathered considerable local media attention. The flavors of Kōchi possess tremendous potential to travel beyond the boundaries of the nation. Once transposed outside the region, regional food specialties are incorporated within the larger national unit. When Kōchi cuisine becomes Japanese cuisine, it gains in global recognition but loses its regional typicality.

## Conclusion

Kōchi is connected to wide reaching networks of exchange that trade food produced in the region in return for much needed economic capital. In doing so, food from Kōchi becomes a constitutive part of a Japanese cuisine—an important element in the construction of a common national cultural identity. To achieve such goals, Japanese cuisine must manage to resolve the contradiction that exists between regional diversity and national homogeneity. The emergence of *washoku* as meta-cuisine that incorporate various regional practices and the appropriation of offal cuisine from a disenfranchised minority are both extensions of this project of culinary nation building. The global dissemination of food items beyond the confines of the nation was made possible only once this project came to fruition. In “The Global Situation,” Anthropologist Anna Tsing (2000:351) writes “an ethnographic study of the global needs careful attention not only to global claims and their effects on social life but also to questions of interconnection, movement, and boundary crossing that globalist spokespeople have brought to the fore.” This chapter has sought to examine the movement of food across regional,

national and global scales of taste. The circulation of food and cuisine between each level demonstrates the fluidity of these analytical categories. The regional, the national and the global are not only levels of analysis; they also constitute bounded divisions of the physical and social world. After all, the foods and cuisines described in this chapter undergo significant transformations when crossing these boundaries. These delimitations, far from static, are the product of specific historical contexts. Although these borders might be lines drawn in the sand, they still carry tremendous weight when it comes to the circulation of culinary objects imbued with socio-cultural meaning and value.

# Chapter 7. Finding *Umami*: The Scientific Construction of Deliciousness

In a neon lit university laboratory, Japanese scientists and chefs team up to solve the timeless question of what makes food delicious. For sixth months, they steam abalone, a luxury treat in Japanese cuisine, at various temperature increments. Their study concludes that optimum steaming temperature is between 60 and 65 degrees Celsius depending on the culinary use. Using the scientific method, they measure and chart cooking pressure and taste bud reaction in order to improve traditional Japanese cuisine. Kyoto University's deliciousness research program (*oishisa*) aims at bringing with the help of science Kyoto cuisine into the twenty first century. A world away, a celebrity chef experiments in his California "Food Lab" using the scientific methods to improve popular recipes. He charts the glutamate content of various ingredients in order to achieve *umami* in his recipes. The elusive *umami* taste is a holy grail for this new breed of gastro-scientists that live a world a part. No matter the distance and no matter the lack of clear consensus around the definition of *umami*, they all agree that the more *umami* a dish has, the better it will taste.

In this chapter, I propose to look at how scientific discourse participates in the social construction of the sense of taste. Incorporated beliefs brought on by scientific discourse shape how we perceive and understand our surroundings. Put together, these convictions constitute a cultural lens through which human beings experience the world in different ways. Scholars have waged intense academic debate over whether color cognition is universal or if linguistic categories affect visual perception (Berlin and Kay 1969; Conklin 1973). Yet, little research has explored the influence of language and culture on taste perception. In recent years, science has emerged as a hegemonic discourse in gastronomy. Part of the question I seek to answer is how scientific research shape how we think of and perceive taste categories. The discourses that emanate from scientific research on taste are far from objective as it is motivated by precise outcomes. At length, I will examine how corporations and chefs in Japan and abroad combine *umami* research with existing cultural concepts of deliciousness to build a new taste

category. Japanese cuisine's success outside of Japan has helped legitimize *umami* as a Japanese flavor that now belongs to the world. In this manner, *umami* operates on many levels as a scientific "fact", a criterion of deliciousness and an element of cultural nationalism. Ultimately, *umami* public awareness in Japan, and more recently abroad, forces us to rethink monolithic definitions of taste categories.

# I. The Construction of Sensory Categories

## 1. Language and Color

The proposition that scientific discourse participates in the social construction of a taste category is based on the premise that language, and by extension culture, shapes the way we experience the world through our senses. In order to demonstrate this hypothesis, it is essential to explore the color naming debate as it informs other areas of human sensory perceptions. In this respect, we must briefly explore the genealogy of the argument travelling back through time to the roots of cultural relativism established by Boas and his students. Sapir, a student of Boas, and later Whorf, a student of Sapir, posit that language has a considerable impact on people's cognition of the world (Niyekawa-Howard 1972). For the purpose of clarity, we will call this postulate linguistic relativity.[114] The two fundamental premises of this hypothesis are that (1) different language communities perceive the world in a different way and (2) the structure of the language of a given community shapes the cognitive structure of the people who speak it (Brown and Lenneberg 1954; Kay and Kempton 1984).

Most of the research that inscribes itself in this perspective has been concerned at looking at color naming as they are easily testable semantic categories (Conklin 1973; Roberson 2005; Regier and Kay 2009). According to this hypothesis, individuals are raised in an existing

---

[114] The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is considered a misnomer as it never was framed as a hypothesis by Sapir or Whorf.

linguistic community which will influence the individual's vision of the world (Brown and Lenneberg 1954). Studies have demonstrated that the more accurately a color can be named the more likely it can be recognized by the language user. Case in point, speakers who speak only Zuni, with no separate terms for orange and yellow, were not able to distinguish these colors apart whereas American English speakers were readily able to distinguish both (Lenneberg and Roberts 1955). Having one retrievable word for a color category instead of a string of descriptors, which is called codability, could constitute the determining factor in identifying the given color (Brown and Lenneberg 1954).

In response to linguistic relativity, critics have conceded that different languages operate under different color classification systems, yet, they argue that the perception of color are not fundamentally different (Kay and Kempton 1984). According to the name strategy hypothesis, subjects that are faced with classifying colors that do not fit in any category will substitute it for the closest category even if it is not the same (Kay and Kempton 1984). Researchers have argued that linguistic universal and linguistic relativity are the product of competing linguistic currents and are not mutually incompatible (Niyekawa-Howard 1972). To substantiate this argument, recent studies suggest that linguistic conventions may play some role in determining the boundaries of color categories but argue for clear universals that govern the semantic distinctions that language creates when it comes to color (Regier et al. 2010). Other studies have advance that language can influence performance on visual search, but it does not necessarily mean that language influences perception (Klemfuss, Prinzmetal, and Ivry 2012). Berlin and Kay, early proponents of universal color categories, argue in their influential study "Basic color terms: their universality and evolution" (1969) that basic linguistic color terms developed out of universal, ingrained categories which they call foci. These categories are subject to seven stages of development in which languages evolve more complex color naming nomenclature. Although the authors argue for a gradual evolution of color lexicons that correlate with cultural and technological complexity, their research falls short of explaining why perception is different among the groups studied.

Berlin and Kay's exhaustive study (1969) generated tremendous response among academics. In an article review of the study, Harold Conklin (1973) argues that analyzing color categories

and translating color terms can hardly be neatly coordinated into one study. His criticism illustrates how different conceptions of the human, whether universal or relativist, have pitted against each other two fundamentally different styles of research, theoretical perspectives and overall epistemic views. Several studies seem to indicate that preexisting color vocabulary not only influences identification (Lenneberg and Roberts 1955) but also color perception (Conklin 1955). According to Conklin (1955), color confusion can be argued to be the result of perceptual categories relative to studied group rather than sensory reception. In his article *Colors and Cultures*, Marshall Sahlins (1976) embraces the Berlin and Key thesis of universality of color categories. However, he argues using semiotics that these universal color categories are given meaning through the cultural process (Sahlins 1976).

Since Berlin and Kay's ground breaking work, Bornstein (1973) has suggested that color categories are determined by the environment in which the language has developed. He noticed color confusion among linguistic groups living in different geographical environments. More specifically, he argues that color semantics are a function of color sensitivity to certain wavelengths, and that this is the result of adaptation to ultraviolet exposure and dietary habits that differ according to latitude. For Bornstein et al. (1976), color categories are already present in preverbal human stages. His study demonstrates that infants categorize color hues much like adult humans. The implication of this study is that color categories are ingrained in us before we develop language ability, which means that linguistic syntax cannot possibly influence perception. However, according to Avery Gilbert (2014), the simplification of sensory input is a general feature of the brain called categorical perception. For example, since the physical spectrum of visible light is continuous, the stripes of the rainbow are created in our head to which we ascribe name categories (Gilbert 2014). Recent studies by Roberson of color category among different linguistic groups seems to confirm the hypothesis of linguistic relativity (Roberson 2005; Roberson et al. 2005; Roberson, Davies, and Davidoff 2000). Recent studies have suggested that native language transmits set categories of color that gives a window on the color definition of the environment (Roberson 2005).

Still, the evolutionary model of color emergence, which posits that color categories do not emerge randomly out of the diversity of languages, remains a leading paradigm (Kay and

Maffi 1999). This updated model largely based on Berlin and Kay's study (1969) maintains predetermined stages of development or a set trajectory for color categories. Furthermore, Kay and Regier (2007) believe that although color naming follows universal patterns, linguistic color categories correlate with color cognition. Indeed, recent research on the subject seems to reveal that color naming operates under some level of universal categories while language specific color syntax affects, at least partially, perception of the language user (Regier and Kay 2009). After sixty years, the color naming debate is still relevant because it encapsulate two core visions in Anthropology that are not necessary contradictory. The fact that color naming follows universal patterns does not proscribe that language affects overall perception of these colors. Thus, linguistic and cultural categories can be said to at the very least affect how we apprehend the color spectrum.

## 2. Language and Taste

While language, and to a certain degree cultural schemes of classification, seems to affect color cognition, I set out to demonstrate that linguistic classification affects taste perception. The question that needs answering is not so much why sensory categories differ from one culture to another but rather if those categories engender a different perception of the world. I have argued that both sides of the color naming debate have some measure of truth to them. It seems that, although the debate is far from resolved, some aspect of cognition and perception might be affected by language but that those differences are not incommensurable. How does research on language categories and color perception apply to taste? As presented earlier, linguistic syntax and structure shape the worldview in the form of cognitive structure and sensorial perspective. Language shapes the way one thinks and the way one perceives his or her surroundings. Color is a complex taxonomic system that can be permutated in numerous category combinations, whereas primary tastes in most languages can be broken down into fewer categories. Furthermore, unlike color, which can be easily quantified using scientific scales, taste is harder to measure as scaling the respective levels of each category cannot easily be done in experimental setting. Consequently, experimenting on taste leaves greater room for relative interpretation.

Research seems to demonstrate that the absence of a linguistic category for a taste can affect the ability to distinguish this taste. As it is ill equipped to transmitted sensory perception like taste (Majid and Levinson 2011), the connection between language and taste has been less thoroughly explored than the one between language and color. Certain studies have focused on the dynamics behind taste category similarity in different neighboring linguistic groups and how these groups were also able to more precisely discriminate between these tastes (Enfield 2011; Majid and Levinson 2011). The mere presence of a taste in the natural environment of a group does not automatically warrant a lexical name for it in the local language. Linguistic exchange and borrowing is posited to be the source of parallel categorization (Enfield 2011). Just as with color perception, language plays an essential role in enabling the taster to identify particular tastes. Taste and its terminology has been argued to be ordered through binary oppositions and analogies where cosmology, language and taste are bound together (Dupire 1987). The relatively few numbers of taste categories is in fact an illusion that is sometimes reinforced by language (Gilbert 2014). If a word does not exist for a particular taste, it does not necessarily mean that the subject cannot taste it, however, intimate linguistic knowledge of descriptors that are the product of association and experience certainly helps guide the tasting experience.

Studies on taste conflation and taste confusion illustrate the link between language, culture and taste perception. Taste conflation directly supports the thesis that language and culture influence our classification of our sensory reality. However, do humans fundamentally detect the same flavors and simply classify them differently or do they perceive the tasting spectrum in a radically different way? Different linguistic groups appear to sometimes conflate so-called primary taste[115] (Dupire 1987; Osawa and Ellen 2014). Osawa and Ellen (2014) argue that confusion of taste words is due to lexical conflation, yet fail to address that primary taste categories might themselves be conflation of different sensory inputs. They state: “We now need to explain why this pattern [of conflation] occur given that, physiologically, humans are

[115] The idea that we are able to detect four or five basic taste categories is today widely contested.

predisposed to discriminate between four or five tastes" (Osawa and Ellen 2014:86). Ultimately, although the authors admit the existence of a relationship between language and cognition, they assume a 'taste description deficiency' in some linguistic groups. This research strongly suggests that different linguistic groups arrange tastes in varying ways. but says little about actual perception. Physiologically speaking, evidence seems to point to the conclusion that taste receptors are not assigned to specific primary taste as it was previously thought (Zhang et al. 2003; Shepherd 2011). Furthermore, even our own linguistic taste categories are inherently subject to debates. For instance the perception of bitterness can greatly vary among people but is due to genetic aptitudes (Drewnowski, Henderson, and Shore 1997) or linguistic and cultural difference (Dupire 1987).

While knowledge acquired through experience and education can increase one's tasting vocabulary range, it also contributes to your ability to discriminate between subtle tastes. Wine tasting is the perfect illustration of how language expertise and experience feed into a better perception–or at least a better ability to discriminate–between different flavors. There is a plethora of studies on the topic of wine taste discrimination and vocabulary. Wine tasting categories are well developed and although there is some consensus on particular flavors, studies have demonstrated the sheer variety of tasting descriptors (Brochet and Dubourdieu 2001; Lehrer 1975). Interestingly, in a study of wine notes, non-sensory elements like location and climate become sensory attributes that can be tasted by the experts (Brochet and Dubourdieu 2001). In order to facilitate tasting description other senses are invoked through a process of analogy that involves color (Brochet and Dubourdieu 2001) and mouthfeel (Gawel, Oberholster, and Francis 2000). Authors have suggested that wine tasting skills are tied to knowledge rather than actual sensory superiority (Hughson and Boakes 2002). When talking about wine tasting categories there is little consensus in how to apply the tasting lexicon (Lehrer 1975). In part to remedy to this lacuna, a standardized wine aroma terminology was introduced to facilitate communication among members of the industry. Although focused on the senses of smell, the "Wine Aroma Wheel" introduces experts to wine smell categories like sweaty and dusty as metaphors that are not commonly used to categorize sensory input (Noble et al. 1987). Wine experts can better identify specific wine tastes and aromas, not only because

they have a broader vocabulary but also because this vocabulary is tied to past sensory experience and non-sensory association (e.g. a *terroir*).

Figure 59. Wine aroma wheel

## 3. Deconstructing Taste

Historically, primary tastes have not always been organized in the same way and with the same number of basic tastes. Today, most people recognize four or five primary tastes with sweet, salty, bitter, sour and more recently *umami*. Although we need common categories to taste the world, these categories are the product of specific historical developments. Semantic limitations in Western languages might be the cause of culturally constructed primary taste categories (Faurion 1993). Research in primate taste evolution offers evidence in support of the cultural construction of primary taste. This research suggests that salty and sour taste categories are not genetically determined because as humans we possess a much broader range of perceived taste than the primary tastes (Hladik, Pasquet, and Simmen 2002). Research in the social sciences have also questioned the fundamental taste categories under which we operate (Osawa and Ellen 2014). The model of basic taste is entrenched in culture and is accepted as a wide held belief when it was never rigorously proven (Erickson 2008). The

implications are that taste does not operate under four, or five, fundamental categories but is a much more complex sensory experience to categorize. Electrophysiological studies show that receptors are not discrete in the specific primary taste to which they respond but represent a continuum (Johns 1990). Case in point, as research advances, new taste categories like with *umami* or oleogustus[116] are discovered and given legitimacy using the tools of scientific investigation (Running, Craig, and Mattes 2015).

In addition, the other senses, like smell and sight, play an essential role in taste perception. Taste, like most senses, is the product of the intersection of several sensory inputs. A perceived taste is in fact a image constructed by the brain that involves the taste buds, touch receptors, retronasal olfaction,[117] olfaction and vision (Crisinel et al. 2012). The cumulative expression of these senses in one sensory perception is collectively referred to as flavour[118] (Dupire 1987; Shepherd 2011). Much research on sense cross-modality has established that the perception of taste is impacted by food color (Spence et al. 2010) and by sound (Spence and Piqueras-Fiszman 2014; Crisinel et al. 2012). Furthermore, taste perception is linked to the visual esthetics of a particular dish (e.g. food plating) (Zellner et al. 2014). Sensory Anthropology refers to the cross-modality of the senses as synesthesia (Jung 2014; Sutton 2001; Howes 2006). Synesthesia, a medical condition where stimulation in one sensory modality triggers perception in other modality, is taken to mean, in our case, a unity of all senses (Howes 2006). Association of the senses have been demonstrated to be physiological (Calvert, Spence, and Stein 2004) as well as culturally mediated (Howes 2005).

Flavour perception is not only the product of multiple sensory inputs, it is also the product of higher neural mechanism. Research in neurobiology suggests that the perceptual systems are

---

[116] Oleogustus is the proposed name for the taste of fatty acids particularly present in olive oil.

[117] Smelling odorants that originate in the oral cavity and are a necessary component of taste.

[118] The term flavour is derived from the old French *flaveur* and is used as a substitute to refer to the multi sensory nature of taste. I will use the term flavour when it is referred to in its neurobiological context. In other cases, when I use the term taste it is assumed that I refer to more than simply the physiological interaction of molecules on the tongue.

closely linked to systems for learning, memory, emotion and language (Shepherd 2006). According to Shepherd (2011), flavour does not reside in the food but is actively constructed by the brain from a variety of senses and higher cognitive mechanisms to give meaning to what we perceive. He describes that phenomenon as the Human Brain Flavor System (see below). Of particular interest for this research is the role of the human neocortex which reads taste in the way that gives it meaning in a human context with language and other cognitive associations playing an essential part in building the taste image (Shepherd 2011). Furthermore, it appears that the constructed flavour images lead to images of desire for acquiring and ingesting the food (craving circuit) supplying the construction of this flavour image in a feedback loop (Shepherd 2006). The point is that we should not focus uniquely on the highly-salient sensory information and ignore the network of association that lies in the background (Epstein 2004). The neurobiological model for flavour directly supports the hypothesis that taste perception could be in part socially constructed. This fact also resonates with the anthropological premise that sensory perceptions are more than physical input from outside our bodies, they are always social and culturally shaped as they delineate a world of meaning and values (Le Breton 2016).

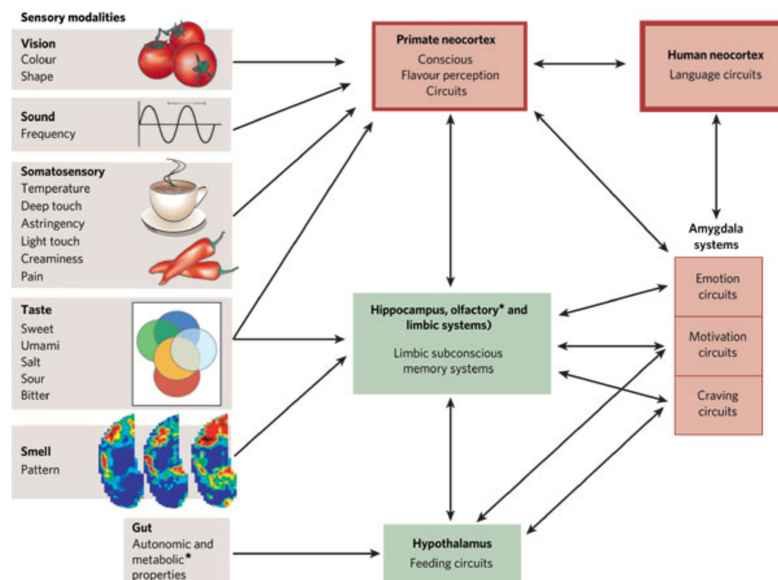



Figure 60. The Human Brain Flavor System

I argue that just like color perception, systems of beliefs that are incorporated through language and culture shape our experience of taste. Taste perception is mediated cognitively by language as well as culture (Johns 1990). If we accept that taste is the product of a physiological stimulus that is shaped by higher neural mechanisms (Shepherd 2011), it is possible to recognize that the taster is a reflexive actor. We can then examine taste as a cultural activity that is shaped by practice, embodiments and beliefs (Højlund 2015). Cultural elements become internalized shaping how we perceive it through our senses. Far from being an arbitrary arbitrator, it provides us with a filter through which we experience reality. In our case, embodied knowledge participates in the construction of the gustative experience (Højlund 2015). In recent years, science has been on the forefront of gastronomic knowledge in Japanese research on taste. In the following section, I will take a closer look at how discourses emanating from the sciences, once incorporated in the taster's mind, are shaping people's cognition and perception of taste.

## II. Construction of Deliciousness through Science

In this second section, I examine how actors that operate on different scales use science to shape taste in Japan. Scientific production does not escape social dynamics as it can be configured to respond to particular sets of imperatives. As explained above, taste perception is fluid and changes from one linguistic and cultural context to another. Contemporary scientific discourse plays a crucial role in shaping consumer palates. In order to do this, scientific discourse is deployed in a variety of way and on various scales. As this research focuses on the social construction of taste in Kōchi, I have chosen particular case studies that illustrate the impact of scientific production on the understanding and the experience of taste. First, I will explore how regional health research aims at increasing the value and taste for locally produced traditional food. Second, I will address how scientific research on palatability develops new ways of conceptualizing taste in Japan. Third, I will look at how a large corporation through guided policy can shape conception of taste in Japan and abroad.

## 1. Regional Health Research

*Sujiaonori* (*ulva prolifera*) is a type of comestible green laver that thrives in low salinity environment. The green laver is harvested from the Shimanto river in the western part of Kōchi prefecture. Shimanto river is considered one of the last clean streams in Japan (JETRO Kōchi 2015) and is famous for many regional products. Shimanto river produces nearly ninety percent of the natural non-farm raised river seaweed in Japan (JETRO Kōchi 2015). The long strands of laver are air-dried until they acquire an intense fragrance that can hardly be reproduced in farm-raised conditions (Kōchi prefectural government 2011). The seaweed is eaten seasoned over rice, deepfried (*tempura*), added to hotpot (*nabe*) or boiled in sweet rice wine and soy sauce (*tsukudani*). Beyond the connection with local people that regional cuisine entails, the image of long green strands drying on racks on the banks of the emblematic Shimanto river is one that Kōchi residents can identify to. The Shimanto river is one of the main tourist destinations representing the natural beauty of the region. The food products of the river have come to symbolize the forgotten way of a remote rural region. By consuming *sujiaonori*, one consumes a bit of the river and the traditional way of life that it incorporates. *Sujiaonori* tastes good because it embodies a place, the pure and clean Shimanto river, and local tradition. The Shimanto area is an agricultural region in one of the poorest prefectures in Japan.[119] The area has experienced low harvesting yield in this type of laver due to global warming and aging population (Kōchi Newspaper 2016). Yet, it still represents an important economic resource for the people of the area, which have a monopoly of this commodity, as ninety percent of this seaweed is naturally produced in the region. Although the values it incorporates helps sell it on the market, it must compete with thousands of other location-specific traditional foods available throughout Japan.

[119] Including the touristic city of Nakamura, the media income of the Shimanto administrative area is less than half the nation average of 5,372,000 yen with 2,590,000 yen (23,000 USD) (http://www.nenshuu.net/prefecture/shotoku/shotoku_city.php?code=392103).

Figure 61. *Sujiaonori* drying near the Shimanto river

In Japan, food products are often made more desirable and palatable when they incorporate a health component. Using nutritional and health research as a tool for marketing is a commonly employed strategy to sell a unique product to a consumer (Nestle 2016; Nestle 2013). Roger Ngatu is a medical researcher at Kōchi University who does research on *sujiaonori*. Our research paths crossed when he was investigating local folklore pertaining to the health properties of the river algae. Such data, he explained, could substantiate his upcoming medical and nutritional research on the local laver (Ngatu et al. 2017). In a review paper, Ngatu et al. (Ngatu et al. 2015:2) had already recognized the potential of the geographic location: "It is said that water from the Shimanto River is one of the cleanest in Japan; thus, food resources from this river are regarded as of great value." This initial exploratory paper suggested that *sujiaonori* may have an impact on obesity related disease like cardiovascular diseases and diabetes (Ngatu et al. 2015). The Kōchi University research team would eventually focus their efforts on adiponectin replenishment, a hormone with salutary health effect. The team found that dietary intake of *sujiaonori* increases adiponectin level thereby improving blood pressure in humans (Ngatu et al. 2017). The project, a joint collaboration between the farming industry, academia and the local government, was modestly funded at 1.5 million yen (Kōchi Newspaper 2016). Financial relationships among a specific industry and an academic institution are widespread but are not necessarily the only conflict of interest as other pressures

such as professional recognition and competition over research funding can be powerful motivators (Bekelman, Li, and Gross 2003). Underlining motivations behind such research can provide clues to how the production of such scientific discourse affects the intrinsic qualities of this regional product.

Ascribing health qualities to food influences both consumer behavior and consumer taste perception. Research in the area appears divided with inconclusive research demonstrating that organic foods taste better to the consumer (Fillion and Arazi 2002) while other research shows that unhealthy food is inferred to be tastier than healthy food (Raghunathan, Naylor, and Hoyer 2006). This is primarily due to the fact that health labels in certain cultural context modulates expectation of taste more positively than negatively (Wansink, van Ittersum, and Painter 2004). I argue that in the Japanese cultural context, positive health attributes make foods taste better. Discourse on taste, especially when socializing children, foregrounds food as a scientific object composed of chemical elements (Ochs, Pontecorvo, and Fasulo 1996). Studies have demonstrated that taste is subject to both conscious and subconscious processing by the brain which includes personal beliefs (Clark 1998). In Japan, desirable characteristics in food products like rarity, expensiveness, safety or healthiness adds value to the product. This value increases the commercial value as well as the taste value of the food. Research on the health benefit of *sujiaonori*, if proven to be true via scientific legitimation, will most likely have an impact on the sale of the regional product. Shimanto, one of the poorest areas of Kōchi, is the only region that produces the seaweed naturally and consequently could greatly benefit from such research. With this research, the economic survival of a rural area and the pride that local people have for their traditional product could be propped up on the national stage. Until further research, one can only conjecture that food that is good for your body as well as good for your community also tastes good.

## 2. Palatability Science

The emergence of palatability science in Japan is an interesting case to look at when exploring the intersection of culinary theorization and taste (Svejenova, Mazza, and Planellas 2007).

Palatability science (*oishisa no kagaku*) is an endeavor that comprises Japanese scientists who seek to explain what makes food delicious. In the Japanese language, the adjective *oishii*, typically translated as delicious, is by far the most common adjective used to describe the palatability of food. Unlike the word palatability, *oishii* is much more context driven, signifying gustatory enjoyment as a form of respect, in a precise moment, and as a proxy for the relationships it embodies. In the Japanese cultural context, objective taste and the value embodied by the food are often blurred (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993). For example, Japanese people might use the word *oishii* even before thoroughly tasting their food to demonstrate respect for what the food represent, will say hot food is particularly delicious on a cold day or food that is made with great care (*kodawari*)[120] taste better. The addition of the particle *-sa* transforms *oishii* from an adjective into a noun. The term *oishisa* is commonly used in commercial, food packaging and many other forms of marketing in order to imply palatability. Japanese people can easily identify what is, and will be, *oishisa*, however, the mechanism behind what makes something truly delicious to the Japanese palate is a more complex affair.

In the last few years, the term has gained popularity and visibility in the mass media. According to the Institute of *Oishisa* Research Science, term *oishisa* is a unique Japanese term that signifies more than deliciousness as it takes in account elements like taste, smell and texture. Its aim is also to use a scientific perspective generating concrete data to reveal general trends in taste that will take into account age, gender, experience and place (Institute of Palatability Science 2017). In print media, the *Oishisa* Science publication series takes into account the mechanism behind taste perception, with food trends and provenance among others, using a vast array of scientific disciplines ranging from biology to cultural anthropology (Yamano 2011). Tohru Fukushi, a member of the *Oishisa* research group and faculty at Ryukoku University, argues that since taste is relative, deliciousness depends less on cooking preparation per se but more on the mechanisms that takes place in the brain. Thus, he identifies four elements; physiological need (*ikiru tameno seiri yokkyū*), hedonistic desire

[120] Kodawari is a Japanese term that indicates the pursuit of perfection and the attention to detail. For a more thorough exploration of its signification in Japanese coffee culture see (White 2012:Chap.4).

(*kairaku wo motomeru shoku*), traditional eating practice (*tabenareta shokubunka*), and appetizing information (*jōhō ga riddo suru oishisa*), that allows the brain to construct a taste judgment that is possible to quantify (Fushiki 2006). For Yuya Hasegawa a high school chemistry teacher and creator of the site Life and Science (2017), *Oishisa* science seeks to reveal that palatability is a complex sensation that involves taste, smell, texture, sound, and memory among other. It is also the product of external factors such as homesickness while abroad, media influence or healthiness while sick (Hasegawa 2017). In short, taste is apprehended as a complex construction that can be explained using a scientific perspective.

The research on palatability science, albeit diverse, attempts to rationalize the components of good taste. The goal of *Oishisa* research is to experimentally breakdown the subdomains of taste into manageable isolatable factors (Nakano et al. 2013). Palatability research sets forth lofty objectives like decreasing nutrition related diseases and improving overall taste for marketing purposes (Fushiki 2011). Experimental subjects can be human (Nakano et al. 2013) as well as laboratory animals (Kawasaki et al. 2011), yet all aim at solving the riddle of human palatability. *Oishisa* research explains, by using scientific discourse, why elements of traditional Japanese cuisine are delicious. For example, *dashi* fish broth[121] can become a substitute for unhealthy ingredients like fat and sugar (Fushiki 2011). Other *Oishisa* researchers are interested in clearly breaking down deliciousness in measurable categories with for instance measuring texture, flavor and fragrance of *udon* noodles to access their palatability (Yamano 2007). Research on *oishisa* implies that Japanese people have a unique ability to appreciate taste due in part to their range of vocabulary to describe textures (Hayakawa et al. 2013). Research on *oishisa* also looks into brain mechanisms of deliciousness. Palatability is triggered by a complex intersection of different sense that have positive impacts on the mind as well as the body (Yamamoto 2003; Yamamoto 2006).

---

[121] *Dashi* is a central element of traditional Japanese cuisine and is made by boiling dried bonito flakes with dried kelp.

*Oishisa* is more than mere benign research on palatability. It is a discourse about taste that finds its credibility in science. In Japan, this objectification of taste is far from objective as it is molded by a myriad of local cultural considerations. The question is not, as one researcher puts it, to measure how noodle chewiness creates palatability (Yamano 2007) but instead to understand why certain gustatory characteristics are taken to be more palatable. Many researchers still attempt to formulate universal palatability rules (Ninomiya 2002; Berridge 2000; Raghunathan, Naylor, and Hoyer 2006). Although the world is independent of human minds, how we experience the world as humans is always socially constructed (Crotty 1998). In the case of *Oishisa* science, the leading paradigm is one based on the belief that science can explain palatability. In this sense, *oishisa* research presupposes that standards of good taste are universal, yet still have a bias for what the researchers enjoy eating (i.e. Japanese cuisine). Furthermore, *oishisa* discourse solidifies the idea that certain typically Japanese techniques and flavors are inherently delicious. This circular logic uses science to prove that Japanese food is delicious all the while reinforcing the discourse on the intrinsic deliciousness of Japanese food. This type of discourse feeds into the broader cultural and nationalistic discourse about the healthiness and uniqueness of traditional Japanese cuisine.

## 3. Corporate Funded Research

The food and chemical company Ajinomoto is arguably one of the most prolific producers of the scientific discourse on taste. The Japanese company is a multinational corporation with hundreds of brand names and affiliates across twenty-six countries. The Ajinomoto conglomerate produces seasonings, frozen foods, processed foods, sweeteners and amino acids. The company was for a long time the largest producer of monosodium glutamate (MSG) until it was forestalled by Chinese manufacturers (IHS Markit 2015) and is currently the world's largest producer of aspartame (Reed Business Information 2000). Ajinomoto's processed food empire owes much of its fortune to introducing MSG to the world in the early twentieth century (Sand 2005). In fact, the name *Ajinomoto* has become for most Japanese people a synonymous with MSG and is ubiquitous in most cuisine. Ajinomoto, which can be translated as the essence of taste, has been very active shaping consumer taste in Japan by heavily

investing in food and taste research. Its central research laboratory established near the site of its first factory has been producing research since 1956 (Ajinomoto Corporation 2017a). Although adoption of *Ajinomoto* was slow at first, it eventually spread throughout East Asia and the Pacific region (Sand 2005). By 1945, *Ajinomoto* was already a commonly used household item for Japanese Hawaiians (Masuoka 1945). The corporation is looking to new markets to expand, targeting developing nations in order to sell "Flavor seasoning rooted in food cultures worldwide" (Ajinomoto Corporation 2017b).

One of the core missions of the Ajinomoto Institute of Food Sciences and Technologies is the development of scientific research on "Deliciousness"[122] (Ajinomoto Corporation 2017a). It aims to provide deliciousness to people around the world via development of taste materials, flavor materials and texture improving materials. For the sale of its products in new markets, Ajinomoto has adopted several strategies. Most frequently, it sells what it calls *umami* rich products, which are in fact products rich in MSG in ways adapted to the local food culture. The alternative route is to launch projects in developing nations that aim at selling new products under the guise of improving nutrition. For example, the Ghana Nutrition Improvement Project, which is framed as a social business initiative, devised a strategy to sell the product, Koko Plus, throughout Ghana. *Koko* is a traditional weaning food in Ghana made from fermented corn. According to Ajinomoto researchers, *koko* is deficient in nutrients and could contribute to infant malnourishment (Ghosh et al. 2014). Ajinomoto plans to enrich *koko* with the amino acids they synthesize in factories built locally. They would then hire local women to sell the amino acid rich formula, Koko Plus, and provide nutrition education to communicate its importance to a vulnerable population (Ghosh et al. 2014). The business plan is presented as a social cause because it helps fight nutrition problems and empowers women (Ajinomoto Corporation 2017a) all the while generating profits and opening up future markets in developing countries (Ghosh et al. 2014). The moral and ethical dimensions are widely

---

[122] Quotes here are not a personal addition. They are best interpreted as an attempt to provide an approximate translation of *oishisa* and the implicit recognition that the term deliciousness hardly sounds scientific. To the cynic reader, the quotes are an ironic reminder that Ajinomoto is in fact a producer of chemical "deliciousness".

ignored in the Ajinomoto literature. If Koko Plus ends being a widely accepted necessity, Ajinomoto could potentially generate profits at the expense of a financially precarious population.

The Ajinomoto Foundation is directly involved in shaping the scientific discourse around taste beyond its laboratory facilities. When doing research on Japanese food, the Ajinomoto Food Culture Center is an essential resource. The food culture center is a modern building in Tokyo, with intricate glass and wood panels. Inside the building the security is tight, one has to check in with a special invitation and no bags are allowed within the library area. On several occasions, I went to use the center's library that, to my knowledge, surpasses any other collection on Japanese food culture. It also carries 40 thousands books about all subjects that pertain to food culture around the world (Ajinomoto Food Culture Center 2017). The center is an important resource for food scholars in and outside Japan that frequently reference the center in their work (Cwiertka 2007; Osawa and Ellen 2014; Sand 2005). As an important imperative of Ajinomoto research is to investigate the relationship of taste, culture and product sale, it is also a readily usable database for marketing research. The center also funds events, exhibitions, and publications and small research projects that expand and bring new depth to food culture research (Ajinomoto Food Culture Center 2017). Ajinomoto spearheads the food studies scholarship in Japan with its publication, *Vesta,* in a close collaboration within the industry, food researchers, journalists and chefs (Nozawa 2012). Furthermore, the company's innovative alliance program is heavily investing in large grant schemes with food palatability mechanisms and ethnological approach to food choices as special areas of interests (Ajinomoto Corporation 2017a).

As mentioned above, Ajinomoto built a food processing and chemical synthesizing empire with the discovery of monosodium glutamate. Using research and scientific discourse, it has pushed its corporate agenda and in the process has shaped taste. Although Ajinomoto has beyond a doubt played a role in shaping palates around the world, in many cases it is not easy to precisely pinpoint its impact as it has influenced discourse around taste on many levels in Japan and beyond. If we are to investigate the case of monosodium glutamate, a much clearer picture of its influence seems to emerge. MSG has garnered considerable bad press over the

years with studies that reveal its links to obesity and allergic reactions (Olney 1969; Schaumburg et al. 1969). In response, Ajinomoto has engaged in a systematic campaign to rehabilitate MSG arguing that it is safe until proven otherwise (Ajimoto Norh America Incorporated 2017; Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014). In order to achieve this goal, it has espoused the premise that the compound occurs naturally in certain foods and is now produced the natural way through bacterial fermentation (Ajinomoto Corporation 2017a). The company played a considerable role in shaping and public opinion through scientific discourse as attested by the recent wave of articles in the popular media that argue for the safety of MSG and that its bad reputation is due to xenophobia[123] (Barry-Jester 2016; Daley 2013; Haber 2003). Today, the popular and scientific consensus is leaning towards the acceptance of MSG (Geiling 2013; Lubin 2017; Geha et al. 2000; Walker and Lupien 2000). In the next section, I will demonstrate how *umami* as the fifth primary taste has helped further this same agenda.

## III. Building *Umami*

I first heard of *umami* ten years ago when I started working in a small run down sushi shop on top of one of San Francisco's hills. While training, the head chef instructed me how to prepare the kitchen before the shift started. He explained the proper ratio of rice to water necessary to cook sushi rice in a restaurant sized rice cooker, how to thinly slice cucumbers so that they would be ready to roll into California rolls and how to make miso soup. Instead of dissolving the miso in hot water, he added *hondashi*, a concentrated fish broth extract. He explained that the slightly fragrant fish broth was an essential part of miso soup because it gave *umami*.

"What's *umami*," I immediately asked him.

Unable to formulate an answer, he mixed miso paste with water in one cup and poured some of the *dashi* rich miso soup in another cup. They both tasted identical to me.

[123] These authors argue that "Chinese Food Syndrome" or an allergic reaction to food laden with MSG is in fact based on xenophobia rather than science.

Years later, sitting at the counter of a sushi shop on a cold night in Montreal, I decided to order a bowl of miso soup. The soup tasted strange as it was devoid of complexity. In a word, it had no *umami*. After a few years of living in Japan, I went from someone that was skeptical about the existence of the *umami* taste to someone that championed it.

## 1. Building a New Taste

In this third section, I will demonstrate how scientific discourse on *umami* has fostered the social construction of the so-called fifth primary taste. I do not seek to question *umami* as a fifth basic taste but instead claim that the fifth taste is perceptible precisely because it is constructed through scientific discourse. First of all, *umami* is a word that is a combination of the words *umai*, which signifies good or delicious in Japanese, and *mi*, which signifies taste. Although the exact description of the *umami* taste is quite elusive as it changes from one person to another, it is often described as a pleasant savory taste (Imai 2015). There appears to be a consensus within the scientific community that *umami* is with, salty, sweet, bitter and sour, one of the primary tastes (Beauchamp 2009; Fuke 1994; Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014; Osawa 2012). Japanese ingredients like dried bonito flakes, dried kelp and dried shitake mushroom are said to be rich in *umami* components. However western ingredients like tomato paste, vegemite,[124] parmesan cheese and even wine (Klosse 2013) are said to be rich in glutamate, the main molecule behind *umami* (Oruna-Concha et al. 2007; Bellisle 1999).

Perhaps even more important than ingredients, traditional Japanese techniques of fermentation and preservation are said to give *umami* to food (Kawasaki n.d.; McLean 2015). Therefore, *umami* is arguably anchored in the tradition of certain cultures (e.g. Japanese culture) that have sought out this elusive taste from times immemorial. Although the word *umami* might have been used prior to its discovery, the taste itself only came under rigorous scientific scrutiny in

[124] Vegemite is an Australian yeast spread made from the byproduct of brewing beer. It is a staple in Australia and is tied to Australian food identity.

the early 20th century (McLean 2015). First legitimized through scientific investigation, it has been since incorporated into public discourse. In addition of being widely accepted among the Japanese public, *umami* has gained prominence abroad among *haute gastronomie* celebrity chefs.

In order to better understand the social and historical context that helped foster the development of the concept of *umami*, it is worthwhile to retrace its history. The German trained chemist Kikunae Ikeda is credited with the discovery and coinage of *umami* in 1908 (Sand 2005). According to the Ajinomoto Company funded website Umami Information Center, Ikeda noticed the presence of a taste in *dashi* broth that did not fit any of the four basic tastes.[125] Using his chemical expertise, he discovered that the main component of this still unknown flavor was the amino acid glutamate which he penned *umami* (Umami Information Center 2017). Historically, this discovery coincided with a moment when Japan understood the crucial need to catch up with Western industrial powers (Imai 2015). Among the various attempts to modernize, improvements in nutrition became a major goal as they could make Japanese bodies as well as the nation stronger (Cwiertka 2007). Ikeda was well aware of the need to make industrial food palatable to improve nutrition (Sand 2005). He was also an astute entrepreneur patenting his new product: monosodium glutamate (MSG). He convinced the iodine manufacturer the Suzuki Chemical Company to produce and market his discovery under the brand name Ajinomoto meaning the "essence of taste." As the historian Jordan Sand (2005:38) explains: "The combination of the Suzuki Company's state-of-the-art technology and Ikeda's proposed dietary reforms placed MSG at the intersection of chemical science and nineteenth-century progressive concerns regarding health of the nation. Science was important to its marketing as well as its production."

The company Ajinomoto's scientific production has shaped conception of taste in Japan and abroad. Its most remarkable contribution was how it solidified the idea of *umami* amongst the

---

[125] Ajinomoto produced a "docudrama" celebrating Ikeda's discovery of *umami* entitled "Ambition": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZlucq0jNcA.

Japanese consumer. Against all odds, it made MSG a staple of the Japanese diet and a distinctive taste for the Japanese palate. When it was first marketed, the product had little success as it was rejected by the food industry, so the company focused its efforts on the emerging bourgeois class. The brand would offer predictability, efficiency, convenience, and scientific guarantees of hygiene and nutrition, themes that would resonate with the modernist imperatives of the Meiji-era housewife (Rubinfien 1995). They would eventually secure major endorsements of popular author Murai Gensai[126] who wrote on Ajinomoto first newspaper advertisement: "Added to miso soup it brings out the flavor most admirably" (Sand 2005). Ajinomoto would eventually gather support among cooking pedagogues like Akiho Masumi[127] who dubbed MSG a "blessing of modern civilization" (Rath 2016). By 1931, Ajinomoto was officially designated for use on the Emperor's table so that chemists in the company set to make a purer crystal[128] (Sand 2005). The food industry eventually embraced this miracle of science and once the domestic market was secured, the company started expanding in the colony of Taiwan and to Mainland China. In a zeal of nationalist fervor, Chinese entrepreneurs started early on to produce their own MSG (Sand 2005). China is today by far the largest producer and consumer of this food additive (IHS Markit 2015).

---

[126] Murai Gensai was a prolific Meiji era serial novelist and his novels are among the earliest examples of gastronomic novels. A firm believer of western diet and scientific nutrition, his novel's protagonists aim to civilize Japan through food (Aoyama 2008).

[127] Akiho Masami founded an influential cooking school in Tokyo where he taught how to make Japanese and Western dishes in new modernized kitchens.

[128] The company would from then on emphasize that the product was *masshiro* (pure white), which would both appeal to the hygienic quality and the Shinto concepts of purity.

Figure 62. Ajinomoto table shaker

While modernism and science can be credited for the success of Ajinomoto in Japan, by the late 60s the consumer attitude had changed about processed food. In response to plummeting sales, Ajinomoto decide to revamp its image tying its product to *umami* rather than a synthesized chemical. Ajinomoto MSG would be renamed *umami* seasoning associating it with natural products and traditional techniques (McLean 2015). To consolidate this belief, the company had to scientifically prove Ikeda's initial assumption: that *umami* was the fifth basic taste. It would embark on a remarkable campaign of public relations and sponsoring of scientific projects. Within Japan, Ajinomoto still sends its employees to teach dietary habits to elementary schools students. The program fundamental message stresses the important of *dashi* and *umami* (Ajinomoto Corporation 2016b). Outside Japan, it funded many initiatives. For example, in the 2015 Milano World Fair, the company sponsord choose to promote *umami*:

> In Italy people enjoy a bounty of umami-rich ingredients, including tomatoes, anchovies, and cheese, yet awareness of umami as a basic taste is still low. For this reason the Ajinomoto Group held the Umami Summit in Milan, the first international symposium on umami to be held in Italy. A panel of chefs, researchers, and other umami specialists from around the world delved into the questions of how umami changes food and what health benefits umami provides. By sampling *pomodori secchi*, sun-dried tomatoes, and other ingredients, participants learned how to identify umami

taste and how using umami-rich broth (*dashi*) can reduce salt intake while maintaining flavor.[129] (Ajinomoto Group Sustainability Report 2015)

Although monosodium glutamate was tied to the discovery of the *umami* taste and was a prominent feature of Ajinomoto in its early days, the company has strived to distance itself from the negative connotation of a chemical compound. Monosodium glutamate is the crystalized form of glutamate which is said to be one of the principal compounds of the *umami* taste (Bellisle 1999; Kurihara 2009). Since Ikeda's discovery of glutamate as a flavoring, other organic compound like inosinate and guanylate have also been attributed to the *umami* flavor (Ninomiya 2015). MSG alone is often described as unpleasant, bitter, salty or soapy but combined in the right amount with the right kind of foods enhances the savory deliciousness of a dish (Halpern 2002). For this reason, MSG is often referred to as a flavor enhancer that has been associated with Asian and processed food. There is still considerable debate surrounding the specificity of taste bud receptors for the glutamate and other MSG-creating tastes as it seems that multiple receptors with multiple functions are involved in the detection of glutamates (Beauchamp 2009; Chaudhari, Pereira, and Roper 2009). When evaluating the relationship of MSG and *umami*, it is important to take in consideration the corporate interests of a company with vast resources like Ajinomoto. *Umami* discourse emerges after years of campaigning to rehabilitate MSG in the eyes of the public (McLean 2015). The scientific discourse constructed to legitimize *umami* is contingent on the company's vested interest in legitimizing a product it depends on.

Recent research has legitimized *umami,* transforming glutamate from an additive to a natural flavor. As Ajinomoto has been diligently shaping the scientific discourse around *umami* (McLean 2015), the popular opinion has at the same time shifted in favor of the safety of MSG going viral on social media (Aralasco 2017; Colburn 2017; Hosie 2017). Considering that the general public obtains most of its information from the Internet, a rapid keyword search for

---

[129] The choice to italicize or not italicize *umami* helps to mark an important distinction between *umami* as a Japanese culturally constructed concept and umami as universal scientific fact.

*umami* will reveal the website Umami Information Center (2017) amongst the top results. The nonprofit organization is entirely funded by Ajinomoto and states that its mission is to convey information about *umami*. The single most important goal of the website is to prove the existence of the fifth taste via researchers, chefs and expert statements. *Umami* rich foods are said to be present around the world thereby making their product one that is synonymous with "deliciousness." In fact, the website only mentions MSG fleetingly in its frequently asked question section:

> Question: What is the difference between umami and MSG?
> Response: Though the glutamate in MSG and in umami-rich ingredients is the same, MSG is one of the umami substances that is commercially made using the fermentation method from natural ingredient such as sugar cane. And umami is a savory taste derived from naturally occurring glutamate such as tomatoes, cheese and cured hams (Umami Information Center 2017).

The sources that do not corroborate Ajinomoto's narrative are sparse and appear as less reliable. In fact, fringe media outlets and obscure nonprofit groups seem to be the only voices arguing that the concept of *umami* was developed in an effort to legitimize the use of MSG in food (Rufus 2010; Truth in Labeling Campaign 2010).

In recent years, a considerable amount of research has been produced on *umami*. Most of the research produced on *umami* aims at studying the mechanisms behind *umami* perception (Chaudhari, Pereira, and Roper 2009; Bellisle 1999; Zhang et al. 2003) and identifying ingredients rich in *umami* (Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014; Klosse 2013; Fuke 1994). Little research has been dedicated to question the initial premise that *umami* is in fact the fifth basic taste (Hladik, Pasquet, and Simmen 2002). Scientific research produced on *umami* implicitly legitimizes the existence of this fifth taste in the eyes of researchers as well as in the eyes of consumers. Ajinomoto has led a successful campaign funding scientific research on *umami* shifting the focus off MSG in order to assuage consumer anxiety (McLean 2015). Out of the research produced on *umami*, a sizeable amount of these publications have close ties to Ajinomoto, being either funded or directly employed by the company (Fuke and Shimizu

1993; Fuke and Ueda 1996; Yamaguchi 1991; Ninomiya 2015). Producing research that furthers a company's corporate agenda is a widespread strategy used to shape consumer opinion. For example, the tobacco industry has produced its own research through the Center for Indoor Air Research to articulate via science the safety of tobacco consumption (Barnes and Bero 1996). Ajinomoto production of *umami* research has a clear conflict of interest as it is devised to distance the brand from the MSG scare.

*Umami* research rarely questions the initial premise proposed by Ajinomoto, yet, some of its implications present direct and indirect challenges to the Ajinomoto narrative of *umami* as a universal primary taste category. First, the taste of *umami* might not be as firmly anchored in the taste buds as it appears to be a cross-modal construction dependent on the aroma of *dashi* (Fushiki 2011). Second, familiarity with the concept of *umami* is a prerequisite to identify it. Research demonstrates that when preference for *umami* rich food is low, umami sensitivity is low (Otomi and Tajima 2003). Moreover, only Ajinomoto workers seem to frequently use *umami* as a codable descriptor whereas other subjects simply refer to the taste as Ajinomoto (O'Mahony and Ishii 1986). Third, the taste of *umami* might prove difficult to study cross-culturally as it is difficult to translate (Sobal 1998). In cross-cultural experimental setting, *umami* is often conflated with salty which is argued to be due to the fact that monosodium glutamate is itself a salt (Osawa and Ellen 2014). Fourth, the problem that *umami* foods have glutamate in levels that cannot be detected by the human palate (Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014) is resolved using the theory of taste synergy. Research on taste synergy which simply quantifies *umami* appreciation based on subject observation suggests that the mixing of two different *umami* compound creates a synergy that otherwise would be undetectable (Yamaguchi and Ninomiya 2000). Finally, the most important discovery that has benefitted the Ajinomoto *umami* narrative is the discovery of specific *umami* receptor (Chaudhari, Landin, and Roper 2000). However, the function of the receptor is unclear as these *umami* sensitive receptors might not be taste receptors at all (Lindemann 2000). Subsequent research done by the research team that discovered specific *umami* receptor indicates that, not one, but in fact several different types of receptors are involved in the perception of *umami* (Chaudhari, Pereira, and Roper 2009).

## 2. Harnessing *Umami*

As the concept of this fifth taste permeates the broader public, *umami* is appropriated to fit various objectives hence gaining new meaning. In today's public discourse, *umami* is still legitimized through science, however, it has come to signify much more. According to anthropologist Yoshimi Osawa (2012), the popular meaning attached to the term *umami* among Japanese is complex. For one, she remarks that the term *umami* is polysemous with definition ranging from delicious taste, to artistic skills. *Umami* taste is intimately linked to *dashi* fish stock, which she argues is endemic to Japanese culture. Her research demonstrates that "the existence of *dashi* in Japan most likely played a key role in the 'discovery' of *umami* in the early twentieth century and the development of MSG seasoning […] This is the way in which traditional food culture has combined with modern science to convince consumers of the existence of an independent taste sensation" (Osawa 2012). Thus, a particular cultural context was a prerequisite for the construction of the primary taste of *umami*. In Japan, the meaning of *umami* is tied to *dashi*, one of the most characteristic tastes in Japanese cuisine, and as the historical use of *dashi* has changed over time so has the perception of *umami* (Osawa 2012). Furthermore, it appears that for Japanese people who experience *dashi* at an early age, the preference for *umami* seems to be cultivated (Imai 2015).

Scientific facts inform many levels of popular discourse on *umami* legitimizing a culturally constructed sensory reality. In the region of Kōchi, regional cuisine experts often invoke *umami*. As few people thoroughly grasp the actual meaning of the term, these experts have a monopoly over what it means to them. For example, the *Tosa Table* cookbook states "since tomatoes are rich in glutamic acid an *umami* ingredient, it is not only good with raw foods, it is also used with soup, eggs, meat and in the sauce of fish dishes" (Tosa Traditional Cuisine Research Group 2007). In another example, the Japanese National Curriculum Cooking textbook states, "Amino acid components like glutamic acid (konbu), theanine (gyokuro tea), inosic acid (dried sardines and katsuobushi), guanine (dried shiitake) create the taste of *umami*. Once these components are turned into salt, it increases their flavor" (Japan Association of

Training Colleges for Cooks 2014). According to Takashi Okui, lecturer at the *Séminaire sur la Culture Culinaire Japonaise* held in Paris:

> Glutamic acid is an amino acid that makes up proteins but does not produce *umami*. In a neutral solution, this acid becomes glutamate ion when carboxylic acid group dissociates into a proton and a carbon ion (-COO-). Glutamate is the substance that produces *umami*. Ionsinic acid and guanylic acid are nucleic acids and have structures similar to those of amino acids. Ionsinic acid and guanylic acid have a phosphate group. When these acids are in a neutral solution, they become their corresponding phosphate-containing ions, producing *umami* (Kawasaki n.d.).

However, *umami* is much more than mere chemical flavor; traditional techniques, personal relationships and memories all contribute to *umami*. In the early days of my research, Yasu Hamada, invited me to eat handmade *udon* at a small local shop. He shared an intimate bond with the shop owners and had been regularly visiting the shop. When Hamada exclaimed that the noodle broth had *umami*, it was implied that he was speaking of a deliciousness that was socially constructed. Since regional techniques and traditions are deemed delicious, they bring forth *umami* to a dish. For chef Hiroshi Yamashita, raw fish (*sashimi*) is cut into thick slices in the region of Kōchi because biting into thicker slice gives it more *umami*. According to Shosaku Takeuchi, a dried bonito (*katsuobushi*) artisan, the use of traditional mold[130] brings out *umami* in his product (Ishimaru 2015). Finally, for traditional fish cakes (*kamaboko*) artisans in Kōchi, fish cakes are often made with smaller fish not only because they are cheaper but also because they have more *umami*.[131] In Kōchi popular discourse, *umami* is a metonym for deliciousness of local culinary traditions.

---

[130] He sprays the dried fish with *Aspergillus glaucus* a type of mold found in Artic marine environment essential in the process of making dried bonito.

[131] They also explained that a lot of *dashi* came out of *kamaboko* when cooked in broth, something I was skeptical of at first as the cold fish cake have little taste. After cooking extensively with fish cakes, I realized I was wrong as broth cooked with *kamaboko* tastes of *dashi* and *umami*.

Although the Japanese cultural context was essential to building a concept like *umami*, it has since gathered considerable traction in Europe and America. *Umami* particularly popular among a new breed of celebrity chefs called gastro-scientists that seek to improve cooking with science (Imai 2015). Although the legitimacy of the discovery and what *umami* actually means is still up for debate among American food scholars (Fitzgerald and Petrick 2008), celebrity chef endorsements have played a major role in shaping the food industry's acceptance of the fifth taste with, for example, restaurants and food products themselves inherited the *umami* name (McLean 2015). The fifth taste has experienced worldwide adoption in part because of the role it occupies in the representation of Japanese food culture and has become a mark of authenticity among the globalized network of Japanese chefs (Imai 2015). *Umami*, as a primary taste, has helped make Japanese cuisine recognized abroad, at the same time, the recognition of the same Japanese cuisine has helped legitimize the fifth basic taste to consumers (Imai 2015). However, as *umami* grows in renown outside Japan, new actors are tapping into this cultural resource transforming its original meaning.

Among the many proponents of *umami*, Kenji Lopez-Alt, a scientist with a passion for cooking, has been spreading the *umami* gospel. In "The Food Lab: Better Home Cooking Through Science," he writes, "Just as the sensation of sweetness is triggered by sugar, saltiness by salt, sourness by acid, and bitterness by a number of mildly poisonous classes of chemical, *umami* flavor is triggered by glutamates—essential amino acids found in many protein-rich foods" (Lopez-Alt 2015:245). Perhaps the most influential voice in shaping the *umami* discourse in the *Haute Gastronomie* is the Michelin rated chef Heston Blumenthal. Blumenthal is an advocate of the scientific understanding of cooking, a pioneer of multisensory cooking and a published contributor of scientific articles (Dermiki et al. 2013; Oruna-Concha et al. 2007). In an article for The Guardian, he writes "Some amazing developments have taken place in recent years on the way in which we perceive flavour. Notably, that we have more than 300 receptor genes that, between them, account for every possible flavor known to man. This is something so potentially revolutionary that I will be returning to it in subsequent articles, but for now it will suffice to tell you that, among those receptors, one has been isolated that is responsible for detecting the *umami* taste" (Blumenthal 2002). Another example would be renowned chef and entrepreneur David Chang who has

combined *umami* with the consumer desire to eat local ingredients creating a miso paste dubbed New York umami (Kramer 2013). These gastro-scientists practice a brand of cooking that is shaped by the scientific discourse contributing to the construction of *umami* as the fifth taste.

No book embodies the Ajinomoto *umami* message as faithfully as "Umami: Unlocking the Secrets of the Fifth Taste" (Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014). Ole Mouritsen, a professor of molecular biophysics at the University of Southern Denmark writes, "We discovered that umami was as deeply embedded in European cuisines as in those of the East. By attaching a single word to this taste, we were immediately able to bring into focus a host of discrete sensory impressions related to it and to start to analyze them" (Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014:xiv). Mouritsen has been a major influence in introducing scientific understanding of *umami* outside of Japan. Incidentally, he has close ties with Ajinomoto with multiple collaborative projects and sponsored visits to Japan. Throughout the book, Mouritsen deemphasizes the role of the company in shaping the Japanese palate. For example, he explains that professional tasters tended to employ the scientific term of *umami* failing to mention that these professional tasters were Ajinomoto employees (Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014). He shows little reservation about the use of MSG implying that "the Chinese restaurant syndrome" is scientifically unfounded and it is as harmless as table salt stating: "The unfavorable impressions continue to cast a long shadow over the amazing story of the Japanese professor who found umami in his miso soup and launched a multimillion-dollar industry that produces the most umami-intense substance, glutamate" (Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014:33). The book suggests that culinary cultures around the world have unwittingly been using *umami* to make their food delicious citing the examples of the New England clambake and the *garum* sauce from roman antiquity.[132] The goal is ultimately to rehabilitate MSG to prove that the search for *umami* is a universal human endeavor.

---

[132] The author argues that in the case of New England clambake where seafood is steamed over seaweed releasing glutamate. In the case of *garum*, roman fermented fish sauce, glutamic acid is release during the process of fermentation (Mouritsen and Styrbæk 2014).

Although the concept of *umami* emerged out of the scientific discourse in part promulgated by Ajinomoto, it has since taken a life of its own signifying related, albeit slightly different, cultural concepts. In Japanese popular discourse, *umami* literally means delicious taste but is also associated with traditional cuisine. Ajinomoto has seized upon this popular discourse in an attempt to rebrand its chemical seasoning and in the process has transformed the meaning of *umami*. The shift from a taste that in its early days signified chemicals and modernity towards a taste of nature and tradition was orchestrated through the company's selective research funding. However, *umami* recent adoption outside of Japan does not carry the same cultural associations. In an effort to construct *umami* as universal and timeless, Ajinomoto has reassured consumers weary of the company chemical seasoning while helping to legitimize the fifth taste around the world. In restaurants outside of Japan, the discourse around *umami* balances its Japanese origin with its biological nature. Glutamates have been subsequently identified in typical European products making *umami* a taste that is universal rather than simply Japanese. As *umami* has come to signify something different, the fifth taste category has done more than morphed semantically. It has become altogether a different sensory category with attributes that fit different cultural and linguistic contexts.

## 3. From Japan to the World

*Umami*, first coined by Kikunae Ikeda in 1908, has altered meaning and sensory attributes in concordance with Ajinomoto corporate agenda. However in creating a new primary taste category that is much more than a synonym of MSG, the company has lost some of the monopoly it had in defining what *umami* meant. Today, *umami* is much more than a tool used to relieve consumer anxiety as various actors have seized upon this new "discovery" in order to use it to fulfill various objectives. First**,** it has played a key role in helping solidify Japanese cuisine as a form of cultural heritage. *Umami* has become a form of heritage, one that encapsulates traditional techniques and ancestral values of taste. During the application process of Japanese cuisine (*washoku*) to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Japanese government linked the skillful use of *umami* flavor with the overall health benefit of

limited use of animal fat in their cuisine (Nippon Foundation 2014). For people promoting *Washoku*, *umami* is a key part of the legacy of Japanese cuisine. Chef Yoshihiro Murata, one of the first people to call on the public sector to help get *Washoku* nominated, argues that one can achieve *umami* with Japanese *dashi* stock that has no calories. Consequently, promoting such heritage can contribute to worldwide health (Yoshida 2012). In this logic, *umami* becomes a form of "ancient wisdom" which must be rediscovered, protected, and spread to the rest of world.

Discourse of *umami* as heritage often feeds into a cultural nationalist discourse of *nihonjinron*. As discussed in the previous chapter, *ninhonjinron*, or theories about the Japanese, is a type of pseudoscientific discourse that became popular after the Second World War. The books, conferences and shows that participate at constructing this discourse aim at explaining the unique cultural and psychological characteristics of the Japanese people (Befu 2001). *Umami*, as the product of Japanese culinary tradition, becomes one more argument in favor of *nihonjinron*. The link between *umami* and cultural nationalism is at times subtle. According to New York chef and sommelier Yukari Sakamoto, "the first thing that makes Japanese cooking special is that it is rich in *umami*" (Ryall 2013). For chef Yoshihiro Murata, "All cuisines, except for Japanese food, are based on oils and fats. Japanese cuisine is based on *umami*" (Yoshida 2012). While in other cases, it is explicit: "There is no country other than Japan that has such diverse and high quality ingredients. Umami-rich *dashi* (broth) and fermented seasoning have been used to enhance the inherent taste and aroma of other ingredients" (Kawasaki n.d.). Nationalism via *umami* helps cement the idea of Japan as a unique cultural entity, while at giving credence to Japanese cuisine as a cuisine worthy of international recognition.

> It was about 100 years ago when a Japanese person discovered that there was a taste, alongside sweet, sour, salty and bitter, called umami. Umami is now listed in English dictionaries and is spreading throughout the world together with *Washoku* (Cool Japan NHK).

*Umami* has also been used to promote the image of Japan abroad in, for example, the "Cool Japan" campaign. The government-sponsored campaign is an attempt to respond to Japan's dwindling economical influence using the concept of soft power. "Cool Japan" campaign seeks to promote Japanese popular culture abroad to exploit its commercial capital and to further Japan's influence. For soft power to be effective, other countries must accept cultural elements from the nation that seeks to extend its influence. A good example of soft power would be how American popular culture (e.g. Hollywood, rock music) has been embraced by countries around the world making them more amendable to American power (Nye 1990). In the culinary scene, *umami* has been an effective cultural symbol shaping people's opinion of Japan and its cuisine. According to the Umami Information Center (2017), although *umami* is a Japanese discovery and Japanese have had a tacit understanding of *umami* flavor using traditional cooking techniques, it is also part of traditional foods around the world. At the 2016 Umami International Symposium, experts from around the world made the case for the universality of *umami*.[133] As the idea of *umami* is more and more accepted around the world, competing discourses that emphasize the local and global nature of *umami* start to emerge.

*Umami* outside of Japan has been shaped by series of different agendas. First, the company Ajinomoto, which first legitimized its existence in Japan, has focused spreading the *umami* gospel abroad in the last twenty years to assuage concerns over MSG (McLean 2015). Second, the ascension of Japanese cuisine as one of the most celebrated cuisine, sanctioned by its nomination as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage and government campaigns like "Cool Japan", has helped disseminate the idea of *umami* abroad (Imai 2015). Finally, gastronomic scientists with one foot in the laboratory and the other foot in kitchen have popularized *umami*

---

[133] Among others, Julie Mennella of the Monell Chemical Sense Center argued that breast milk has a high glutamate content explaining why *umami* is accepted worldwide. Gabriela Morini of the University of Gastronomic Science in Italy suggests that although the word *umami* is unknown in Italy, it importance is well known because Parmesan cheese which is rich in *umami* is added to baby food. According to Ali Bouzari a Food biochemist, *umami* is not Japanese nor is it related to culture, it is a fundamental trait of every cuisine around the world. For Ole Mouritsen, all traditional food around the world make use of *umami* but the word *umami* is not used to describe its flavor, consequently, education about *umami* must be done in schools.

abroad (Mouritsen 2015). Outside of Japan, understanding *umami* is valuable as it is a source of what Bourdieu would call (1984) cultural capital. New ideas that help theorize gastronomy are crucial for the success of creative institutional entrepreneurs like chefs (Svejenova, Mazza, and Planellas 2007). In this given context, *umami* becomes a tool of differentiation in a competitive economic environment. The platform that mass media has given to chefs in the last few years has increased their visibility and given them substantial weight in popular discourse (Sax 2015). Celebrity chefs interested in the science of cooking have been particularly active in shaping the *umami* discourse. As they rely on their craft for a living, these chefs have distanced themselves from using MSG as an easy shortcut, instead of relying on, for example, traditional techniques of fermentation (Kramer 2013).

Today, the science of *umami* serves multiple pragmatic interests from rehabilitating MSG to generate hype over a restaurant. Renowned chefs like Yoshihiro Murata believe that the chemistry of controlling *umami* will be the next step in the evolution of traditional Japanese cuisine (Ho 2015). While Michelin rated chef Heston Blumenthal argues that the rule that says parmesan should never be served with seafood is without basis as both food have a *umami* synergy (Blumenthal 2002). As the signification of *umami* changes according to its context, so does its taste perception. Depending on context, traditional Japanese cooking and modern gastronomic techniques can both taste of *umami*. In an interesting twist of fate, *umami* is something bound by culture but owned by science. The pursuit of deliciousness and profit helped forge a taste category that did not previously exist. The legitimization of a new linguistic classification subsequently enabled to expand a new taste to the sensory register. Multiple agendas have contributed to the success of the concept of *umami* worldwide and have helped solidify it as a sensorial reality. However, the conflicting discourses on *umami* have also shaped the way we experience it through our senses. Thus, grandmothers in Kōchi and gourmets in the US alluding to *umami* in different sociocultural contexts might very well be speaking of different sensory experiences.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I first set up to demonstrate that linguistic categories have at least some impact on color perception. In the same manner, taste perception is in part regimented by culturally constructed categories. Being able to sense minute flavors, as it is the case of wine tasting experts, for example, derives from the construction of a specific glossary that is acquired via sensory practice and incorporated knowledge. Taste is in fact a mental representation that is multi-sensory and involves higher cognitive mechanisms like language, emotions and memory. If we accept this premise, a variety of cultural elements shape how we experience taste. In Japan, cultural beliefs conveyed via scientific discourse participate in the social construction of deliciousness. An analysis of scientific discourse of taste reveals that actors operating on different scales can affect the palate of the consumer. The case of *umami* helps clarify how corporate funded research activities shape the perception of a basic taste category. *Umami* has become a defining characteristic of Japanese cuisine as well as a unique trait tied to Japanese culture. In Japan, *umami* locates itself at the intersection of scientific discourse and popular discourse, which explains why it was so readily adopted as a sensory reality. The adoption of the fifth taste outside of Japan first legitimized by the dissemination of this scientific discourse became much more than it was intended to be. As a Japanese cultural export, it has spread across the world more effectively than other Japanese attempts at soft power. As *umami* is taken out of its Japanese cultural context, it transforms and becomes something different that is lost in translation.

Ultimately, I do not suggest that *umami* proponents are mistaken when they taste *umami*, rather once cultural awareness of *umami* settles in, its taste is as tangible as any other of the primary tastes. Discourse, language, shared experience among others all contribute to the social construction of sensory categories. Belief in *umami*, especially one substantiated by a host of cultural elements, becomes a shared reality, something that can be discussed, cultivated and experienced. In this scheme, science becomes the great arbitrator, the beginning and the end, that turns a socially constructed reality into one that is palpable. If *umami* is socially constructed, how can it transcend its immediate cultural context? I argue that *umami* does not

fully transcend its milieu shifting meaning as often as it crosses cultural boundaries. However, the fact that, more often that not, people seem to agree on what *umami* tastes like demonstrates that common understanding is far from being an incommensurable task. Each individual's way of experiencing the world is affected by his or her cultural background, yet, bridges can be built and common agreements can be reached. The common sensory experience of a socially constructed taste remains a promising area of inquiry. In this respect, some questions warrant future investigation. How do linguistic categories, incorporated beliefs and embodied experiences in Japan work in unison to create a mutual understanding of *umami* and why has *umami* remained cross-culturally a metonym for food that is delicious?

# Concluding Remarks on Taste: Model Summary, Theoretical Implications and Future Outlooks

In the east mountain range of Kōchi, groups of elderly residents make a strange brown jelly known locally as *kashikiri*. When the temperature drops in late November, acorns litter the nearby forest floor. The best specimens are collected in bamboo wicker baskets to be sun-dried until they "burst out laughing," a local idiom for when their shells splits open. The nuts are separated from their tough skins and immediately immersed in water to prevent oxidation. For the next few days, they will be repeatedly rinsed to leach out the toxic chemicals. The acorns are traditionally ground into a coarse powder using a hand-powered crank stone-mill. Today, most people use an electric blender. The meal is boiled in a large flat pan and skimmed until the foam stops forming on the surface. The mixture is then poured into a wooden mold the size of a crib and cooled down until it solidifies. The block of brown jelly is carefully carved into bite size slices, hence, the name *kashikiri* or "cut oak". It is served with creamy green *nuta* sauce made from miso, sugar, vinegar and garlic leaves. The acorn tofu has no smell but its taste is like nothing else. Its bitterness compares to eating a mouthful of unroasted coffee beans followed by an acrid aftertaste that will make the uninitiated retch. Although the dish was brought over centuries ago from Korea, its origins are all but forgotten. It stands today as a symbol of the uniqueness of the region's taste. In fact, its taste is so different than anything else that it is, for better or for worse, a taste impossible to forget. For younger residents, it is a taste that belongs to the past, a taste that is hard to relate to and, thus, one that is fundamentally unpalatable. For older residents, it is a way to perform the past, a taste that encapsulates the resilience of a community turning a bitter relic into a delectable treat.

Figure 63. *Kashikiri* with *nuta* on the side

I have never acquired a taste for acorn jelly but there is a possibility that I might some day. To restate the obvious, taste is relative. Something that is delicious to some might be disgusting to others. However, these preferences are not entirely arbitrary as they operate with some level of commonality. One thing that emerged out of my time in Kōchi is how important the food of the region is for the residents of this rural region. The food culture of Kōchi is so tied to the social and economic fabric of the region that it permeates just about every aspect of daily life. Although my experience remains to some degree biased by my research, I have not met a single habitant of the region for whom the regional food was unimportant. This research only begins to articulate the genuine love that Kōchi inhabitant have for their local food culture. This passion for all things related to food is not only a result of necessity. It is also the product of a particular social and cultural milieu. After spending time in the region, I noticed my own taste buds shifting towards an appreciation of flavors uncommon outside the region. This transformation is one that I believe takes place early on for Kōchi residents. The socialization process of finding foods delicious is a complex one that I have tried to unpack in this research. The larger questions that I seek to answer in this research are not only about me or about Kōchi residents but rather about people as cultural beings that make choices and experience the world that surrounds them. Such endeavor seeks to reveal how taste is more than esthetic and gustative superficial distinction, they are at the heart of what makes us human. A better

understanding of these variations can help to elucidate how taste helps discriminate and unite people.

## 1. Bridging Layers of Taste

One of the aims in this research was to demonstrate how the construction of taste is a process that is multi-layered. Thus, researchers must peel away analytical layers in order to get to why residents of a rural region care so much about their food. Each chapter presented is conceived as a layer of analysis:

1. Practice, in both theoretical and culinary sense of the term, enables taste to be the permanent internalization of the social order in the human body. Embodiment provides a lens to examine how so-called authentic regional culinary practices are both transformed and transmitted.
2. Taste is tied to the memory process that is constructed through individual sensory experiences and collective shared recollections. These recollections, real or imagined, are often fuelled by deep emotional content where nostalgia serves to sell a product.
3. Food stories that circulate in the region help connect taste to a complex imaginary. The accuracy of those tales matters little, instead, they allow particular flavors to become proxies for a different time and place.
4. Commensality and food sharing that are so essential to Kōchi residents is part of a regionalized habitus that structures taste in the region. While commensality and food sharing are important elements of gustatory pleasure, it is at the same time a symbolic representation of the broader community that serves the economic interests of the region.
5. While food preferences help construct identity, regional belonging is itself incorporated having a deep impact on how we make choices and perceive the world. Concretely, this materializes in food allegiances where preferences for certain foods and tastes are part of the collective self.
6. When food crosses regional and national taste boundaries, its meaning and taste must adapt to new socio-cultural settings. In Japan, the peripheral regional cuisine and food

from marginalized communities are appropriated into the larger national cuisine to fit the goals of the nation.

7. The sense of taste is constructed through discourses of authority within a given cultural context. While the fifth basic taste of *umami* finds its sources in existing concepts of deliciousness in Japan, it is legitimated abroad using scientific discourse produced by a multinational company.

The approaches presented in these successive layers of analysis are not disconnected from one another. For example, memory and nostalgia are deeply tied to narrative and stories that are told about food. Throughout the chapters, I have made a point to remind the reader of these connections. More importantly, one must keep in mind that no one in Kōchi experiences taste in such a deconstructed way. Kōchi residents simply know if food tastes good or bad. For the purpose of this study, complex phenomena were broken down in easily analyzed units to which specialized theoretical tools could be applied. In reality, taste in the region of Kōchi is not so much composed of separate domains waiting to be investigated, rather it should be conceived as one united complex phenomenon. Moreover, it operates on more than one scale. This research is arranged into three parts with each chapter belonging to individual, regional and national scales of analysis. Although this exercise in scale-making aims to facilitate the organization of this research, it appears that these divisions are far from absolute. Scales are not neutral as they are themselves erected through human and political processes. This research locates these various approaches on a sliding scale of taste, an adjusting analytical lens necessary to make sense of taste. Although these scales should not be conceived as ontological category, they still matter because they are embedded into the social world. Thus, scales are tools that enable to understand the relation between socially constructed phenomenon rather than preexisting frameworks for ordering the world.

The aim of this research was to address the question: how do incorporated beliefs and pragmatic considerations shape the social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi? This research has strived to demonstrate that regional beliefs ranging wide and broad about the past, tradition, authenticity, belonging, the nation, science and other elements shaping worldview and perception are deeply embedded in local residents' minds and bodies. Put together, these

beliefs enable the articulation of a regional taste that is unique to Kōchi residents with specific ingredients, preparations, seasonings, cultural code of consumption and so on. Although these beliefs exist in people's minds, they carry weight beyond the realm of ideas. Incorporated beliefs, like tradition and the nation, are subject to change in order to face a changing reality, while at the same time shaping the world that surrounds us. In addition, economic revitalization seems to be the most immediate pragmatic consideration the prefecture is facing. Nostalgia, authenticity, stories, identity, community, nationalism and scientific discourse are all exploited for some measure of economic gain. Entrepreneurs, the prefecture, the nation and transnational entities all attempt to tap into these resources. The social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi does not operate in a vacuum, as it must recon with the bottom line of a region with a dwindling economy. As food is a major source of revenue in the region, every aspect of taste is permeated by this ongoing concern. For instance, festivals are not only seen as a perpetuation of tradition but also as an opportunity to generate profit. At the same time, active preservation and revitalization policies promulgate a taste for forgotten and invented food traditions. Hence, symbolic and material necessities both participate in shaping palates in Kōchi.

Among the other major conclusions of this study, three emerge as important correlated findings. First, this research reveals how communities of taste are constructed at the scale of the region. As taste in food changes tremendously across time and space, deliciousness is a product of a particular social cultural environment. This serves to explain why in a given setting like contemporary Kōchi a consensus emerges over what constitutes regional ingredients, emblematic dishes, proper seasonings and eating etiquette. This is not to say that within a specific region there is no contention over taste. For example, people in the western *hata* area prefer much sweeter soy sauce than in the eastern part of Kōchi. In fact, variations in taste are to be expected since such a wide range of beliefs and material conditions exist even within a region. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how effective were the efforts to create a regional taste that most Kōchi residents agree on. Second, taste perception, the detection of flavor in food, can be surmised as being at least in part socially constructed. The example the taste of *umami* serves to illustrate how a taste that did not exist before was built out of a conception of deliciousness and scientific discourse. The model of the Human Brain Flavor

System examined in chapter 7 posits that when we taste, we construct a flavor image that involves all our senses, emotions, language and memories. Third, the body plays a central role in the construction of taste. Embodied dispositions or *habitus* that organize the way people perceive and engage with the world not only take place in the mind, they take place within the body. When experiencing the world through the senses, one should acknowledge the primacy of how our corporality is shaped by our social context. Taste is the sum of the repetition of the bodily functions that start with cooking and end with eating.

## 2. A Theoretical Understanding of Taste

This research contributes theoretically and methodologically with its use of ethnographic vignettes. Narrative and descriptive content is far from new in ethnography. However, the stylistic choice of placing framed short accounts within an analytical text has to my knowledge, not been done before. As the style and tone of these vignettes contrast with the rest of the writing, these interludes are to be taken as snapshots that breathe life into an otherwise passive account. As explained in the introduction, there are two reasons for the use of these vignettes. First, they aim to provide human context to a text primarily analytical and theoretical. They seek to transmit sensory and emotional information so that the reader can relate in a more human way to the data and its analysis. The goal is to provide insight into the researcher's perspective in order for the reader to grasp what is truly at stake. The choice of these vignettes is not random as these narrative inserts represent ethnographic moments that were formative for the understanding of taste in Kōchi. Using a phenomenological approach, these narratives seek to reveal not so much an objective reality but how subjective experience is given meaning through the conscious mind. This premise is grounded in the promise of intersubjectivity where senses, feeling and thoughts of the Other can be apprehended by the attentive researcher. Second, these vignettes act as complex sets of data that cannot be neatly broken down through a systematic analysis. They are not only a means to convince that the subjects matter, they are pieces of the arguments. They are in effect "thick descriptions" that seek to actively interpret the meaning of culturally coded messages. In order to lighten the text

they are short and do not seek to cover more than one single event at a time. Although they are relevant to the argument at hand, they are framed so that they can be explored at the reader's leisure the same way a diagram or a photograph supports an analysis.

As stated in the previous section, this study of the social construction of taste in the region of Kōchi combines various approaches. These approaches draw on a large and differentiated theoretical corpus that seeks to provide a holistic approach on taste. Using phenomenology, embodiment, incorporation, cultural nationalism and rural revitalization, this study's theoretical contribution does not represent a shift in paradigm, rather it proposes a new articulation of the existing literature. As the analysis takes into account the social and the material within multiple scales of taste, it was necessary to peel away a disparate number of theoretical layers. Although each layer uses different theoretical approaches, each chapter's theoretical corpus strives to tie into the adjacent ones. Chapters 1 and 2 intersect in their approach of the individual and the body as the site where taste is experienced. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with how residents remember the past. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 relate to how residents make sense of how they belong to the region. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the way the region is constructed in relation to the nation. Chapters 6 and 7 explore how soft power ties cultural nationalism to scientific discourse of deliciousness. Of course, the concepts presented in these chapters also connect in ways that are not necessarily linear. Most importantly, these seemingly disparate collections of theoretical approaches are united to examine the social construction of taste. In order to understand the social construction of taste, the multiple dimensions of the palate must be apprehended using an integrated theoretical apparatus.

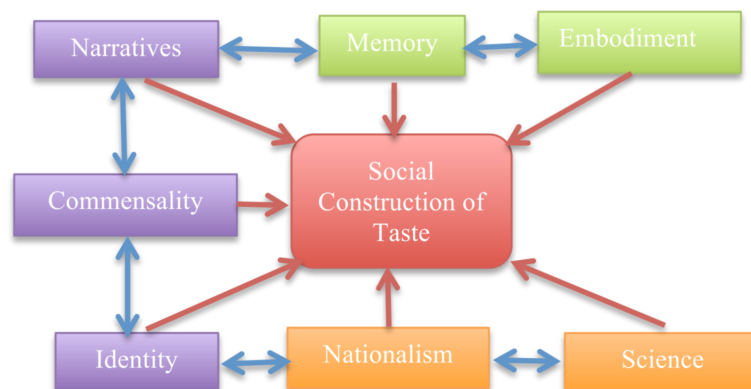


Figure 64. An integrative approach on taste

Aside from using an integrative approach, this research theoretically contributes in two major ways. First, it suggests that taste preference and taste perception are closely tied together as both dimensions need to be investigated for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon. Albeit preferences and perceptions are different conceptualizations of taste, they both merge together when one examines deliciousness. In the region of Kōchi, people choose to eat certain regional foods because they taste good to them. However, this research does not aim to be a consumer study on food preference. Instead, it seeks to uncover how tasting as a human experience is tied to social choice. In this manner, nostalgia for traditional food or scientific concepts of deliciousness feeds into a system where preferences and perceptions are both at work in the construction of taste. Second, critics too often assume that the social construction of a given phenomena operates in a different sphere from the material world. This research argues that the social construction of taste does not only exist within the confines of society and the minds that inhabit it, it is a product of material constraints, is embodied and has a lasting impact on the world precisely because it is socially constructed. In the region of Kōchi, material reality that primarily takes the form of economic imperatives play a large role in shaping this social reality. Each chapter has strived to acknowledge the underlining material conditions that shape this formation. For example, Kōchi commensalism, the way of eating that is so central to region, participates in building shared notions of community. These beliefs are then exploited as a resource, which reinforces commensal practices. Thus, social constructions do not exclude the material world, they are engaged in a dynamic relation with it.

## 3. Beyond Taste in Kōchi

The research implications for this study expand beyond the region of Kōchi. First, it serves to answer the fundamental question of why people love certain foods. In this respect, this study tackles more than regional identity as it takes into account different layers and scales to reflect

the complexity of taste. Although taste in Kōchi operates under specific local dynamics that residents have incorporated and pragmatic considerations that take place in a particular setting, the model used in this research can be adapted to other similar settings. In cases other than Kōchi, pragmatic concerns might not focus as much on the economy, stories might take on a larger part in shaping people's tastes or nationalism could be so hegemonic that it leaves little space for regional expressions of taste. Still, adjustments can be made while conserving a similar integrative approach as in this research. Second, this research provides groundwork for inquiries that extend beyond the realm of the study of taste. An approach like this study of regional taste can help inform research on consumer markets. It enables a thorough examination of why consumers find certain food delicious, something of considerable marketing value. Although this research has tremendous potential to evaluate consumer habits, I do not believe that a better understanding of taste should be used to increase the profit margins of large corporations. Third, as gastro-tourism is an area of growth, studies on rural revitalization can benefit from a better comprehension of how taste can be linked to sustainable development. At the same time, I am skeptical of its potential to save struggling rural regions in the face of increased economic and politic centralization. Fourth, sensory studies, in particularly the ones that look at how the senses are constructed through society and material context, could benefit from the use of theoretical tools presented in this research.

The application of this research beyond the region of Kōchi raises a new set of questions that have thus far been taken for granted. (1) What makes the case of regional taste in Kōchi so special as opposed to other rural regions around the world? As explained above, the integrative theoretical approach of this research can be easily applied to other examples of regions where the construction of taste might operate in a similar way. Many rural regions adhere to similar revitalization and identity dynamics. Kōchi regional cuisine is in many ways similar to other disenfranchised regions where taste is tied to local community and pride in their cultural resources. The differences are really in the circumstances: local agricultural production, state of the local economy, historical trajectory, place of regional identity and power of the nation-state. These circmstances constitute significant distinctions that make the food that Kōchi residents enjoy like no other. (2) How can regional taste even exist on the scale of a region as diversified as Kōchi? Chapter 5 discussed how taste in the region of Kōchi

is far from homogenous. Regional tastes are ongoing projects where social and material processes attempt to create unity among the vastness of regional experiences. These bounded spaces become cultural units that carry much weight because they are socially constructed through politics, history and economy. As explained earlier, social constructions are not abstract concepts that hover above the physical plane. They are enmeshed within material conditions. Although the region could have been broken down, historically and culturally in many other ways, the prefecture of Kōchi is very real for its residents. Most residents of Kōchi will admit that to some degree they share a common culinary repertoire. However, this is not to say that there is no possibility to contest the normative forces of regional taste.

The construction of regional taste offers a number of promising avenues for future research. First of all, research that can reconcile physiological and social mechanism behind taste is urgently needed. How are food choices the product of social constructed taste and genetic predisposition? How is the experience of taste based on socially learned behavior and physiological mechanisms? Tying together preference and perception could be a step in the direction of reconciling nature with nurture. Such research requires multidisciplinary approach involving perhaps more than one researcher with complementary expertise. This research could be conceived as qualitative with participant observation and interviews, and quantitative with experimental design components. It holds the potential to mend rifts created by disciplinary divides offering a multi-facetted understanding of a complex mechanism. Another venue of promising research would be to examine the construction of communities of taste that are not bounded by geographical borders. This research has just begun to brush the surface on these issues. It explored how disenfranchised and transnational communities of taste form across regional and national borders. Chapter 6 examines how *Zainichi* Koreans have had their food appropriated by the Japanese nation. Interestingly, they have also assimilated a number of Japanese culinary practices while conserving taste preferences that link them back to the Korean peninsula. *Zainichi* Korean taste embodies a microcosm of their relation to the Japanese state, their identity, economic hardships and cultural resistance. Chapter 7 investigates how Japanese taste has had an impact on the global gastronomic community. This global community adopts a common taste habitus that is a marker of social

distinction that transcends national borders. Thus, an analysis of taste can illuminate much larger social dynamics that affect marginalized and global communities.

A few months before writing these lines, I visited Kōchi with people close to me. As we travelled by bus to the remote rural region, my mind steered towards the food I wanted to eat and the food I wanted to introduce to the people travelling with me. The cuisine of Kōchi constitutes a slice of the region—its inhabitants, its culture and its taste—and a reflection of who I had become. After days of feasting, we left the remote location satiated but wanting more. The guests I had brought along would later tell me they already missed the taste of Kōchi's most emblematic dish: seared bonito tuna (*katsuo no tataki*). There is a saying in Kōchi that goes "*makkoto umai zeyo*," or this is truly—and with the utmonst sincerity—delicious. Understanding what is truly delicious in Kōchi is akin to understanding the lives, dreams and pleasures of the region's inhabitants. I am well aware that solving the riddle of taste will not serve to explain every aspects of regional culture. However, taste, as I have defined it, remains a central concern for me as a researcher and as human being. The implication is that delicious meals do not need to be gastronomical or sophisticated, they can be in some cases banal and personal. Food, like mom's cooking or produce straight from the farm, connects us to a broader social world. Such cuisine possesses a taste that is hard to describe, one that reaches beyond the choice of ingredients or the molecules interacting with taste receptors. The tastes people are familiar with, understand and care about are one certainty people can hold on to as they are swept away through the course of life. The potential of understanding taste lies in that it says much about who we are as individuals as well as who we are as social creatures revealing in the process a salient feature of our humanity.

# Bibliography


Agar, Michael
2004 We Have Met the Other and We're All Nonlinear: Ethnography as a Nonlinear Dynamic System. Complexity 10(2): 16–24.

Ajinomoto Corporation
2017a Ajinomoto website. http://www.ajinomoto.com/, accessed February 13, 2017.
2017b Ajinomoto Corporation. https://www.ajinomoto.com/en/aboutus/pdf/ajinomoto_profile.pdf?scid=av_ot_pc_comeheadbp_aboutus_ajinomoto_profile, accessed February 13, 2017.

Ajinomoto Food Culture Center
2017. Ajinomoto Food Culture Center. http://www.syokubunka.or.jp, accessed February 13, 2017.

Ajimoto Norh America Incorporated
2017 MSG info. http://www.msginfo.com, accessed February 15, 2017.

Albors-Garrigos, J., V. Barreto, P. García-Segovia, J. Martínez-Monzó, and J. L. Hervás-Oliver
2013 Creativity and Innovation Patterns of Haute Cuisine Chefs. Journal of Culinary Science & Technology 11(1): 19–35.

Allen, Matthew, and Rumi Sakamoto
2011 Sushi Reverses Course: Consuming American Sushi in Tokyo. The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus 9(5). http://ro.uow.edu.au/artspapers/1827/, accessed August 27, 2014.

Allison, Anne
1991 Japanese Mothers and Obentōs: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus. Anthropological Quarterly 64(4): 195–208.

Althusser, Louis
2009 Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation). *In* The Anthropology of the State: A Reader. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.

Amselle, Jean-Loup
2000 La Globalisation. "Grand Partage" Ou Mauvais Cadrage? L'Homme (156): 207–225.

Anderson, Benedict

2006 Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. New Edition. London; New York: Verso.

Andrews, Geoff
2008 The Slow Food Story: Politics and Pleasure. Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Aoki, Tamotsu
2001 The Domestication of Chinese Foodways in Contemporary Japan: Ramen and Peking Duck. *In* Changing Chinese Foodways in Asia. David Y. H. Wu and Chee Beng Tan, eds. Pp. 219–236. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Aoyama, Tomoko
2008 Reading Food in Modern Japanese Literature. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Appadurai, Arjun
1981 Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia. American Ethnologist 8(3): 494–511.
1986 On Culinary Authenticity (Letter). Anthropology Today 2(4): 24–25.
1988 How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India. Comparative Studies in Society and History 30(1): 3–24.
1996 Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. Minneapolis, Minn: Univ Of Minnesota Press.
2009 The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Aralasco, Czarina
2017 MSG Used in Chinese Cuisine Is Good for the Health, Scientist Says. TravelersToday. http://www.travelerstoday.com/articles/39150/20170214/msg-used-chinese-cuisine-good-health-scientist.htm, accessed February 17, 2017.

Arch, Jakobina
2016 Whale Meat in Early Postwar Japan: Natural Resources and Food Culture. Environmental History 21(3):467–487.

Ashkenazi, Michael
1993 Matsuri: Festivals of a Japanese Town. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Assmann, Jan, and John Czaplicka
1995 Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. New German Critique (65): 125–133.

Assmann, Stephanie
2010 Food Action Nippon and Slow Food Japan: The Role of Two Citizen Movements in the Rediscovery of Local Foodways. *In* Globalization, Food and Social Identities in the Pacific Region. James Farrer, ed. Tokyo: Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture.

2017 Global Recognition and Domestic Containment: Culinary Soft Power in Japan. *In* Feeding Japan. Andreas Niehaus and Tine Walravens, eds. Pp. 113–137. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Autio, Minna, Rebecca Collins, Stefan Wahlen, and Marika Anttila
2013 Consuming Nostalgia? The Appreciation of Authenticity in Local Food Production. International Journal of Consumer Studies 37(5): 564–568.

Aymard, Maurice, Claude Grignon, and Françoise Sabban
1993 Le Temps de Manger. Alimentation, Emploi Du Temps et Rythmes Sociaux. Paris: Maison des Sciences de L'Homme.

Bamforth, Chris
2005 The Taste of Tosa in Tokyo. The Japan Times Online, September 30. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2005/09/30/food/the-taste-of-tosa-in-tokyo/, accessed October 3, 2018.

Barnes, Deborah E., and Lisa A. Bero
1996 Industry-Funded Research and Conflict of Interest: An Analysis of Research Sponsored by the Tobacco Industry through the Center for Indoor Air Research. Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law 21(3): 515–542.

Barraud, Eric
2010 The Future Needs Terroirs. https://satoyama-initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/06_Claude-Beranger.pdf, accessed June 6, 2012.

Barry-Jester, Anna Maria
2016 How MSG Got A Bad Rap: Flawed Science And Xenophobia. FiveThirtyEight. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-msg-got-a-bad-rap-flawed-science-and-xenophobia/, accessed January 16, 2017.

Barthes, Roland
1983 Empire of Signs. Richard Howard, tran. Writing. New York: Hill and Wang.

Baumert, Nicolas
2013 Peut-Il Exister Des Terroirs Du Saké? Ebisu - Études Japonaises (29): 5–29.

Beauchamp, Gary K.
2009 Sensory and Receptor Responses to Umami: An Overview of Pioneering Work. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 90(3): 723-727.

Befu, Harumi
2001 Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of “Nihonjinron.” Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press.

Bekelman, Justin E., Yan Li, and Cary P. Gross

2003 Scope and Impact of Financial Conflicts of Interest in Biomedical Research: A Systematic Review. Jama 289(4): 454–465.

Bellah, Robert N.
2003 Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation. Berkeley: Univ of California Pr.

Bellah, Robert N., Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton
2007 Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. 3 edition. Berkeley, Calif. Los Angeles, Calif. London: University of California Press.

Bellisle, France
1999 Glutamate and the UMAMI Taste: Sensory, Metabolic, Nutritional and Behavioural Considerations. A Review of the Literature Published in the Last 10 Years. Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews 23(3): 423–438.

Bérard, Laurence, and Philippe Marchenay
2004 Les Produits de Terroir. Entre Cultures et Règlements. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

Berlin, Brent, and Paul Kay
1969 Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bernard, Harvey Russell
2006 Research Methods in Anthropology. Lanham, Md.; New York; Toronto: Altamira Press.

Bernier, Bernard
1975 Breaking the Cosmic Circle: Religion in a Japanese Village. Ph.D. dissertation, China-Japan Program, Cornell University.
2009 L'expansion Du Travail Précaire: Conséquence Du Système Japonais de Production Flexible. Anthropologie et Sociétés 33(1): 229–244.

Berridge, Kent C.
2000 Measuring Hedonic Impact in Animals and Infants: Microstructure of Affective Taste Reactivity Patterns. Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews 24(2): 173–198.

Berthon, Jean-Pierre
1989 Les Formes de La Pratique Religieuse Au Japon: Persistance et Changement. Civilisations 39(1/2): 19–39.

Bessière, Jacinthe
1998 Local Development and Heritage: Traditional Food and Cuisine as Tourist Attractions in Rural Areas. Sociologia Ruralis 38(1): 21–34.

Bessière, Jacinthe, and Laurence Tibère

2011 Innovation et patrimoine alimentaire en Midi-Pyrénées. Anthropology of food (8). http://aof.revues.org/6759, accessed September 15, 2015.

Bestor, Theodore C.
1990 Tokyo Mom and Pop. Wilson Quarterly 14(4): 27–33.
2000 How Sushi Went Global. Foreign Policy 121: 54–63.
2001 Supply-Side Sushi: Commodity, Market, and the Global City. American Anthropologist 103(1): 76–95.
2004 Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World. New Ed edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.
2014 Most F(l)avored Nation Status: The Gastrodiplomacy of Japan's Global Promotion of Cuisine. Public Diplomacy (11): 12–62.

Bestor, Theodore C., and Victoria Lyon Bestor
2011 Cuisine and Identity in Contemporary Japan. Education about Asia 16(3): 13-18.

Bhowmik, DC.
1984 Food Habits of the Khasi People: A Study of Tradition and Change. HUman Science: Journal of the Anthropology Survey of India 33(4): 263–269.

Bloch, Maurice
1999 Commensality and Poisoning. Social Research 66(1): 133–149.

Blumenthal, Heston
2002 My Heart Belongs to Umami. The Guardian, July 13. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2002/jul/13/fish.foodanddrink, accessed January 23, 2017.

Boisard, Pierre
2003 Camembert: A National Myth. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bornstein, Marc H.
1973 Color Vision and Color Naming: A Psychophysiological Hypothesis of Cultural Difference. Psychological Bulletin 80(4): 257–285.

Bornstein, Marc H., William Kessen, and Sally Weiskopf
1976 Color Vision and Hue Categorization in Young Human Infants. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance 2(1): 115–129.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1980 L'identité et la représentation: Éléments pour une réflexion critique sur l'idée de région. Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 35(1): 63–72.
1982 Ce que parler veut dire: l'économie des échanges linguistiques. Paris: Fayard.
1984 Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

1990 The Logic of Practice. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Boutaud, Jean-Jacques
2004 L'imaginaire de la table: convivialité, commensalité et communication. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Brau, Lorie
2004 *Oishinbo's* Adventures in Eating: Food, Communication, and Culture in Japanese Comics. Gastronomica 4(4): 34–45.

Breslin, Paul A. S.
2013 An Evolutionary Perspective on Food and Human Taste. Current Biology 23(9): R409–R418.

Brochet, Frédéric, and Denis Dubourdieu
2001 Wine Descriptive Language Supports Cognitive Specificity of Chemical Senses. Brain and Language 77(2): 187–196.

Brown, Linda Keller
1984 Ethnic Regional Foodways United States: Performance of Group Identity. 1st edition. Univ Tennessee Press.

Brown, Roger W., and Eric H. Lenneberg
1954 A Study in Language and Cognition. The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 49(3): 454.

Burgess, Chris
2010 The'Illusion'of Homogeneous Japan and National Character: Discourse as a Tool to Transcend the'Myth'vs.'Reality'Binary. The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus 8(9).
2015 "Killing the Practice of Whale Hunting Is the Same as Killing the Japanese People": The Importance of the Role of Identity, National Pride, and Nationalism in Understanding Japan's Resistance to International Pressure on the Issue of Whaling. *kokusai kankei gaku kenkyū* (42): 1–13.

Buzzi, Peter, and Claudia Megele
2012 Honne and Tatemae: A World Dominated by a 'Game of Masks,.' *In* Communication across Cultures. Palgrave Macmillan

Cabinet office, Government of Japan
2018 *kokumin keizai tōkei (GDPtōkei)* [National Economic Calculation (GDP Statistics)]. http://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/menu.html, accessed July 26, 2018.

Calvert, Gemma, Charles Spence, and Barry E. Stein
2004 The Handbook of Multisensory Processes. Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press.

Cang, Voltaire Garces
2007 Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage and Its Stakeholders: The Case of Japan. International Journal of Intangible Heritage 2: 45–55.

Cantarero, Louis, J. MacClancy, J. Henry, H. Macbeth, and others
2009 From Edible to Inedible: Social Construction, Family Socialisation and Upbringing. *In* Consuming the Inedible: Neglected Dimensions of Food Choice Pp. 205–214.

Ceccarelli, Giovanni, Alberto Grandi, and Stefano Magagnoli
2010 The "Taste" of Typicality. Food and History 8(2): 45–76.
2013 Typicality in History, Tracing a Basic Definition. *In* La Typicité dans l'histoire: Tradition, Innovation, and Terroir. Giovanni Ceccarelli, Alberto Grandi and Stefano Magagnoli, eds. Pp. 13–22. Brüssel: P.I.E.-Peter Lang S.A.

Ceisel, Christina Maria
2013 Consuming the 'Authentic': Globalized Nostalgia and The Politics of Hybridity through Culinary Tourism and Heritage Foodways. A Case Study of Galicia, Spain. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois.

Chapman, David
2006 Beyond the Colonised and the Colonisers: Intellectual Discourse and the Inclusion of Korean-Japanese Women's Voices. Japanese Studies 26(3): 353–363.

Chaudhari, Nirupa, Ana Marie Landin, and Stephen D. Roper
2000 A Metabotropic Glutamate Receptor Variant Functions as a Taste Receptor. Nature Neuroscience 3(2): 113–119.

Chaudhari, Nirupa, Elizabeth Pereira, and Stephen D. Roper
2009 Taste Receptors for Umami: The Case for Multiple Receptors. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 90(3): 738–742.

Chuang, Hui-tun
2011 Fabricating Authentic National Cuisine Identity and Culinary Practice in Taiwan. Ph.D. dissertation, New School University.

Cidell, Julie
2006 The Place of Individuals in the Politics of Scale. Area 38(2): 196–203.

Clair, Valerie Wright-St, Wannipa Bunrayong, Soisuda Vittayakorn, Phuanjai Rattakorn, and Clare Hocking
2004 Offerings: Food Traditions of Older Thai Women at Songkran. Journal of Occupational Science 11(3): 115–124.

Clark, Jane E.

1998 Taste and Flavour: Their Importance in Food Choice and Acceptance. Proceedings of the Nutrition Society 57(04): 639–643.

Clarke, Austin
2014 Pig Tails "n" Breadfruit - Anniversary Edition. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.

Claus, C. Anne
2017 Beyond Merroir: The Okinawan Taste for Clams. Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies 17(3): 49–57.

Cobbi, Jane
1978 Le Végétal dans la vie japonaise : L'utilisation alimentaire de plantes sauvages dans un village de montagne, Kaida-Mura. Paris: Publications orientalistes de France.
1989 L'évolution Du Comportement Alimentaire Au Japon. Économie Rurale 190(1): 41–45.
1992 Goût du Sake, coût de la cohésion sociale. Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen.

Cohen, Erik
1988 Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism. Annals of Tourism Research 15(3): 371–386.

Colburn, Randall
2017 Read This: Food Scientist Says MSG Isn't Bad, Is Delicious. http://www.avclub.com/article/read-food-scientist-says-msg-isnt-bad-delicious-249874, accessed February 17, 2017.

Comaroff, John L, and Jean Comaroff
2009 Ethnicity, Inc. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Conklin, Harold C.
1955 Hanunoo Color Categories. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 11(4): 339–344.
1973 Color Categorization. American Anthropologist 75(4): 931–942.

Cooper, Malcolm, Ogata Masakatsu, and Jeremy Eades
2013 Heritage Tourism in Japan - A Synthesis and Comment. *In* Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Asia and the Pacific Pp. 138–146. Routledge.

Corbeau, Jean-Pierre, and Jean-Pierre Poulain
2008 Penser l'alimentation: entre imaginaire et rationalité. Toulouse: Privat.

Costa, LeeRay, and Kathryn Besio
2011 Eating Hawai'i: Local Foods and Place-Making in Hawai'i Regional Cuisine. Social & Cultural Geography 12(8): 839–854.

Counihan, Carole

2004 Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence. New York: Routledge Press.

Creighton, Millie

1997 Consuming Rural Japan: The Marketing of Tradition and Nostalgia in the Japanese Travel Industry. Ethnology 36(3): 239–254.

2001 Spinning Silk, Weaving Selves: Nostalgia, Gender, and Identity in Japanese Craft Vacations. Japanese Studies 21(1): 5–29.

2015 Nostalgia, Anthropology Of. *In* International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences Pp. 34–38. Elsevier.

Crisinel, Anne-Sylvie, Stefan Cosser, Scott King, et al.

2012 A Bittersweet Symphony: Systematically Modulating the Taste of Food by Changing the Sonic Properties of the Soundtrack Playing in the Background. Food Quality and Preference 24(1): 201–204.

Crotty, Michael J.

1998 The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process. 1 edition. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Csergo, Julia

1995 Nostalgies Du Terroir. Autrement. Série Mutations (154): 156–162.

Csordas, Thomas J.

1990 Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology. Ethos 18(1): 5–47.

Cwiertka, Katarzyna

1997 Domesticating Western Food In Japan, a Comparative View. *In* Food on the Move: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, 1996. Oxford Symposium.

1998 A Note on the Making of Culinary Tradition—an Example of Modern Japan. Appetite 30(2): 117–128.

2005 From Ethnic to Hip: Circuits of Japanese Cuisine in Europe. Food and Foodways 13(4): 241–272.

2007 Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity. Reaktion Books.

2015 Food as Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Lesson from Japan. *In* Conference on Chinese Food Culture Pp. 173–188.

Daley, Bill

2013 Has MSG Gotten a Bad Rap? Tribune digital-Chicago tribune. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-07-17/features/ct-food-0717-msg-20130717_1_msg-chinese-restaurant-syndrome-kikunae-ikeda, accessed January 16, 2017.

Davis, Fred
1979 Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia. Free Press.

De Certeau, Michel, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol
1994 L'Invention au quotidien, tome 2 : Habiter, cuisiner. Nouv. éd. Paris: Folio.

De la Barre, Suzanne, and Patrick Brouder
2013 Consuming Stories: Placing Food in the Arctic Tourism Experience. Journal of Heritage Tourism 8(2–3): 213–223.

De St. Maurice, Greg
2012a "The Real of the Real": Kyoto's Heirloom Vegetables and Articulations of Authenticity. Digest: A Journal of Foodways and Culture 1.
2012b Savoring Kyoto. Etnofoor 24(2): 107–122.
2015 The Kyoto Brand: Protecting Agricultural and Culinary Heritage. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/25830/, accessed August 10, 2016.

Demossier, Marion
2011 Beyond Terroir: Territorial Construction, Hegemonic Discourses, and French Wine Culture. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 17(4): 685–705.

Dermiki, Maria, Rana Mounayar, Chutipapha Suwankanit, et al.
2013 Maximising Umami Taste in Meat Using Natural Ingredients: Effects on Chemistry, Sensory Perception and Hedonic Liking in Young and Old Consumers. Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture 93(13): 3312–3321.

Desjarlais, Robert, and Jason Throop
2011 Phenomenological Approaches in Anthropology. Annual Review of Anthropology 40(1): 87–102.

Didierjean, Cécile
2006 Les Offrandes Alimentaires, Un Champ d'étude Classique de l'ethnologie Du Japon. Ateliers d'anthropologie (30). http://ateliers.revues.org/86, accessed December 10, 2013.

Dodds, Rachel, Mark Holmes, Vichukan Arunsopha, et al.
2013 Consumer Choice and Farmers' Markets. Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics 27(3): 397–416.

Douglas, Mary
1997 Deciphering a Meal. *In* Food and Culture: A Reader Pp. 36–54.
2002 Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. 1st edition. Taylor.

Drewnowski, Adam, Susan Ahlstrom Henderson, and Amy Beth Shore

1997 Genetic Sensitivity to 6-n-Propylthiouracil (PROP) and Hedonic Responses to Bitter and Sweet Tastes. Chemical Senses 22(1): 27–37.

Ducann, Charlotte
1986 Offal and the New Brutalism: A Book About Food. London: David & Charles.

Dupire, Marguerite
1987 Des Goûts et Des Odeurs: Classifications et Universaux. L'Homme (104): 5–25.

Duranti, Alessandro
2010 Husserl, Intersubjectivity and Anthropology, Husserl, Intersubjectivity and Anthropology. Anthropological Theory 10(1–2): 16–35.

Elias, Norbert
2000 The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations. 2 edition. Oxford ; Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell.

Elias, Norbert, Jephcott, Edmund, Dunning, Eric, Goudsblom, Johan, and Stephen Mennell
2000 The Civilizing Process. Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

Embree, John F.
1939 Suye Mura: A Japanese Village. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Enfield, Nicholas J.
2011 Taste in Two Tongues: A Southeast Asian Study of Semantic Convergence. The Senses and Society 6(1): 30–37.

Epstein, Russell
2004 Consciousness, Art, and the Brain: Lessons from Marcel Proust. Consciousness and Cognition 13(2): 213–240.

Erickson, Robert P.
2008 A Study of the Science of Taste: On the Origins and Influence of the Core Ideas. Behavioral and Brain Sciences 31(01): 59–105.

Everett, Sally, and Cara Aitchison
2008 The Role of Food Tourism in Sustaining Regional Identity: A Case Study of Cornwall, South West England. Journal of Sustainable Tourism 16(2): 150–167.

Faurion, Annick
1993 Why Four Semantic Taste Descriptors and Why Only Four. *In* Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on the Physiology of Food and Fluid Intake.

Ferguson, Priscilla Parkhurst
2006 Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fillion, Laurence, and Stacey Arazi
2002 Does Organic Food Taste Better? A Claim Substantiation Approach. Nutrition & Food Science 32(4): 153–157.

Fischer, Anne, Yoav Gilad, Orna Man, and Svante Pääbo
2005 Evolution of Bitter Taste Receptors in Humans and Apes. Molecular Biology and Evolution 22(3): 432–436.

Fischler, Claude
1988 Food, Self and Identity. Social Science Information 27(2): 275–292.
2011 Commensality, Society and Culture. Social Science Information 50(3–4): 528–548.

Fisher, Mary F. K.
1989 The Gastronomical Me. Edition Unstated edition. San Francisco: North Point Press.

Fitzgerald, Gerard J., and Gabriella M. Petrick
2008 In Good Taste: Rethinking American History with Our Palates. Journal of American History 95(2): 392–404.

Foster, Michael Dylan
2013 Inviting the Uninvited Guest: Ritual, Festival, Tourism, and the Namahage of Japan. Journal of American Folklore 126(501): 302–334.

Fournier, Vincent
2005 Le Développement de l'industrie Vitivinicole et Les Représentations Du Vin à Cirò En Calabre : Une Anthropologie Du Particulier. Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Montréal.

Fox, Nick J., and Pam Alldred
2018 The Materiality of Memory: Affects, Remembering and Food Decisions. Cultural Sociology 12(2): Open Access.

Franchi, Maura
2013 The Contents of Typical Food Products: Tradition, Myth, Memory. Some Notes on Nostalgia Marketing. *In* Typicality in History: Tradition, Innovation and Terroir = La Typicité Dans l'histoire : Tradition, Innovation et Terroir. Giovanni Ceccarelli, Alberto Grandi, and Stefano Magagnoli, eds. Pp. 45–69. Bruxelles: PIE P. Lang.

Francks, Penelope
2007 Consuming Rice: Food, 'Traditional' Products and the History of Consumption in Japan. Japan Forum 19(2): 147–168.

Freedman, Irith
2015 Cultural Specificity in Food Choice – The Case of Ethnography in Japan. Appetite.

Fuke, Shinya

1994 Taste-Active Components of Seafoods with Special Reference to Umami Substances. *In* Seafoods: Chemistry, Processing Technology and Quality. Fereidoon Shahidi and J. Richard Botta, eds. Pp. 115–139. Springer US.

Fuke, Shinya, and Y. Ueda

1996 Interactions between Umami and Other Flavor Characteristics. Trends in Food Science & Technology 7(12): 407–411.

Fuke, Shinya, and Tetsuji Shimizu

1993 Sensory and Preference Aspects of Umami. Trends in Food Science & Technology 4(8): 246–251.

Fukutomi, Satomi

2010 Connoisseurship of B-Grade Culture: Consuming Japanese National Food Ramen.

2014 Bottom-up Food: Making Rāmen a Gourmet Food in Tokyo. Food and Foodways 22(1–2): 65–89.

Furst, Tanis, Margaret Connors, Carole A. Bisogni, Jeffery Sobal, and Laura Winter Falk

1996 Food Choice: A Conceptual Model of the Process. Appetite 26(3): 247–266.

Fushiki, Tohru

2006 *oishisa wo kagaku suru* [Doing Palatability Science]. Tokyo: Shikuma Shobo.

2011 *oishisa no kagaku to kenkō* [Palatability Science and Health]. Conference lecture outline presented at the 71th Yamano Institute of Chemistry Laboratory.

Gardner, Cristine

1994 Humanism in the Narrative Voice. Anthropology and Humanism 19(2): 166–168.

Gawel, Richard, A. Oberholster, and I. Leigh Francis

2000 A 'Mouth-Feel Wheel': Terminology for Communicating the Mouth-Feel Characteristics of Red Wine. Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research 6(3): 203–207.

Geertz, Clifford

1973 The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays, vol.5019. Basic books.

Geha, Raif S., Alexa Beiser, Clement Ren, et al.

2000 Review of Alleged Reaction to Monosodium Glutamate and Outcome of a Multicenter Double-Blind Placebo-Controlled Study. The Journal of Nutrition 130(4): 1058–1062.

Geiling, Natasha

2013 It's the Umami, Stupid. Why the Truth About MSG Is So Easy to Swallow. Smithsonian. http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/its-the-umami-stupid-

why-the-truth-about-msg-is-so-easy-to-swallow-180947626/, accessed February 15, 2017.

Gheorghe, Georgică, and Daniel Bulin
2014 Cuisine–A Regional Tourism Differentiation Tool. Knowledge Horizons–Economics 6(2): 194–199.

Ghosh, Shibani, Kwaku Tano-Debrah, Grant J. Aaron, et al.
2014 Improving Complementary Feeding in Ghana: Reaching the Vulnerable through Innovative Business-the Case of KOKO Plus: Complementary Feeding: Innovative Business in Ghana. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 1331(1): 76–89.

Gilbert, Avery
2014 What the Nose Knows: The Science of Scent in Everyday Life. A Synesthetics Inc. Book.

Glanz, KAREN, MICHAEL Basil, EDWARD Maibach, JEANNE Goldberg, and DAN Snyder
1998 Why Americans Eat What They Do: Taste, Nutrition, Cost, Convenience, and Weight Control Concerns as Influences on Food Consumption. Journal of the American Dietetic Association 98(10): 1118–1126.

Gomez, Marie-Léandre, Isabelle Bouty, and Carole Drucker-Godard
2003 Developing Knowing in Practice: Behind the Scenes of Haute Cuisine. Knowing in Organizations: A Practice-Based Approach: 100–25.

Graburn, Nelson HH
1995 The Past in the Present in Japan: Nostalgia and Neo-Traditionalism in Contemporary Japanese Domestic Tourism. *In* Change in Tourism: People, Places, Processes. R. W. Butler and D. Pearce, eds. Pp. 47–70.

Gray, Blake
2006 SAKE'S REGIONAL REVIVAL: Japanese Breweries Embrace Terroir and a Return to Local Flavors. San Francisco Gate, September 31. http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/08/31/WIGDFKP0EM1.DTL&ao=all, accessed May 24, 2012.

Greve, Gabi
2008 WASHOKU - Japanese Food Culture and Cuisine. WASHOKU - Japanese Food Culture and Cuisine. https://washokufood.blogspot.com/2008/05/sawachi-kochi.html, accessed October 3, 2018.

Grinshpun, Helena
2012 The City and the Chain: Conceptualizing Globalization and Consumption in Japan. Japan Review(24): 169–195.

Haber, Barbara
2003 Life on the Culinary Edge. Harvard Magazine. http://harvardmagazine.com/2003/01/life-on-the-culinary-edg.html, accessed January 16, 2017.

Hacking, Ian
1999 The Social Construction of What? Cambridge: Ma.: Harvard University Press.

Hallam, Elizabeth, and Tim Ingold
2007 Creativity and Cultural Improvisation. Oxford; New York: Berg.

Halpern, Bruce P.
2002 What's in a Name? Are MSG and Umami the Same? Chemical Senses 27(9): 845–846.

Hammersley, Martyn
2006 Ethnography: Problems and Prospects. Ethnography and Education 1(1): 3–14.

Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson
2007 Ethnography: Principles in Practice. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge.

Hanasaki, Akira
2004 Oishinbo, vol.87. Tokyo: Shōgakukan.

Handler, Richard
1984 *Review of* The Invention of Tradition. American Anthropologist 86(4): 1025–1026.

Handler, Richard, and Jocelyn Linnekin
1984 Tradition, Genuine or Spurious. The Journal of American Folklore 97(385): 273–290.

Harbottle, Lynn
1997 Taste and Embodiment: The Food Preferences of Iranians in Britain. In Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change. Ellen Macbeth ed. Pp. 175–185. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Harker, F. Roger, Rachel L. Amos, Gemma Echeverríaa, and F. Anne Gunson
2006 Influence of Texture on Taste: Insights Gained During Studies of Hardness, Juiciness, and Sweetness of Apple Fruit. Journal of Food Science 71(2): S77–S82.

Harris, Marvin
1998 Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture. Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Pr Inc.

Hasegawa, Yuya

2017 *oishisa no kagaku. seikatsu no kagaku* [Palatability and Science. Life Science]. http://sekatsu-kagaku.sub.jp/taste-science.htm, accessed February 9.

Hayakawa, Fumiyo, Yukari Kazami, Katsuyoshi Nishinari, et al.
2013 Classification of Japanese Texture Terms: Classification of Japanese Texture Terms. Journal of Texture Studies 44(2): 140–159.

Henderson, Joan C.
2009 Food Tourism Reviewed. British Food Journal 111(4): 317–326.

Hendry, Joy
2003 From Scrambled Messages to an Impromptu Dip: Serendipity in Finding a Field Location. *In* Doing Fieldwork in Japan. Theodore Bestor, Patricia Steinhoff and Victoria Bestor, eds. Pp. 55–70. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Hirao, Michio
1959 *kyōdoshi yobanashi 27* [Local history evening tale 27]. Kōchi Newspaper, August 8.

Hirome Company
2014 *hirome ichiba no gaiyō* [Hirome Market Outline]. Kōchi city.
2015 *hirome ichiba ohuisharu saito* [Hirome Market Official Site]. http://hirome.co.jp/, accessed October 3, 2018.

Hirsch, Marianne, and Valerie Smith
2002 Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 28(1): 1–19.

Hladik, Claude-Marcel, P. Pasquet, and B. Simmen
2002 New Perspectives on Taste and Primate Evolution: The Dichotomy in Gustatory Coding for Perception of Beneficent versus Noxious Substances as Supported by Correlations among Human Thresholds. American Journal of Physical Anthropology 117(4): 342–348.

Ho, Tienlon
2015 A Japanese Master on Innovation Through Tradition. The MAD Feed. http://www.madfeed.co/2015/a-japanese-master-on-innovation-through-tradition/, accessed December 17, 2015.

Hobsbawm, E. J., and T. O. Ranger
1992 The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hodges, Matt
2001 Food, Time, and Heritage Tourism in Languedoc, France. History and Anthropology 12(2): 179–212.

Hoelscher, Steven, and Derek H. Alderman
2004 Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship. Social & Cultural Geography 5(3): 347–355.

Hoey, Brian
2008 American Dreaming: Refugees from Corporate Work Seek the Good Life. *In* The Changing Landscape of Work and Family in the American Middle Class: Reports from the Field. Elizabeth Rudd and Lara Descartes, eds. Pp. 117–138. Lexington Books.

Højlund, Susanne
2015 Taste as a Social Sense: Rethinking Taste as a Cultural Activity. Flavour 4(6).

Holtzman, Jon D.
2006 Food and Memory. Annual Review of Anthropology 35(1): 361–378.

Hosie, Rachel
2017 A Food Scientist Has Just Debunked a Huge Food Myth. The Independent. http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/msg-additive-good-for-you-food-science-sodium-salt-glutamic-acid-chinese-bad-health-steve-witherly-a7567406.html, accessed February 17, 2017.

Howes, David
2005 Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader. Oxford ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
2006 Scent, Sound and Synaesthesia: Intersensoriality and Material Culture Theory. *In* Handbook of Material Culture. Christopher Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands and Patricia Spyer, eds. Pp. 161–172. London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Howes, David, and Marc Lalonde
1991 The History of Sensibilities: Of the Standard of Taste in Mid-Eighteenth Century England and the Circulation of Smells in Post-Revolutionary France. Dialectical Anthropology 16(2): 125–135.

Hughson, Angus L., and Robert A. Boakes
2002 The Knowing Nose: The Role of Knowledge in Wine Expertise. Food Quality and Preference 13(7): 463–472.

Huh, Woo-kung
2008 Can Information Technology Revive Rural Economies?: The Cases of E-Villages in Korea and Japan. Journal of the Korean Geographical Society 43(5): 728–742.

Huss-Ashmore, Rebecca, and Susan L. Johnston

1997 Wild Plants as Famine Foods: Food Choice Under Conditions of Scarcity. *In* Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change. Helen Macbeth ed. Pp. 83–95. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

IHS Markit
2015 Monosodium Glutamate (MSG). Chemical Economics Handbook. https://www.ihs.com/products/monosodium-glutamate-chemical-economics-handbook.html, Accessed February 13, 2017.

Ikkai, Mariko
1988 The 'Senbetsu-Omiyage'Relationship: Traditional Reciprocity among Japanese Tourists. Kroeber Anthropological Society Paper 67: 62–66.

Imai, Shoko
2015 Umami Abroad: Taste, Authenticity, and the Global Urban Network. *In* The Globalization of Asian Cuisines. James Farrer, ed. Pp. 57–78. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Imilan, Walter
2015 Performing National Identity through Peruvian Food Migration in Santiago de Chile. Fennia-International Journal of Geography 193(2): 227–241.

Inoue, Nobutaka, Mitsugu Kōmoto, Hirochika Nakamaki, et al.
1979 A Festival with Anonymous Kami: The Kobe Matsuri. Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 6(1/2): 163–185.

Institute of Palatability Science
2017 *oishisa no kagaku* [Palatability science]. http://www.oishisa-no-kagaku.com, accessed February 9.

Irwin, Rachel
2007 Culture Shock: Negotiating Feelings in the Field. Anthropology Matters 9(1): 1–11.

Ishida, Hiroshi
2012 Japan Yuzu Lime Exported to Europe for the First Time. Asahi Shinbun, November 26. https://www.japanbullet.com/life-style/japan-yuzu-lime-exported-to-europe-for-the-first-time, accessed April 6, 2018.

Ishige, Naomichi, and Paul Kegan
2001 The History and Culture of Japanese Food. London; New York: Routledge.

Ishikida, Miki Y.
2005 Living Together: Minority People and Disadvantaged Groups in Japan. Lincoln: iUniverse.

Ishimaru, Shizuka
2015 *shōmetsu shikaketa meihin* [The disaperance of a masterpiece]. Kōchi Newspaper, May 10.

Ivy, Marilyn
1995 Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Iwabuchi, Koichi
2010 Undoing Inter-National Fandom in the Age of Brand Nationalism. Mechademia 5(1): 87–96.

Jackson, Michael
1998 Minima Ethnographica: Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Japan Association of Training Colleges for Cooks
2014 *chōri riron* [Cooking Theory]. Tokyo: Zenkoku chōrishi yōsei shisetsu kyōkai.

Japan Broadcast Association
2017 shioesai wo tsukatta ozōni zukuri [Making zoni soup with shioesai]. NHK News Web. http://www3.nhk.or.jp/lnews/Kōchi/20171211/8010000843.html, accessed December 11, 2017.

Jean-Louis Flandrin, and Jane Cobbi
1999 Tables d'hier, tables d'ailleurs: histoire et ethnologie du repas. Paris: Odile Jacob.

JETRO Kōchi
2015 Food and Beverage From Kōchi Prefecture to the World. Kōchi: Japan External Trade Organization.

Johns, Timothy
1990 With Bitter Herbs They Shall Eat It: Chemical Ecology and the Origins of Human Diet and Medicine. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Jolly, Margaret
1992 Specters of Inauthenticity. The Contemporary Pacific 4(1): 49–72.

Jourdan, Christine
2010 The Cultural Localization of Rice in the Solomon Islands. Ethnology 49(4): 263–282.

Jourdan, Christine, and Kathleen C. Riley
2013 Présentation : La Glocalisation Alimentaire. Anthropologie et Sociétés 37(2): 9–25.

Jung, Yuson

2014 Tasting and Judging the Unknown *Terroir* of the Bulgarian Wine: The Political Economy of Sensory Experience. Food and Foodways 22(1–2): 24–47.

Kako, Toshiyuki
2010 Sharp Decline in the Food Self-Sufficiency Ratio in Japan and Its Future Prospects. Journal of Agricultural Science and Technology 4(3): 102.

Kambu, Alphonse
2008 The Need to Conserve the Vanishing Satoyama Heritage. Conserving Nature: A Japanese Perspective: 12–19.

Katz, Esther
2009 Chili Pepper, from Mexico to Europe: Food, Imaginary and Cultural Identity. Estudios Del Hombre(24): 213–232.

Kawamura, Genshichi
1974 *wan to sakazuki: tosa no shoku* [The Bowl and the Sake Cup: the Food of Tosa]. Kōchi: Kōchi Library.

Kawasaki, Hiroya, Atsuko Yamada, Ryota Fuse, and Tohru Fushiki
2011 Intake of Dried Bonito Broth Flavored with Dextrin Solution Induced Conditioned Place Preference in Mice. Bioscience, Biotechnology, and Biochemistry 75(12): 2288–2292.

Kawasaki, Takakazu
N.d. Roots of Dashi (Broth), Soy Sauce, and Miso - the Unsung Stars Supporting Japanese Cuisine. Field Report. Essence of Washoku - Traditional Japanese Cuisine.

Kay, Paul, and Willett Kempton
1984 What Is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis? American Anthropologist 86(1): 65–79.

Kay, Paul, and Luisa Maffi
1999 Color Appearance and the Emergence and Evolution of Basic Color Lexicons. American Anthropologist 101(4): 743–760.

Kay, Paul, and Terry Regier
2007 Color Naming Universals: The Case of Berinmo. Cognition 102(2): 289–298.

Kelly, William W.
1986 Rationalization and Nostalgia: Cultural Dynamics of New Middle-class Japan. American Ethnologist 13(4): 603–618.

Kibayashi, Etsuko, Takashi Yamagami, Sigeru Sokejima, Miao Zhang, and Sadanobu Kagamimori
1999 The Change of Dietary Habits and the Resultant Changes in Health of Japanese Children. Ecology of Food and Nutrition 38(1): 1–19.

Kim, Sangkyun, and Ashleigh Ellis
2015 Noodle Production and Consumption: From Agriculture to Food Tourism in Japan. Tourism Geographies 17(1): 151–167.

Kimura, Aya H.
2010 Food Education as Food Literacy: Privatized and Gendered Food Knowledge in Contemporary Japan. Agriculture and Human Values 28(4): 465–482.

Kimura, Aya H., and M. Nishiyama
2008 The Chisan-Chisho Movement: Japanese Local Food Movement and Its Challenges. Agriculture and Human Values 25(1): 49–64.

Kimura, Junko
2015 Dawn of Geographical Indications in Japan Strategic Marketing Management of GI Products Candidates. 145th Seminar, April 14-15, 2015, Parma, Italy, 200232. European Association of Agricultural Economists. https://ideas.repec.org/p/ags/eaa145/200232.html, accessed July 21, 2015.

Kivela, Jakša, and John C. Crotts
2005 Gastronomy Tourism. Journal of Culinary Science & Technology 4(2): 39–55.

Klemfuss, Nola, William Prinzmetal, and Richard B. Ivry
2012 How Does Language Change Perception: A Cautionary Note. Frontiers in Psychology 3: 78.

Klosse, Peter
2013 Umami in Wine. Research in Hospitality Management 2(1): 1–4.

Knibbe, Kim, and Peter Versteeg
2008 Assessing Phenomenology in Anthropology: Lessons from the Study of Religion and Experience. Critique of Anthropology 28(1): 47–62.

Knight, John
1994a Rural Revitalization in Japan. Asian Survey 34(7): 634–646.
1994b Town-Making in Rural Japan: An Example from Wakayama. Journal of Rural Studies 10(3): 249–261.
1996 Competing Hospitalities in Japanese Rural Tourism. Annals of Tourism Research 23(1): 165–180.
2003 Repopulating the Village? *In* Demographic Change and the Family in Japan's Aging Society. John W. Traphagan and John Knight, eds. Pp. 107–124. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kobori, Hiromi, and Richard B. Primack

2003 Participatory Conservation Approaches for Satoyama, the Traditional Forest and Agricultural Landscape of Japan. AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment 32(4): 307–311.

Kōchi Economic Newspaper
2015 Whitebait a Surprising Mystery Soft-Serve Ice Cream Topping. Kōchi Economy Newspaper. https://Kōchi.keizai.biz/headline/167/, accessed October 13, 2017.

Kōchi International Association
2012 Food Culture in Kōchi - Introduction to Local Dishes. Tosa Wave Blog. http://tosawave.blogspot.com/2012/08/food-culture-in-Kōchi-introduction-to.html, accessed October 3, 2018.
2013 Tosa Wave: Inaka Desserts. http://www.Kōchi-kia.or.jp/info/tosawave/tosawavevol50.pdf, accessed November 22, 2017.
2015 Eat Local. Tosa Wave Blog. http://tosawave.blogspot.com/2015/03/eat-local.html, accessed October 3, 2018.

Kōchi Life Improvement Association
1994 *tosa no aji: furusato no daidokoro* [Taste of Tosa: the home village kitchen]. Kōchi: Kōchiken nōgyō kairyō fukyū kyōdai.

Kōchi Newspaper
2003 *tosa ga umai! sansai ryōri* [Delicious Tosa! Mountain Vegetables Cuisine]. Kōchi Newspaper, April 30.
2004 *tosa ga umai! katsuo nakatosachō* [Delicious Tosa: Nakatosa City Katsuo]. Kōchi Newspaper, May 27.
2005 *tosa ga umai! yoheirui no ryōri* [Delicious Tosa! Vegetable Stalk Cuisine]. Kōchi Newspaper, August 25.
2014 *kaiseki yori tosa ryōri* [Tosa Cusine over Kaiseki]. Kōchi Newspaper, August 20.
2016 *kōchiken no shimantogawa no sujiaonori wo gyokyō, ichi, diagaku ga renkeishi saibai* [Kōchi Prefecture's Shimanto River Sujiaonori Fishery, City and University Colaboarative Cultivation]. Kōchi Newspaper, August 30. https://www.Kōchinews.co.jp/article/45625/, accessed February 7, 2017.

Kōchi Prefectural Government
2011 *tosa no shoku* [Tosa Food]. Kōchi: Kōchi Prefectural Government.
2015a *kōchiken sangyō shinkō keikaku* [Kōchi Prefecture Industry Promotion Plan]
2015b *kōchike saito* [Kōchi Family Website]. http://www.Kōchike.pref.Kōchi.lg.jp/~top/, accessed October 3, 2018.
2015c *kengai kankōkyaku iriko dōtai chōsa hōkokusho* [Tourism from Outside the Prefecture Research Report].

Kōchi Prefecture
2015 *hachi gatsu nichiyōichi* [August Sunday Market]. Tosa bushi.

Kōchi Prefecture Agriculture Promotion

2015 *kōchiken no engei tōkei* [Kōchi Prefecture Horticulture Statistics]. Kōchi Prefecture.
2017 *oishii fūdo kōchi* [Delicious Local Flavors Kōchi]. http://www.chisanchisho.pref.Kōchi.lg.jp/, accessed, October 19.

Kōchi Prefecture Cultural Life Section
2011 *tosa no kaze - tosa no warai: okyaku* [Tosa Wind - Tosa Fun: Banquet] Pp. 60.

Kōchi Prefecture Education Board
2011 *gakko kyūshokuyō reshipishū* [Recipe Collection for School Lunch]. Kōchi.

Kōchi Prefecture Fishery Promotion
2015 *kōchiken suisan shikōbu gyōsei yōran* [Kōchi Prefecture Fishery Promotion Bureau Summary]. Kōchi Prefecture.

Kōchi Prefecture General Statistic Section
2017 *kōchiken no suikei jinkō geppō heisei 29 nen* [Kōchi Prefecture Monthly Report of Population Estimate 2017]. http://www.pref.Kōchi.lg.jp/soshiki/111901/files/2014021401751/h2911.pdf, accessed December 6, 2017.

Kōchi Prefecture Nankoku city
2011 *nōka resutoran marhoroba hata* [Farmer restaurant "Marvelous field"]. Nankoku city.

Kōchi Prefecture Tourism
2015 kōchike no shokutaku kenmin sōsenkyo 2015 ["The Kōchi Family Meal" Prefectural Vote 2015]. http://www.attaka.or.jp/sousenkyo/2015/, accessed September 19, 2018.

Kōchi Prefecture Website
2017 *kōchike ha, ironna kazoku de daikazoku* [Kōchi Familly Is One Large Familly Made out of Many Famillies]. http://www.Kōchike.pref.Kōchi.lg.jp/~top/, accessed December 7, 2017.

Kohsaka, Ryo
2017 The Myth of Washoku: A Twisted Discourse on the "Uniqueness" of National Food Heritages. Journal of Ethnic Foods 4(2): 66–71.

Komatagawa, Akiyo
2015 *amakuchi shoyū* [Sweet Soysauce]. Kōchi Newspaper, March 18.

Kondo, Dorinne K

2005 The Tea Ceremony: A Symbolic Analysis. *In* Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader. David Howes, ed. Pp. 192–211. Oxford ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Kramer, Jane
2013 The Umami Project. The New Yorker. http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/21/the-umami-project, accessed February 20, 2017.

Krebs, John R.
2009 The Gourmet Ape: Evolution and Human Food Preferences. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 90(3): 707-711.

Kuhnlein, H V, and O Receveur
1996 Dietary Change and Traditional Food Systems of Indigenous Peoples. Annual Review of Nutrition 16(1): 417–442.

Kurihara, Kenzo
2009 Glutamate: From Discovery as a Food Flavor to Role as a Basic Taste (Umami). The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 90(3): 719-722.

Kurin, Richard
2004 Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: A Critical Appraisal. Museum International 56(1–2): 66–77.

Kushner, Barak
2012 Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen - Japan's Favorite Noodle Soup. Leiden; Boston: Global Oriental.

Labbe, D., L. Damevin, C. Vaccher, C. Morgenegg, and N. Martin
2006 Modulation of Perceived Taste by Olfaction in Familiar and Unfamiliar Beverages. Food Quality and Preference 17(7–8): 582–589.

Lalonde, Marc P.
1992 Deciphering a Meal Again, or the Anthropology of Taste. Social Science Information 31(1): 69–86.

Lamine, Claire
2006 La «résistance» de l'huile Rouge. Transformation Des Modèles Alimentaires Au Cameroun. Journal Des Anthropologues. Association Francaise Des Anthropologues 106–107: 225–243.

Larsen, Hanne Pico
2010 Performing Tasty Heritage. Ethnologia Europaea 40(2): 90–102.

Le Breton, David

2016 Sensory Play, Wordplay: The Common Sense of Sensing. The Senses and Society 11(3): 251–261.

Lecocq, Baz
2002 Fieldwork Ain't Always Fun: Public and Hidden Discourses on Fieldwork. History in Africa 29: 273–282.

Lee, Sandra Soo-Jin
2000 Dys-Appearing Tongues and Bodily Memories: The Aging of First-Generation Resident Koreans in Japan. Ethos 28(2): 198–223.

Leeder, Jessica
2011 Honey Laundering: The Sour Side of Nature's Golden Sweetener. The Globe and Mail, January 5. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/technology/science/honey-laundering-the-sour-side-of-natures-golden-sweetener/article562759/, accessed April 8, 2018.

Lehrer, Adrienne
1975 Talking about Wine. Language 51(4): 901–923.

Leitch, Alison
2003 Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity. Ethnos 68(4): 437–462.

Lenneberg, Eric H., and John Milton Roberts
1955 The Language of Experience: A Study in Methodology. Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for International Studies.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude
1963 Totemism. Boston: Beacon Press.

Linde, Charlotte
2000 The Acquisition of a Speaker by a Story: How History Becomes Memory and Identity. Ethos 28(4): 608–632.

Lindemann, Bernd
2000 A Taste for Umami. Nature Neuroscience 3(2): 99–100.

Lindholm, Charles
2008 Culture and Authenticity. 1st edition. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lloyd, Paul
2012 The Changing Status of Offal. Food, Culture & Society 15(1): 61–75.

Lopez-Alt, J. Kenji

2015 The Food Lab: Better Home Cooking Through Science. New York ; London: WW Norton.

Love, Bridget

2007 Fraught Fieldsites: Studying Community Decline and Heritage Food Revival in Rural Japan. Critical Asian Studies 39(4): 541–559.

2010 Mountain Vegetables and the Politics of Local Flavors in Japan. *In* Japanese Foodways, Past and Present. 1st Edition. Eric C. Rath and Stephanie Assmann, eds. Pp. 221–242. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

2013 Treasure Hunts in Rural Japan: Place Making at the Limits of Sustainability. American Anthropologist 115(1): 112–124.

Lowry, Dave

2005 The Connoisseur's Guide to Sushi: Everything You Need to Know About Sushi Varieties And Accompaniments, Etiquette And Dining Tips And More. Boston, Mass: Harvard Common Press.

Lubin, Gus

2017 Everyone Should Cook with MSG, Says Food Scientist. Business Insider. http://www.businessinsider.com/cooking-with-msg-supersalt-2017-2, accessed February 15, 2017.

Lupton, Deborah

1994 Food, Memory and Meaning: The Symbolic and Social Nature of Food Events. The Sociological Review 42(4): 664–685.

Maanen, John Van

2011 Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography, Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Macbeth, Helen.

2007 Food Preferences And Taste: Continuity and Change. New York: Berghahn Books.

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

2014 *heisei 26 nen kōchiken kaimen gyogyō yōshokugyō seisanryō* [2014 Sea fishery and aquaculture production in Kōchi prefecure]. http://www.maff.go.jp/chushi/info/toukei/39Kōchi/pdf/15-koc01.pdf, accessed September 28, 2015.

Mahias, Marie-Claude

1999 Manger en Inde. Partage et Transaction. *In* Tables d'hier, Tables d'ailleurs. Histoire et Ethnologie Du Repas. JL Flandrin and Jane Cobbi eds. Pp. 347–369. Paris: Odile Jacob.

Majid, Asifa, and Stephen C. Levinson

2011 The Senses in Language and Culture. The Senses and Society 6(1): 5–18.

Mallol, Christophe Serra
2013 Entre Local et Global : L'alimentation Polynésienne : Le Cas de Tahiti et de Rapa. Anthropologie et Sociétés 37(2): 137–153.

Mankekar, Purnima
2002 "India Shopping": Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configurations of Belonging. Ethnos 67(1): 75–97.

Mannur, Anita
2007 Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora. MELUS 32(4): 11–31.

Marshall, Lorna
1961 Sharing, Talking, and Giving: Relief of Social Tensions among! Kung Bushmen. Africa 31(03): 231–249.

Martin-Juchat, Fabienne
2004 Empathie et Rites de Table. *In* L'imaginaire de la Table. Jean-Jacques Boutaud, ed. Pp. 133–150. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Marx, Karl
2012 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. Dover Publications.

Maso, Ilja
2007 Phenomenology and Ethnography. *In* Handbook of Ethnography. Paul Atkinson, Sara Delamont, Amanda Coffey, John Lofland, and Lyn Lofland, eds. Pp. 136–144. London: SAGE Publications.

Masson, Estelle
2004 Culturellement, manger c'est manger ensemble. *In* Imaginaire de la table : convivialité, commensalité et communication. Jean-Jacques Boutaud, ed. Pp. 115–132. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Masuoka, Jitsuichi
1945 Changing Food Habits of the Japanese in Hawaii. American Sociological Review 10(6): 759–765.

Matanle, Peter, and Anthony Rausch
2011 Japan's Shrinking Regions in the 21st Century. Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press.

Matsutani, Minoru
2009 Collagen — Skin-Deep in Myth? The Japan Times Online, January 9. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2009/01/09/national/collagen-skin-deep-in-myth/, accessed April 4, 2018.

Matsuzaki, Atsuko
1986 *kikigaki kōchi no shokutaku* [An Account of the Kōchi Meal]. Tokyo: nōsan gyoson bunka kyōkai.
2013 *kōchi wa konna kodesu: kōchi dentō no shoku bunka* [Kōchi is like this: Kōchi Traditional Food Culture]. Kōchi Prefecture: Tobishima.
2015 *kōchi no haru no fūkei* [Kōchi Spring Scenery]. Kōchi newspaper, April 17: 14.

Matta, Raúl
2016 Food Incursions into Global Heritage: Peruvian Cuisine's Slippery Road to UNESCO. Social Anthropology 24(3): 338–352.

Mauss, Marcel
1936 Les Techniques Du Corps. Journal de Psychologie 32(3–4): 271–293.
1969 Essai Sur Le Don. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
2011 The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies. Ian Cunnison, tran. Mansfield Centre, Conn.: Martino Fine Books.

McCracken, Grant
1993 The Value of the Brand: An Anthropological Perspective. Brand Equity and Advertising: 125–139.

McGray, Douglas
2002 Japan's Gross National Cool. Foreign Policy(130): 44–54.

McLean, Alice
2015 Umami. Ken Albala, ed. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Food Issues. London: SAGE Publications.

McMorran, Chris
2008 Understanding the 'Heritage'in Heritage Tourism: Ideological Tool or Economic Tool for a Japanese Hot Springs Resort? Tourism Geographies 10(3): 334–354.

Mennell, Stephen
1995 All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present. 2nd edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Mese, Morio
1998 *chiiki shigen wo ikashita chiiki kasseika to jūmin sankagata no chiiki keikaku shuhō (SS-hō)* [Rural Community Revitalization by Using Regional Resources and Development of Participatory PLaning Method (SS Method)]. The Okayama University Agricultural Sciences Report 87(1): 215–225.

Messer, Ellen
1997 Three Centuries of Changing European Taste for the Potato. *In* Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change. Helen Macbeth ed. 101–14. New York: Berghahn Books.

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
2015 Cool Japan. http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/, accessed April 5, 2018.

Ministry of Eduction, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
2012 *shoku ni kansuru shidō no tebiki* [Introduction to Food Guidelines]. http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/sports/syokuiku/1292952.htm, accessed September 5, 2018.
2016 Religious Statistics Survey. Annual Statistics. Japan. http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/chousa07/shuukyou/1262852.htm, accessed October 3, 2018.

Mie Prefectural Office
2015 *mieken kyōdo ryōri itadori* [Mie Prefecture Regional Cuisine: Itadori]. http://www.pref.mie.lg.jp/ONORIN/HP/26546024185.htm, accessed November 2, 2017.

Miles, Matthew B., A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana
2013 Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook. London: SAGE Publications.

Miller, Howard
2015 The Great Sushi Craze of 1905, Part 1. An Eccentric Culinary History. http://eccentricculinary.com/the-great-sushi-craze-of-1905-part-1/, accessed April 5, 2018.

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
2016 *rōdōtyoku chōsa* [Labout Force Survey]. http://www.stat.go.jp/data/roudou/index.html, accessed July 26, 2018.

Mintz, Sidney
1997 Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Power, and the Past. Boston: Beacon Press.

Miyagawa, Itsuo
1993 *katsuo no tataki no rūtsu wo sagaru* [In Search of the Roots of Katsuo No Tataki]. Kōchi.
1999 *tosa sakana wo ajiwau* [The Taste of Tosa Fish]. Kōchi: Kōchi Newspaper Company.

Miyata, Mitsuo
2009 Authority and Obedience: Romans 13:1-7 in Modern Japan. Bern; New York: Peter Lang.

Moeran, Brian

2002 Drinking Country: Flows of Exchange in a Japanese Valley. *In* Drinking Cultures Alcohol and Identity. Thomas M. Wilson, ed. Pp. 25–42. Oxford; New York: Berg.

Moriarty, Elizabeth
1972 The Communitarian Aspect of Shinto Matsuri. Asian Folklore Studies 31(2): 91–140.

Mouritsen, Ole G.
2015 The Science of Taste. Flavour 4: 18.

Mouritsen, Ole G., Lars Duelund, Luis A. Bagatolli, and Himanshu Khandelia
2013 The Name of Deliciousness and the Gastrophysics behind It. Flavour 2(1): 9.

Mouritsen, Ole G., and Klavs Styrbæk
2014 Umami: Unlocking the Secrets of the Fifth Taste. Mariela Johansen, tran. New York: Columbia University Press.

Nakano, Kumiko, Yasushi Kyutoku, Minako Sawa, et al.
2013 Analyzing Comprehensive Palatability of Cheese Products by Multivariate Regression to Its Subdomains. Food Science & Nutrition 1(5): 369–376.

Narayan, Uma
1995 Eating Cultures: Incorporation, Identity and Indian Food. Social Identities 1(1): 63–86.

Nestle, Marion
2013 Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health. Berkeley: University of California Press.
2016 Corporate Funding of Food and Nutrition Research: Science or Marketing? JAMA Internal Medicine 176(1): 13–14.

Ngatu, Nlandu, Mitsunori Ikeda, Hiroyuki Watanabe, et al.
2017 Uncovering Adiponectin Replenishing Property of Sujiaonori Algal Biomaterial in Humans. Marine Drugs 15(2): 32.

Ngatu, Roger Nlandu, Mitsunori Ikeda, Sakiko Kanbara, et al.
2015 Potential Health Effects of Green River Algae (Aonori) of the LPP Complex, with a Reference to Ulvaprolifera. International Journal of General Medcine and Pharmacy 4(6).

Ninomiya, Kumiko
2002 Umami: A Universal Taste. Food Reviews International 18(1): 23–38.
2015 Science of Umami Taste: Adaptation to Gastronomic Culture. Flavour 4: 13.

Nippon Foundation

2014 Washoku Designated UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Nippon Communications. http://www.nippon.com/en/genre/culture/l00052/, accessed January 24, 2017.

Niyekawa-Howard, Agnes M.
1972 The Current Status of the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis. Working Papers in Linguistics 4(2).

Noble, Ann C., Rich A. Arnold, John Buechsenstein, et al.
1987 Modification of a Standardized System of Wine Aroma Terminology. American Journal of Enology and Viticulture 38(2): 143–146.

Noguchi, Paul H
1994 Savor Slowly, "Ekiben" : The Fast Food of High-Speed Japan. Ethnology : An International Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology 33(4): 317–330.

Nomura Company
2010 Mire biscuits website. http://www.nomura-net.co.jp, accessed November 29, 2017.

Nozawa, Joji
2012 Dix Ans d'histoire de l'alimentation Au Japon. Food and History 10(2): 223–232.

Nye, Joseph S.
1990 Soft Power. Foreign Policy (80): 153–171.

Ochs, Elinor, Clotilde Pontecorvo, and Alessandra Fasulo
1996 Socializing Taste. Ethnos 61(1–2): 7–46.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko
1993 Rice As Self: Japanese Identities Through Time. Princeton: Princeton Univ Pr.
1997 McDonald's in Japan: Changing Manners and Etiquette. *In* Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia. James Watson, ed. Pp. 161–182. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Okely, Judith
2007 Fieldwork Embodied. The Sociological Review 55(1): 65–79.

Olney, John W.
1969 Brain Lesions, Obesity, and Other Disturbances in Mice Treated with Monosodium Glutamate. Science 164(3880): 719–721.

O'Mahony, Michael, and Rie Ishii
1986 A Comparison of English and Japanese Taste Languages: Taste Descriptive Methodology, Codability and the Umami Taste. British Journal of Psychology 77(2): 161–174.

Opazo, M. Pilar
2016 Appetite for Innovation: Creativity and Change at ElBulli. New York: Columbia University Press.

Oruna-Concha, Maria-Jose, Lisa Methven, Heston Blumenthal, Christopher Young, and Donald S. Mottram
2007 Differences in Glutamic Acid and 5 ‘-Ribonucleotide Contents between Flesh and Pulp of Tomatoes and the Relationship with Umami Taste. Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry 55(14): 5776–5780.

Osawa, Yoshimi
2012 Glutamate Perception, Soup Stock, and the Concept of *Umami* : The Ethnography, Food Ecology, and History of *Dashi* in Japan. Ecology of Food and Nutrition 51(4): 329–345.

Osawa, Yoshimi, and Roy Ellen
2014 The Cultural Cognition of Taste Term Conflation. The Senses and Society 9(1): 72–91.

Ostendorf, Berndt
2003 “Jambalaya, Crawfish Pie, File Gumbo”: The Creolizing Cuisines of New Orleans. *In* Eating Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Food. Tobias Doring ed. Heidelberg: Winter.

Otomi, AKIKO, and Mariko Tajima
2003 *gendai no joshi daigakusei no shokumotsu ni taisuru shikō to mikaku kanjusei no kankeu ni tsuite* [Relationship between the Preference and Sensitivity of Taste among Recent Female Students]. Japanese Journal of Home Economics 54(5): 395–400.

Oxfeld, Ellen
2017 Bitter and Sweet: Food, Meaning, and Modernity in Rural China. Berkeley: Univ of California Press.

Pang, Ching Lin
2003 Beyond Authenticity: Reinterpreting Chinese Immigrant Food and Belgium. *In* Eating Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Food. Tobias Doring ed. Pp. 53–70. Heidelberg University Press.

Partner, Simon
2001 Taming the Wilderness: The Lifestyle Improvement Movement in Rural Japan, 1925-1965. Monumenta Nipponica 56(4): 487–520.

Pérez, Ramona Lee
2013 *Review of* Foodscapes, Foodfields and Identities in Yucatán. The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology 18(1): 134–136.

Peters, Micah David James

2012 Consuming Identities : Contemporary Japanese Foodways in a Global Locale. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Adelaide. http://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/handle/2440/72861, accessed December 18, 2013.

Poncelet, Johan, Fanny Rinck, Fanny Bourgeat, et al.

2010 The Effect of Early Experience on Odor Perception in Humans: Psychological and Physiological Correlates. Behavioural Brain Research 208(2): 458–465.

Poulain, Jean-Pierre

1997 Goût Du Terroir et Tourisme Vert à l'heure de l'Europe. Ethnologie Française 27(1): 18–26.

Proust, Marcel

1919 À la recherche du temps perdu. Paris: Gallimard.

Raghunathan, Rajagopal, Rebecca Walker Naylor, and Wayne D. Hoyer

2006 The Unhealthy = Tasty Intuition and Its Effects on Taste Inferences, Enjoyment, and Choice of Food Products. Journal of Marketing 70(4): 170–184.

Ranger, Terence

2014 The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa. Occasional Paper 0(11): 5–50.

Rath, Eric C.

2012 How Intangible Is Japan's Traditional Dietary Culture? Rumblings from the World of Food. Gastronomica 12(4): 2–3.

2016 Japan's Cuisines: Food, Place and Identity. Reaktion Books.

Rath, Eric C., and Stephanie Assmann, eds.

2010 Japanese Foodways, Past and Present. 1st Edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Reader, Ian

2003 Chance, Fate, and Undisciplined Meanderings: A Pilgrimage through the Fieldwork Maze. *In* Doing Fieldwork in Japan. Theodore Bestor, Patricia Steinhoff and Victoria Lyon Bestor, eds. Pp. 89–105. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Reck, Gregory G.

1983 Narrative Anthropology. Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly 8(1): 8–12.

Regier, Terry, and Paul Kay

2009 Language, Thought, and Color: Whorf Was Half Right. Trends in Cognitive Sciences 13(10): 439–446.

Regier, Terry, Paul Kay, Aubrey L. Gilbert, and Richard B. Ivry
2010 Language and Thought: Which Side Are You on, Anyway. *In* Words and the Mind: How Words Capture Human Experience. Barbara Malt and Phillip Wolff, eds. Pp. 165–182. New York: Oxford Uninversity Press.

Richards, Greg
2008 Culture and Authenticity in a Traditional Event: The Views of Producers, Residents, and Visitors in Barcelona. Event Management, 11 1(2): 33–44.

Riley, Kathleen C.
2013 Fêtes Traditionnelles et Festivals Glocalisés Aux Marquises : Utilisation Des Systèmes Alimentaires Syncrétiques Pour Forger Des Identités Hybrides. Anthropologie et Sociétés 37(2): 91–111.

RKC Broadcast
2017 *tosa no shoku isan* [Tosa Food Heritage]. November, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyKk9ZoQEFk, accessed December 11, 2017.

Roberson, Debi
2005 Color Categories Are Culturally Diverse in Cognition as Well as in Language. Cross-Cultural Research 39(1): 56–71.

Roberson, Debi, Jules Davidoff, Ian R. L. Davies, and Laura R. Shapiro
2005 Color Categories: Evidence for the Cultural Relativity Hypothesis. Cognitive Psychology 50(4): 378–411.

Roberson, Debi, Ian Davies, and Jules Davidoff
2000 Color Categories Are Not Universal: Replications and New Evidence from a Stone-Age Culture. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General 129(3): 369–398.

Robertson, Jennifer
1988 Furusato Japan: The Culture and Politics of Nostalgia. International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 1(4): 494–518.

Robertson, Roland
1995 Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity. *In* Global Modernities. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson, eds. Pp. 25–44. London: Sage.

Roemer, Michael K.
2007 Ritual Participation and Social Support in a Major Japanese Festival. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 46(2): 185–200.

Rozin, Elisabeth
1973 The Flavor-Principle Cookbook. New York: Hawthorn Books.

Rozin, Paul, and April E. Fallon
1987 A Perspective on Disgust. Psychological Review 94(1): 23–41.

Rubinfien, Louisa Daria
1995 Commodity to National Brand: Manufacturers, Merchants, and the Development of the Consumer Market in Interwar Japan. Ph.D. dissertation. Harvard University.

Rufus, Anneli
2010 Do We Really Have a 5th Taste? What Is the Umami Fad All About? AlterNet, June 11. http://www.alternet.org/story/147181/do_we_really_have_a_5th_taste_what_is_the_umami_fad_all_about, accessed February 17, 2017.

Running, Cordelia A., Bruce A. Craig, and Richard D. Mattes
2015 Oleogustus: The Unique Taste of Fat. Chemical Senses 40(7): 507–516.

Ryall, Julian
2013 UNESCO Poised to Recognize Japanese Cuisine. Deutsche Welle, November 11. http://www.dw.com/en/unesco-poised-to-recognize-japanese-cuisine/a-17217663, accessed January 24, 2017.

Sahlins, Marshall
1974 Stone Age Economics. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.
1976 Colors and Cultures. Semiotica 16(1): 1–22.

Sakai, Naoki
2000 "You Asians:" On the Historical Role of the West and Asia Binary. The South Atlantic Quarterly 99(4): 789–817.

Sakamoto, R., and M. Allen
2011 There's Something Fishy about That Sushi: How Japan Interprets the Global Sushi Boom. Japan Forum 23: 99–121.

Sanborn, Alexis Agliano
2013 Flavoring the Nation: School Lunch in Japan. M.A. Thesis. Harvard University.

Sand, Jordan
2005 A Short History of MSG: Good Science, Bad Science, and Taste Cultures. Gastronomica 5(4): 38–49.

Sato, Yuriko
2017 Mottainai: A Japanese Sense of Anima Mundi. Journal of Analytical Psychology 62(1): 147–154.

Sax, David

2015 The Tastemakers: Why We’re Crazy for Cupcakes but Fed Up with Fondue. New York: PublicAffairs, cop.

Schaumburg, Herbert H., Robert Byck, Robert Gerstl, and Jan H. Mashman
1969 Monosodium L-Glutamate: Its Pharmacology and Role in the Chinese Restaurant Syndrome. Science 163(3869): 826–828.

Schreiber, Mark
2018 Has Christel Takigawa Cursed Japan with Her 2020 Olympics Omotenashi Pitch? The Japan Times Online, February 3. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/02/03/national/media-national/christel-takigawa-cursed-japan-2020-olympics-omotenashi-pitch/, accessed October 3, 2018.

Sered, Susan Starr
1988 Food and Holiness: Cooking as a Sacred Act among Middle-Eastern Jewish Women. Anthropological Quarterly 61(3): 129–139.

Seremetakis, C. Nadia
1996 The Senses Still. 1 edition. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Sharman, Russell Leigh
2007 Style Matters: Ethnography as Method and Genre. Anthropology & Humanism 32(2): 117–129.

Shepherd, Gordon M.
2006 Smell Images and the Flavour System in the Human Brain. Nature 444(7117): 316–321.
2011 Neurogastronomy: How the Brain Creates Flavor and Why It Matters. Reprint edition. New York: Columbia University Press.

Shimamura, Natsu
2006 *surō fūdo na nihon!* [Japan’s Slow Food!] Tokyo: Shinchōsha.

Shinohara, Shigenori
2003 *yuzu kakōhin no chokubai to sanson no kasseika: kōchiken majimura no jirei.* Direct Marketing of Yuzu Products and the Revitalization of Mountain Villages : A Case Study of Umaji Village Kōchi Prefecture. Proceedings of the General Meeting of the Association of Japanese Geographers 64(79): 126.

Simmel, Georg, David Frisby, and Mike Featherstone
1997 Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings. London: SAGE.

Siniscalchi, Valeria
2013 Slow versus fast: Économie et écologie dans le mouvement Slow Food. Terrain (60): 132–147.

Snow, Nancy
2013 Uncool Japan: Japan's Gross National Propaganda. Metropolis (1024), November 7. https://metropolisjapan.com/uncool-japan/, accessed April 5, 2018.

Sobal, Jeffery
1998 Cultural Comparison Research Designs in Food, Eating, and Nutrition. Food Quality and Preference 9(6): 385–392.

Sobal, Jeffery, and Mary K Nelson
2003 Commensal Eating Patterns: A Community Study. Appetite 41(2): 181–190.

Solt, George
2009 Taking Ramen Seriously : Food, Labor, and Everyday Life in Modern Japan. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego.
2014 The Untold History of Ramen: How Political Crisis in Japan Spawned a Global Food Craze. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Spence, Charles, Carmel A. Levitan, Maya U. Shankar, and Massimiliano Zampini
2010 Does Food Color Influence Taste and Flavor Perception in Humans? Chemosensory Perception 3(1): 68–84.

Spence, Charles, and Betina Piqueras-Fiszman
2014 The Perfect Meal: The Multisensory Science of Food and Dining. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Statistics Japan
2016 Consumption of Beer : Prefecture Comparisons. Statistics. Consumption of Beer: Prefecture Comparisons. https://stats-japan.com/t/kiji/10822, accessed October 3, 2018.

Stevenson, Harold W.
1991 Japanese Elementary School Education. The Elementary School Journal 92(1): 109–120.

Stierand, Marc, Viktor Dörfler, and Jillian MacBryde
2014 Creativity and Innovation in Haute Cuisine: Towards a Systemic Model. Creativity and Innovation Management 23(1): 15–28.

Stradford, Todd
1994 Changes in the Agricultural Landscape of Kouchi, Japan 1987 to 1990. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma.

Strong, Jeremy
2006 The Modern Offal Eaters. Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture 6(3): 30–39.

Sutton, David
2001 Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory. First Edition. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
2006 Cooking Skill, the Senses, and Memory: The Fate of Practical Knowledge. *In* Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture. Ruth Phillips, Elizabeth Edwards and Chris Gosden, eds. Pp. 87–118. Oxford; New York: Berg.
2008 A Tale of Easter Ovens: Food and Collective Memory. Social Research 75(1): 157–180.
2014 Secrets from the Greek Kitchen: Cooking, Skill, and Everyday Life on an Aegean Island. Berkeley: Univ of California Press.

Svejenova, Silviya, Carmelo Mazza, and Marcel Planellas
2007 Cooking up Change in Haute Cuisine: Ferran Adrià as an Institutional Entrepreneur. Journal of Organizational Behavior 28(5): 539–561.

Reed Business Information
2000 Sweetner Sale, June 5, 2000.

Takada, Masatoshi
2006 Naissance et Évolution de La Cuisine Occidentale Japonisée : Meiji, Taishô et Début Shôwa. Ebisu 35(1): 59–72.

Takahashi, Satsuki
2014 Hatchery Flounder Going Wild: Authenticity, Aesthetics, and Fetishism of Fish in Japan. Food and Foodways 22(1–2): 5–23.

Takatsuki, Seiki
2009 Effects of Sika Deer on Vegetation in Japan: A Review. Biological Conservation 142(9): 1922–1929.

Takeda, Wakako, Cathy Banwell, and Jane Dixon
2016 Advancing Food Sovereignty or Nostalgia: The Construction of Japanese Diets in the National *Shokuiku* Policy. Anthropological Forum 26(3): 276–288.

Takezawa, Shoichiro
2012 La Fête Japonaise: Appareil Hégémonique de La Cité Marchande. Techniques & Culture(2): 98–119.

Terrio, Susan J.
1996 Crafting Grand Cra Chocolates in Contemporary France. American Anthropologist 98(1): 67–79.

Thompson, Christopher S.
2004 Host Produced Rural Tourism: Towa's Tokyo Antenna Shop. Annals of Tourism Research 31(3): 580–600.

Tierney, R. Kenji
2016 Consuming Sumo Wrestlers: Taste, Commensality, and Authenticity in Japanese Food. Food, Culture & Society 19(4): 637–653.

Tiwari, Reena
2010 SpaceDBodyDRitual: Performativity in the City. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Tobin, Joseph J., ed.
1994 Re-Made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society. First Edition. Yale University Press.

Tonkinson, Robert
1993 Understanding 'tradition'—Ten Years On. Anthropological Forum 6(4): 597–606.

Tosa Traditional Cuisine Research Group
2007 *tosa no shokutaku: mama no aji, ofukuro no aji tsutaetai* [The Tosa Table Spreading Mom's Taste]. Kōchi.

Toshio, Miyatsuka
1999 Yakiniku–Savory Dish with Simple Origins. Japan Quarterly 46(4): 31–42.

Totani, Mochifumi
2007 *yuzu ni yoru mura zukuri (tokushū kōchi igossō to wa chikin no kuni tosa)* [Village Revitalization with Yuzu (Japanese Citrus)]. Civil Engineering Consultant (236): 20–23.

Tracy, Sarah J.
2012 The Toxic and Mythical Combination of a Deductive Writing Logic for Inductive Qualitative Research. Departures in Critical Qualitative Research 1(1): 109–141.

Traphagan, John W., and Keith L. Brown
2002 Fast Food and Intergenerational Commensality in Japan: New Styles and Old Patterns. Ethnology 41(2): 119–134.

Trubek, Amy B.
2008 The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey Into Terroir. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Truth in Labeling Campaign
2010 Umami: The "Fifth Taste" That MSG-Sensitive People Can't Taste. Truth in Labeling: The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth about MSG. http://www.truthinlabeling.org/Umami-9-23-04.html, accessed February 17, 2017.

Tsing, Anna
2000 The Global Situation. Cultural Anthropology 15(3): 327–360.

Turunen, Liisa
2016 "Isn't Japan Wonderful!" Constructing Japaneseness in the Variety Television Series Wafu Sohonke. M.A. Thesis, University of Helsinki.

Ulin, Robert C.
1995 Invention and Representation as Cultural Capital. American Anthropologist 97(3): 519–527.

Umami Information Center
2017 Umami Information Center website. http://www.umamiinfo.com, accessed February 15, 2017.

UNESCO
2013 Washoku, Traditional Dietary Cultures of the Japanese, Notably for the Celebration of New Year Nomination Form. UNESCO nomination file. http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00869, accessed April 3, 2014.
2018 What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage? - Intangible Heritage - Culture Sector - UNESCO. https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003, accessed March 29, 2018.

UNESCO World Heritage
2017 Cultural Landscapes. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/, accessed November 9, 2017.

Vabre, Sylvie
2015 Le sacre du roquefort : L'émergence d'une industrie agroalimentaire, fin XVIIIe siècle-1925. Rennes, France; Tours, France: PU Rennes.

Valagao, Manuela
1997 Evolution in Eating Habits in the Alto Douro of Nothern Portugal. *In* Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change. Helen Macbeth, ed. Pp. 127–138. New York: Berghahn Books.

Valaskivi, Katja
2013 A Brand New Future? Cool Japan and the Social Imaginary of the Branded Nation. Japan Forum 25(4): 485–504.

Vannini, Phillip, Guppy Ahluwalia-Lopez, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk
2010 Performing Taste at Wine Festivals: A Somatic Layered Account of Material Culture. Qualitative Inquiry 16(5): 378–396.

Vaudour, Emmanuelle
2002 The Quality of Grapes and Wine in Relation to Geography: Notions of Terroir at Various Scales. Journal of Wine Research 13(2): 117–141.

Vega, César, and Job Ubbink

2008 Molecular Gastronomy: A Food Fad or Science Supporting Innovative Cuisine? Trends in Food Science & Technology 19(7): 372–382.

Vialles, Noélie
1988 La viande ou la bête. Terrain (10): 86–96.
1994 Animal to Edible. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press.

Vlastos, Stephen
1998 Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan, vol.9. Berkeley: Univ of California Pr.

Wacquant, Loic
2006 Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer. 1 edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wahlbeck, Östen
2007 Work in the Kebab Economy: A Study of the Ethnic Economy of Turkish Immigrants in Finland. Ethnicities 7(4): 543–563.

Walker, Ronald, and John R. Lupien
2000 The Safety Evaluation of Monosodium Glutamate. The Journal of Nutrition 130(4): 1049-1052.

Walmsley, Emily
2005 Race, Place and Taste: Making Identities Through Sensory Experience in Ecuador. Etnofoor 18(1): 43–60.

Wang, Hongying, and Yeh-Chung Lu
2008 The Conception of Soft Power and Its Policy Implications: A Comparative Study of China and Taiwan. Journal of Contemporary China 17(56): 425–447.

Wansink, B., K. van Ittersum, and J.e. Painter
2004 How Diet and Health Labels Influence Taste and Satiation. Journal of Food Science 69(9): 340–346.

Ward, Frances
2004 The Messiness of Studying Congregations Using Ethnographic Methods. *In* Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context. Mathew Guest, Karin Tusting and Linda Woodhead, eds. Pp. 125–137. Routledge.

Watanabe, Anna
2011 Agricultural Impact of the Nuclear Accidents in Fukushima: The Case of Ibaraki Prefecture. *saigai kiban shakai higashi nihon daishisai kara kangae*. Disaster, Infrastructure and Society Learning from the 2011 Earthquake in Japan (1): 291–298.

Watson, James, ed.
2006 Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia, Second Edition. Second edition. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

White, Merry
2004 Feeding Your Face: Fan Fare and Status at a Sumo Tournament. Gastronomica 4(1): 54–56.
2012 Coffee Life in Japan. 1st edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wilson, Margaret
2002 Six Views of Embodied Cognition. Psychonomic Bulletin & Review 9(4): 625–636.

Wilson, Rob, and Wimal Dissanayake
1996 Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary. Durham: Duke University Press.

Yamaguchi, Shizuko
1991 Basic Properties of Umami and Effects on Humans. Physiology & Behavior 49(5): 833–841.

Yamaguchi, Shizuko, and Kumiko Ninomiya
2000 Umami and Food Palatability. The Journal of Nutrition 130(4): 921-926.

Yamamoto, Takashi
2003 Brain Mechanisms of Sweetness and Palatability of Sugars. Nutrition Reviews 61(5): 5–9.
2006 *oishisa no kagaku: sono jūyōsei to nōnoshikumi* [Palatability science: The Importance of brain mechanisms]. Brain Mechanisms of Palatability and Health. Nutrition Review.

Yamano, Yoshimasa
2007 Estimation of "Oishisa" of Udon (Japanese Noodle). *In* SICE Annual Conference 2007 Pp. ix–xiii. Piscataway, N.J.: IEEE.
2011 *nostimo oishisa no kagaku shirizzu* [Nostimo a palatability science series]. Tokyo: NTS.

Yano, Christine R.
2003 Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ Asia Center.
2005 Covering Disclosures: Practices of Intimacy, Hierarchy, and Authenticity in a Japanese Popular Music Genre. Popular Music and Society 28(2): 193–205.
2007 Side-Dish Kitchen: Japanese American Delicatessens and the Culture of Nostalgia. *In* The Restaurants Book: Ethnographies of Where We Eat. David Beriss and David Evan Sutton, eds. Pp. 47–64. Oxford; New York: Berg.

Yoshida, Mayu
2012 'Washoku' Served up as Heritage. The Japan Times Online, March 22. http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/03/22/national/washoku-served-up-as-heritage/, accessed January 24, 2017.

Yoshikawa, S., S. Nishimaru, T. Tashiro, and M. Yoshida
1970 Collection and Classification of Words for Description of Food Texture. Journal of Texture Studies 1(4): 437–442.

Yotova, Maria
2016 'Right' Food, 'Responsible' Citizens: State-Promoted Food Education and a Food Dilemma in Japan: 'Right' Food, 'Responsible' Citizens: Food Education in Japan. Asia Pacific Viewpoint 57(3): 326–337.

Youn, Hyewon, and Jong-Hyeong Kim
2017 Effects of Ingredients, Names and Stories about Food Origins on Perceived Authenticity and Purchase Intentions. International Journal of Hospitality Management 63: 11–21.

Yusuf, Shahid, Weiping Wu, and Simon J. Evenett
2000 Local Dynamics in an Era of Globalization: 21st Century Catalysts for Development. World Bank Publications.

Zellner, Debra A., Christopher R. Loss, Jonathan Zearfoss, and Sergio Remolina
2014 It Tastes as Good as It Looks! The Effect of Food Presentation on Liking for the Flavor of Food. Appetite 77: 31–35.

Zhang, Yifeng, Mark A. Hoon, Jayaram Chandrashekar, et al.
2003 Coding of Sweet, Bitter, and Umami Tastes: Different Receptor Cells Sharing Similar Signaling Pathways. Cell 112(3): 293–301.

# Appendix A

## Food Glossary

*Buntan*: Pomelo

*Chirimen jako*: Dried baby sardines

*Chisan chishō*: Locally produced, locally consumed movement

*Doburoku*: Homemade unfiltered sake

*Hagatsuo*: First bonito tuna of the season

*Henpai*: Practice of taking turn drinking from the same glass

*Ikezukuri*: Raw fish presented as if it were alive

*Inaka zushi*: Vegetarian country sushi

*Itadori*: Japanese knotweed

*Jizake*: Local Japanese rice wine

*Katsuo bushi*: Dried bonito tuna flakes used to flavor Japanese stock

*Katsuo no tataki*: Seared bonito tuna

*Mushiyōkan*: Steam taro roll

*Nuta*: Miso and garlic leave paste

*Oishisa*: The study of Deliciousness

*Okyaku*: Traditional banquet

*Ponzu*: Yuzu juice mixed with soy sauce

*Ramen*: Chinese style noodle soup

*Ryūkyū*: Stem of the Indian taro plant

*Sansai*: Wild mountain vegetables

*Sawachi*: Large ceramic plates used to served traditional dishes

*Shamo*: Shamo fighting chicken

*Shihochiku*: A type of bamboo sprout

*Shōchū*: Distilled alcohol

*Tosa ryōri*: Kōchi regional cuisine

*Tosa ryōri no denshōbito*: Association of the Tosa Traditional Cooks
*Udon*: Thick wheat noodles
*Umami*: Delicious savory taste
*Utsubo*: Moray eel
*Yuzu*: Regional citrus used in cooking

## People

*Informants have agreed to be included by name in my dissertation. Name anonymization is essential in cases where informants are at risk but it can also be problematic. By using informants' names, I choose to recognize their expert contributions.*

Andersen, Thorbjorn
*Chef-owner of a Swedish lodge themed home-dining restaurant*
The long-term Danish expatriate is an eternal optimist with an intimate understanding of Kōchi's food game.

Hamada, Yasu
*Part life-insurance agent, car mechanic, waiter and navy translator/driver*
The regional food enthusiast accompanied me on many journeys in search of hidden foods of the region.

Kawamura, Hideki
*A worldwide travelling coral jewelry salesman*
The easygoing University friend who first introduced me to the region of Kōchi.

Machido, Futoshi
*A skilled hired blade that specialize in moray eel cuisine*
The guest-chef at RKC cooking school is a living representation of the character of the region.

Matsuzaki, Atsuko
*Emeritus University nutrition professor*
The well-known regional cuisine expert took me under her wing to teach me the ways of Kōchi cuisine.

Mitani, Hideko
*Principal of the RKC Culinary School*
The godmother of Kōchi cuisine provided me with continued support for my research.

Nishimura, Yoshinori
*Chef-owner of three restaurants that specialize in local food*
The eccentric chef is a gourmand and a specialist of the *henpai* drinking custom.

Okabayashi, Toshiro
*Director of the agricultural district and distribution support division at Kōchi prefecture*
The gregarious man facilitated access to the inner working of the prefectural government.

Sumida, Ruriko
*Leader of the "lily of the valley" a farmer restaurant group*
The high-energy retiree is continuously organizing food events in the community.

Yamashita, Hiroshi
*Head-chef at a traditional Kōchi institution*
The guest instructor at RKC cooking school is a knowledgeable resource for regional cuisine.

Yoshikawa, Kazuhide
*Chef-owner of the restaurant Yoshisho in Hirome market*
The jovial drinking chef is always willing to share his expertise on the food of the region.

## Places

Furari Restaurant

Restaurant attached to a direct sales produce store operated by retired women once a week.

Hirome Market

Popular night food market in downtown Kōchi, a place where people come to share food, drinks and good company.

RKC Culinary School

The only cooking school in Kōchi, it is the site of production and reproduction of much of the regional cuisine.

Taisho Market

A fish market on the coast of Kōchi, it is attracts tourists who can sample freshly caught fish.

Sunday Market

Historical farmer market in Kōchi city, it is a place where consumers can experience the local food culture.

Umaji Village

Mountain village focused on *yuzu* production, a renowned case study of successful revitalization.

# Appendix B

## Tables and Figures

Table I. What is your favorite cuisine survey

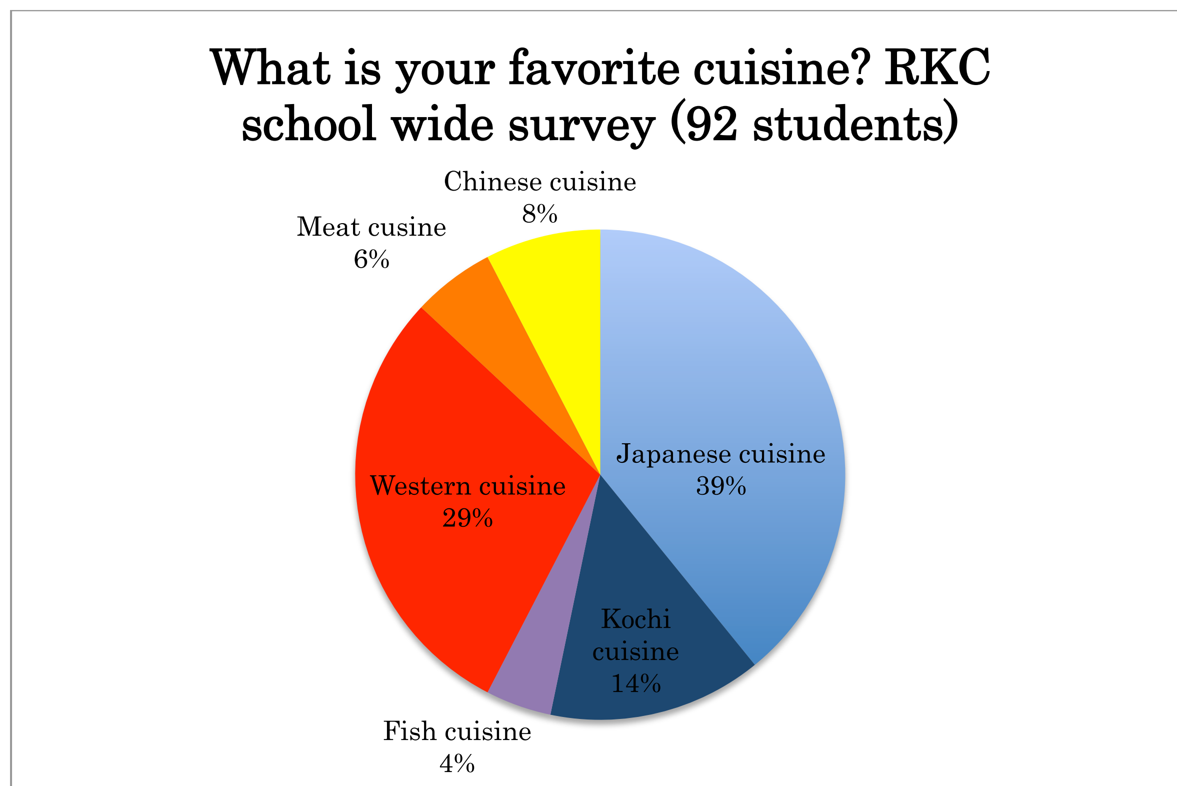



Table II. Kōchi city June 2015 School Lunch Menu

**Items in bold are regional dishes.*

| Day | Staple | Sides | Drink |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Japanese curry and rice | Green bean and tuna salad<br>*Fukujin* pickles | Milk |
| 2 | *Wakame* rice | **Japanese knotweed and pork stir-fry**<br>Udon, **sliced tomatoes** | Milk |
| 3 | Bread roll with raisin cream | Macaroni cream<br>**Konjak salad** | Milk |
| 4 | **Bonito rice** | Cucumber and wakame in vinegar<br>Miso soup, rice mouse | Milk |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | White rice | Rolled fried-eggs<br>Burdock root stir-fry | Milk |
| 8 | White rice | Aurora Chicken, **ginger soup**<br>Fish and vegetable dressed in sesame sauce | Mandarin juice |
| 9 | Barley and rice | Chicken and summer vegetables Chinese stir-fry<br>Sesame salad, melon | Milk |
| 10 | French roll and cheese | Western fish cake stew<br>French salad | Milk |
| 11 | White rice | **Fried *shira* fish**<br>Seaweed salad, ***Tosa* style konjak** | Milk |
| 12 | White rice | **Eggplant** and meat stir-fry<br>Chinese noodle salad, **dried whitebait** | Milk |
| 15 | White rice | **Fried *kibinago* with green seaweed**<br>Simmered vegetables, seaweed in vinegar | Milk |
| 16 | White rice | **Ginger** pork cutlets<br>Miso soup, **whitebait cooked in soy sauce and *mirin*** | Milk |
| 17 | Mochi rice bread | Spaghetti Napolitano<br>Vegetable salad, pineapple | Milk |
| 18 | White rice | Fried squid<br>Cabbage with sesame sauce, vegetables soup | Milk |
| 19 | **Colorful pork bowl** | **Garlic chives** and egg soup<br>Watermelon | Milk |
| 22 | White rice with seaweed | Grilled meat<br>Glass noodle soup | Milk |
| 23 | White rice | **Kōchi garlic chives dumplings**, corn salad<br>Mushroom soup, peach jelly | Milk |
| 24 | Dinner roll with strawberry jam | Pork and beans<br>Italian salad | Milk |
| 25 | Barley and rice | Chikuzen stew<br>**Bell pepper** cooked in soy sauce, **dried whitebait** | Milk |
| 26 | Pork stew over rice | **Yuzu salad**<br>**Sliced tomatoes** | Milk |
| 29 | White rice | Chinese tofu stew<br>Seaweed salad, mustard green pickles | Milk |
| 30 | White rice | Fried mackerel<br>Bean sprouts and **pepper stir-fry**, clear soup | Milk |

Table III. List of Tosa Traditional Cooks Dishes

| **Location** | **Name** | **Description** |
|---|---|---|
| Aki city | *Beinasu no tataki* | *Tataki* style grilled eggplant |
| Aki city | *Kashikiri* | Acorn jelly |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Aki city | *Satoimo yokan* | Steamed and mashed taro |
| Aki city | *Nyugauchi daikon no namasu* | Local white radish in vinegar sauce |
| Aki city | *Kippa no dango* | Dried tuber dumpling |
| Hidaka village | *Tomato yokan* | Tomato jelly |
| Ino town | *Satoimo no ageni* | Fried and simmered taro |
| Ino town | *Imobera azuki* | Sweet tuber and beans |
| Ino town | *Sansai sushi* | Mountain vegetables sushi |
| Ino town | *Konyaku sashimi* | Sliced Konjak jelly with miso dressing |
| Kami city | *Inoshishi nabe* | Wild boar hotpot |
| Kami city | *Negi maru* | Green onion dumplings |
| Kitagawa village | *Inaka sushi* | Vegetable sushi |
| Kōchi city | *Inaka zushi* | Vegetable sushi |
| Kōchi city | *Okiurume no iritsuke* | Sardines simmered in broth |
| Kōchi city | *Kabu zushi* | Stuffed turnip sushi |
| Kōchi city | *Atarashiya* | Sweet bean stuffed dumpling |
| Kōchi city | *Mushi dai* | Steamed stuffed red snapper |
| Konan city | *Shira no oshizushi* | Dolphinfish pressed sushi |
| Konan city | *Himeichi mikan no karashini* | Goatfish and mandarin spicy simmer |
| Konan city | *Dorome no nuta* | Raw whitebait with green garlic sauce |
| Konan city | *Chihochiku no sushi* | Bamboo sprouts sushi |
| Konan city | *Rakkyo no kakiage* | Deep fried shallots |
| Kuroshi town | *Kajime no shiroae* | Brown algae in white sauce |
| Kuroshio town | *Katsuo ryori* | Bonito cuisine |
| Kuroshio town | *Iyomeshi* | Yellow tail rice |
| Muroto city | *Kinmedai no takigomi gohan* | Alfonsino fish mixed rice |
| Nakatosa town | *Katsu no warayaki tataki* | Seared bonito over straw |
| Nakatosa town | *Utsubo no suki yaki* | Morey eel suki yaki |
| Nakatosa town | *Akamutsu no nikomi gohan* | Seabass mixed rice |
| Nyodogawa town | *Itadori no itameshini* | Japanese knotweed stir-fry |
| Nyodogawa town | *Sansai sushi* | Mountain vegetable sushi |
| Nyodogawa town | *Iri mochi* | Mugworth rice dumpling |
| Otoyo town | *Ginburo sushi* | Black bean sushi rice |
| Otsuki town | *Goushi meshi* | Rock seaweed rice |
| Otsuki town | *Buri no hedazushi* | Yellowtail sushi |
| Sakawa town | *Chirashi zushi* | Scattered sushi |

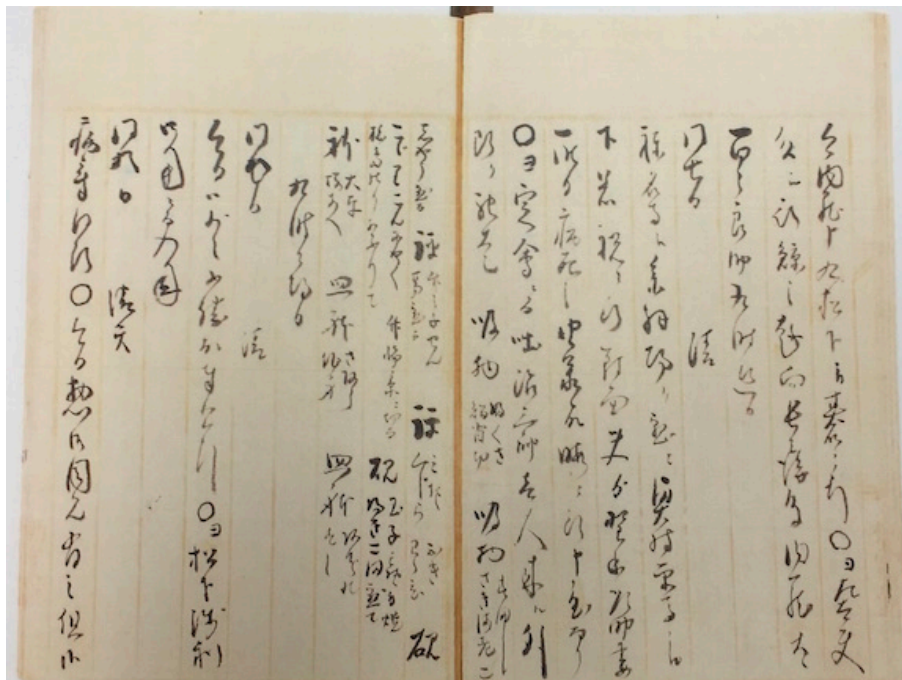
| Sakawa town | *Kirazu mochi* | Soy pulp rice dumpling |
|---|---|---|
| Shimanto city | *Kyuri to kawaebi nimono* | Cucumber and river shrimp simmer |
| Shimanto town | *Inaka zushi* | Vegetable sushi |
| Shimanto town | *Goma daizukko* | Sesame and soy bean dumpling |
| Shimanto town | *Daizu no manmaru age* | Fried soy bean in batter |
| Shimanto town | *Ayu don* | Sweet fish rice bowl |
| Shimanto town | *Shitake no tataki* | Fried mushroom tataki style |
| Shimanto town | *Kurochiku no sushi* | Black bamboo sushi |
| Sukumo city | *Mikan mocha* | Mandarin rice dumpling |
| Sukumo city | *Kibinago* | Sardine sushi |
| Susaki city | *Tachiuo no kaisama sushi* | Beltfish sushi |
| Tano town | *Shamo nabe* | Shamo chicken hotpot |
| Tosashimizu city | *Tsuwazushi* | Silverleaf sushi |
| Toyo town | *Kokera zushi* | Vegetable pressed sushi |
| Tsuno town | *Inaka zushi* | Vegetables sushi |
| Tsuno town | *Tofu no umesu suke* | Tofu in pickled plum vinegar |
| Tusno town | *Amego no satsuma jiru* | Masu salmon soup |
| Yasuda town | *Jinendon* | Local chicken and egg rice bowl |
| Yusuhara town | *Okara no sabazushi* | Mackerel stuffed with soy skins |

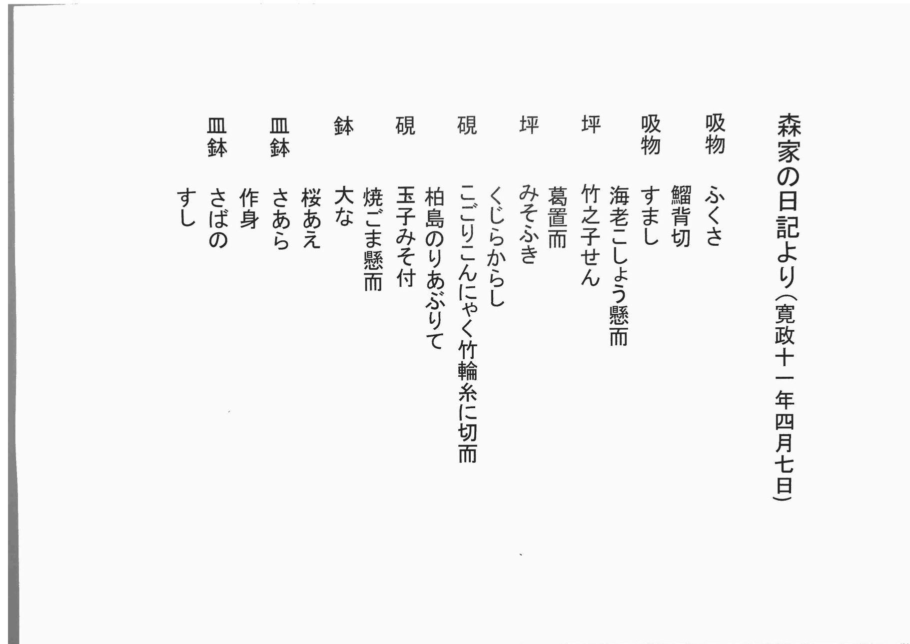
Table IV. Kōchi Food Festivals (non-exhaustive)

| **Festival** | **Place** | **Specialty food** |
|---|---|---|
| *Dorome matsuri* | Akaoka town | Whitebait |
| *Toyokishi gurume matsuri* | Aki city | Dried whitebait |
| *Haru no hana matsuri* | Gohoku town | Mountain cuisine |
| *Aperiteifu no hi* | Kōchi city | Wine and tapas |
| *Furusato matsuri* | Kōchi city | Regional products |
| *Octoberfest* | Kōchi city | Beer and sausage |
| *Ryōma tanjou matsuri* | Kōchi city | Ryōma themed foods |
| *Shukaku matsuri* | Kōchi city | New rice harvest |
| *Tosa no Okyaku* | Kōchi city | *Sawachi cuisine* |
| *Tosa Yokohama minato mirai matsuri* | Kōchi city | Tuna |

| *Urume matsuri* | Kōchi city | Sardines |
|---|---|---|
| *Yosakoi* | Kōchi city | Regional food |
| *Hachimangu shuki daisai* | Kure town | Fishing products |
| *Katsuo matsuri* | Kure town | Katsuo tataki |
| *Hatafest* | Mihara village | Doboroku sake |
| *Kagura to ayu to sakeniyou* | Niyodo town | Sweetfish |
| *Shanikusai* | Okawamura town | Grilled beef |
| *Gibier gurume fesuta* | Otoyo town | Boar and dear |
| *Tosa no hojo matsuri* | Otoyo town | New rice harvest |
| *Shyoga shukaku matsuri* | Shimanto town | Ginger products |
| *Shinko matsuri* | Susaki city | Thazard |
| *Hamono matsuri* | Tosayama town | Local meat |

Figure 65. Mori Family Diary Menu (first mention of *sawachi*)




森家の日記より（寛政十一年四月七日）

吸物　ふくさ<br>
　　　鰡背切<br>
吸物　すまし<br>
　　　海老こしょう懸而<br>
坪　　竹之子せん<br>
　　　葛置而<br>
坪　　みそふき<br>
　　　くじらからし<br>
硯　　こごりこんにゃく竹輪糸に切而<br>
　　　柏島のりあぶりて<br>
硯　　玉子みそ付<br>
　　　焼ごま懸而<br>
鉢　　大な<br>
　　　桜あえ<br>
皿鉢　さあら<br>
　　　作身<br>
皿鉢　さばの<br>
　　　すし

Table V.　Kōchi Mountain Vegetables (non-exhaustive)

| **Kōchi Name** | **Scientific nomenclature** | **Common name** |
|---|---|---|
| Giboushi | *Hosta sieboldiana* | NA |
| Huki | *Petasites japonicus* | Butterbur |
| Itadori | *Fallopia japonica* | Japanese knotweed |
| Kakidoshi | *Glenchoma hederacea* | Ground-ivy |
| Koshiabura | *Ascanthopanax sciadophylloide* | NA |
| Kuzu | *Pueraria Fabaceae* | Japanese arrowroot |
| Mitsuba | *Cryptotaenia japonica* | Japanese honewort |
| Nobiru | *Allium macrostemon* | Wild ramp |
| Seri | *Oenanthe javanica* | Chinese celery |
| Shiode | *Smilax riparia* | Green brier |
| Sugina | *Equisetum arvense* | Horsetail |
| Suiba | *Rumex acetosa* | Sorel |
| Tara no Ki | *Aralia elata* | Angelica-tree |

| Udo | *Aralia cordata* | Japanese spikenard |
|---|---|---|
| Warabi | *Pteridium aquilinum* | Eagle Fern |
| Yomogi | *Artemisia vulgaris* | Japanese mugwort |