

Greetings

What sort of soy sauce do you use at home? Is it sweet, salty, dark colored or light colored? You probably believe that the soy sauce you use is an ordinary soy sauce. However, soy sauce found elsewhere may be sweeter or saltier. A 2015 survey reported that there are more than 1,200 soy sauce breweries across Japan. This suggests that there are still many soy sauce varieties that are rooted in local traditions. The production of soy sauce in Japan is said to have become active in the late Muromachi Period (1336–1573). Later, soy sauce was spread throughout Japan via ocean routes to become Japan's representative seasoning. Why, and since when, has soy sauce come to be so variously diverse in taste as it is now?

From 2014 to 2015, the Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture (KIIFC) conducted a survey study with the theme Soy Sauce and Traditional Local Dishes, in collaboration with food professionals and experts. As reported in Food Culture No. 26, the study results revealed that the local dishes or the taste identified with each region was closely related to the local soy sauce, and that preferences in soy sauce in Japan can be broken into patterns by region. Since 2016, to further explore these findings, the KIIFC has been studying the regional characteristics of soy sauce and contributing factors. With the study underway, the current issue presents the first report of the study by region, conducted in 2016, by dividing the research topics among food experts.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to the Japan Soy Sauce Association, The National Federation of Soy-Sauce Cooperative Associations, and their members for providing considerable cooperation in the survey.

The KIIFC will continue to promote activities to help the public gain a deeper understanding of diverse cultures through the exploration of food culture.

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Books Donated from the Collection of Tokiko Nakayama

A book collection from Tokiko Nakayama received at the KIIFC has three major features. Firstly, the collection holds almost all materials related to the Yushima Seido Chinese Cuisine Study Department, which led the way in Chinese cuisine in postwar Japan. From the written materials, we can see that the department started with the belief that food was the real representation of culture and their activities continued until the middle of 1960's. Also, Professor Nakayama was the first to introduce Japan to the Manchu Han Imperial Feast replicated in Hong Kong. The collection includes a near-complete set of early materials of its introduction to Japan, in which she was involved. There are also videos of the NHK satellite broadcasting program introducing her as a leading expert of the feast. Thirdly, the collection has materials related to the translation of cookbooks published in China after the 1950's. Chinese regional dishes that had been kept secret were opened to the public when the country was established as the People's Republic of China in 1949, and were made available to people in Japan.

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