

Greetings

People have five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. However, feelings differ by person; we do not have exactly the same experience as others. This is because the senses develop based on experiences in the environment where one was born and raised, including topography and climate, as well as one's own family and generation. But we do know that the senses of people who share the same environment and circumstances come to resemble one another. For example, we often see similarities in the senses of families or people living in the same hometown. That is surely the foundation of what we call 'culture'.

Over the past four years, we have been studying the regional characteristics of soy sauce in various parts of Japan and contributing factors for those differences. Our research has revealed that there are far more factors influencing regional tastes than first thought, and that the regions are also highly segmented. With homogenization of information due to our increasingly information-oriented society coupled with the change of generation, the collective memory of each region is fading. While on the one hand we feel this study may have been the last opportunity, there is also evidence of inheritance of tastes in the various regions. There is no way of knowing whether this will continue or be homogenized with the passage of time. We sincerely hope that this and the previous issue (No. 28) of this journal will help preserve those memories.

One thing we can say is that soy sauce is an exceptionally versatile seasoning, and we are very interested to see how it will spread in Japan and around the world. We will continue to promote the activities of The Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture (KIIFC) to help the public gain a deeper understanding of diverse cultures through the exploration of food culture.

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