



Greetings

The theme of Food is always interesting and enjoyable. But once we get started talking about it, we notice the topic expands endlessly and brings up questions we can't answer. This is no surprise, because food has been central to our lives since we became homo sapiens, well before the dawn of history. It has developed along with human development, sometimes changing dramatically depending on the region and era. And food continues to change. Take soy sauce, for example. It's a familiar seasoning, and though a great number of efforts have been made to explore its origins we still lack firm conclusions.

For this issue, we shed light on soy sauce from three different viewpoints. The first is an attempt to pin down the formation of the word "soy sauce" in old Chinese texts. The second is a study of changes in what we call soy sauce in the modern period. And in the third approach, we attempt to draw a picture of the modern history of soy sauce by referencing technical books related to soy sauce written from the Meiji era to the first half of the Showa era.

In an aim to find out just what soy sauce was in the 20th and early 21st century, the Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture has continued research to clarify the regional characteristics of soy sauce, starting with the relationship between regional cuisine and soy sauce. These individual research approaches are seemingly unrelated, but we believe we can get a better approximation of the history of soy sauce, absent legend or oral tradition, if we cast light on it from various angles.

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