

Greetings

Ten years have passed since washoku was inscribed as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage in 2013. For a retrospective review of these 10 years and a discussion of the future of washoku, Kikkoman hosted a panel discussion with four culinary specialists who are active in the front lines of washoku. Drawing from the same lineup of panelists who participated in a similar event held 10 years ago, we were able to hear an overview of the situation delivered with confidence. Standing at the forefront of Japanese cuisine, these experts still emphasize the importance of fundamentals. By having a firmly established base, washoku can accommodate changes and variations. Inscription as an intangible cultural heritage is, in a sense, a wake-up call. Over these 10 years, have we seriously tended to the basics of washoku? Or have we placed it in the frame of culture and set it aside? With the opportunity of this 10th anniversary of UNESCO inscription, we would like to think once again about washoku.

This issue covers two other themes as well. One is about the use of Koji mold in foods, which is one of the characteristics of washoku. Another is about halal, which often comes up as a topic recently. By gaining a better understanding of these two themes, we will be able to find clues to enrich our dietary life for years to come.

Daily culture, food culture in particular, is closely rooted to our lives, and functions only when ordinary life is maintained. Unfortunately, we have recently experienced a series of disasters that have disrupted ordinary life. We do hope that the daily life that is the base of culture will be back on track at the earliest possible time.

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