Discussion

Edo – A Lifestyle Alive and Well in the Present Day

Reiko Koshikawa

Ms. Koshikawa was born in Tokyo and graduated from the Women's Studies department of Aoyama Gakuin. In 1966 she launched the company, Intelligence Service, Inc. which performs market research and project planning. Ms. Koshikawa remains today the executive officer of the company. Ms. Koshikawa has spent her life researching the culture and people of Edo and is supervisor of a group dedicated to the study of people and lifestyles of the Edo era as well as the diffusion of information regarding these topics. Ms. Koshikawa is also the author of such books as *Gray Panther*, awarded the Ushio prize for non-fiction, and *Edo no Hanjo-shigusa* (Edo Behaviors).

Theodore Bestor

Professor Bestor, Director of Graduate Studies in Social Anthropology at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University, first came to Japan in 1967. He has spent years conducting research at Tokyo's vast Tsukiji wholesale fish market. Professor Bestor's first book, *Neighborhood Tokyo,* is an ethnography of daily life and the invention of tradition in an ordinary middle class district of Tokyo. Professor Bestor's new book,Tsukiji : The Fish Market at the Center of the World, will be published in April 2004.

Exciting Edo—The People's Lifestyle and Eating Habits

Koshikawa: I am working with other people to rediscover the oral culture and traditions of Edo that were never recorded. When referring to the people of Edo, we are often referring to the leaders of the population. I have spent my life researching the culture of these so-called townspeople with a focus on their interpretation of life, often referred to as "Edo Behaviors".

Bestor: Though I am not a specialist in the history or culture of the Edo era, research in the field of cultural and social anthropology requires investigation into cultural patterns and social structure. I have made annual trips to the Tsukiji wholesale fish market for the purpose of study and research since beginning my investigations into Edo from an anthropological viewpoint ten years ago. The lifestyle and eating habits of the people of Edo were almost certainly centered around the Nihonbashi fish market. Today, when one thinks of food in Japan, Tsukiji must certainly come to mind as a primary source.

I find not only the eating habits, but the lifestyle of the people of Edo tremendously interesting. Looking at modern-day Tokyo, many people believe that nothing of Edo remains, but I see many remnants of that time. While an image of Edo certainly can't be recalled from the modern buildings, highways and bullet trains, a shadow of the traditions of Edo is visible in the lifestyle of the modern people of Tokyo, especially in this year which celebrates the four-hundredth year since the establishment of Edo as the capital of the nation. In addition to this year's celebration, next year (2004, 16th year of Heisei) commemorates the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of ratification of the US-Japan peace treaty signed February 21, 1855. These two events have, as may be expected, significantly increased my interest in history. Therefore, I am extremely grateful to be participating in today's discussion.

K: Thank you very much. I've heard that you have also spent time in Kyoto.

B: Yes.

K: What was your impression of the city?

B: I'm sure that the people of Kyoto love their city, but I personally find Tokyo to be much more exciting. I feel that Kyoto is a very important city in terms of the history it contains in its gardens and temples, as well as the beautiful artwork to be found there. However, I feel strongly that Tokyo is the heart of modern Japan. I am unable to accept the comments in American guidebooks and travel brochures that proclaim Kyoto as the true Japan.

K: Are you saying that you feel a physical sense of excitement whenever you arrive in Tokyo?

B: Definitely. From the time the bullet train hits Shinagawa until it arrives in the center of the city, I feel a tremendous rush of energy.

K: That sense of energy must really make you feel alive and also make you aware of how alive Tokyo is.

Returning to the topic of Edo, an acquaintance has told me how surprised she was by an early-morning trip to Tsukiji where she saw huge crowds of people running in every direction without ever bumping into one another. This despite the fact that never a word of warning was uttered. That is amazing. I suppose this sort of behavior can be referred to as "Edo Behavior." It almost seems as if a rule is adhered to not only with the mind, but also with the body.

B: I think that such rules are common especially in the Tsukiji market. This is one way in which the Edo era seems to persist even today. The physical movements of the people are almost a kind of technology visible not only in the way the people move along the roads and aisles, but even in the way they use their knives.

On a trip to Tsukiji yesterday, I stopped in at a fish shop that belongs to a good friend. I was so impressed at his skill with a knife in carving up a two-hundred kilogram tuna. He was truly amazing. Though a tremendous amount of strength is required, he was able to carve the fish with it laid out flat. I'm sure that his method follows that passed down from the Edo era.

K: You were surely witness to the skill of a true craftsman.

B: In Tsukiji especially, the consciousness and temperament of the craftsmen is very strong.

K: Edo craftsmen are said be not only consistent in their thinking but able to achieve what is required using that consistency. While it may be off the point to say that craftsmen themselves were valuable, can't it be said that there was value in the confidence they maintained in their own skill? Though machines have taken over many of the tasks previously performed by hand, it seems that true craftsmen can still be seen in places like fish markets.

B: Though there may be no direct relationship to food culture, when I think of my impression of a craftsman, I am reminded of a word I learned when I was studying the Japanese language. The word was ichininmae. This word has two meanings. The first could be translated as "for one," as when ordering from a menu. The second meaning implies a form of recognition for something achieved, as when one has completed the necessary training or apprenticeship to become a craftsman.

K: So the person is recognized as an accomplished craftsman. A true craftsman is not simply someone who does what they have been told to do, but someone who is able to successfully complete the specific process from initial planning to final finishing. It is said that a true craftsman is someone with a consistent hand. Therefore, an accomplished craftsman is referred to as ichininmae. Such a simple word with such deep meaning.

B: That is certainly true.

K: The term "Edo Behavior" also implies a variety of meanings, doesn't it.

B: I suppose that is why more than anything else, culture is defined by language. A single word may have a variety of meanings or delicate nuances.

K: These delicate nuances seem to be fading in the modern Japanese language. As a Japanese, I feel that this is a tremendous loss. Common usage has shortened longer words so that sometimes the sound of these "new," shorter words is unpleasant. It seems that these days we are trying to simplify everything. By the way, in your research of 'the production of cuisine as a globalization both of the fishing industry and of culinary trends and cultural influence,' what sorts of trends have you discovered over the past ten years?

B: I made my first trip to Japan in 1967. I was approximately the age that my son is now; sixteen years old. It was just three years after the Tokyo Olympics and at that time, true Japanese food was not really available in the U.S. Teppanyaki, tempura and salmon teriyaki were about the only "Japanese" foods to be found. I first saw food eaten raw when I was sixteen, and I was really surprised. Actually, more than surprised, I was afraid! That was the first time anyone let me try a little sushi. I loved it!

K: To appreciate and like Japanese food with the first try, you must have had a delicate sense of taste. The Japanese food found in the U.S. is far too sweet. It's a little sad for me to think that Americans think that they're eating true Japanese food. Though soy sauce may have helped a bit, for you to have appreciated the deliciousness of raw fish from the first must be an indicator of the sensitivity of your palate, or rather of all five of your senses.

B: While the Japanese food to be found in the U.S. has improved a great deal, there are still few chefs who can really create a true Japanese dish.

K: I suppose that they're adjusting the flavor of the dishes to suit the American palate.

B: Of course that's a part of it, but there is also the issue of culture and lifestyle. Since the Edo era, Japan has had the tradition of specialty shops. This follows with restaurants as well. People go to a soba shop to eat soba, a ramen shop to eat ramen, or a tempura shop to eat tempura. American culture, however, lends itself to the "supermarket" style of restaurant where a wide variety of dishes is available. When the restaurant must create and serve a variety of dishes such as sushi, tempura and sukiyaki, the seasonings, flavors and aromas all seem to blend together. Not only is the proper atmosphere lost, but so is the true flavor.

K: I see your point. I had never considered that aspect.

B: Imagine a European restaurant in Tokyo that had one table serving Italian food, one table for French food and one table for Scandinavian food. You probably wouldn't find any of it very good.

A fish market in the Nihonbashi area (Edo Nihonbashi Odawara-machi

K: That is true. I suppose that is one result of democracy. I mean the consequences of trying to meet the demands of a wide variety of people. Is it safe to say that you have been a Japanophile since your first trip at age sixteen?

B: No, not exactly. Though I experienced a great deal and had a wonderful time, I was only in Japan for six months on that first trip. I thought that my relationship with Japan was over until I entered university and rediscovered my interest with a Japanese history class.

K: Was it through your research beginning ten years ago into the Tsukiji market that you came to see the theme of "Edo food"?

B: At first, I wasn't much interested in the food culture or the culture of Edo. I was more interested in the structure of the immediate family, extended family and small family businesses. I consulted with friends and university professors about whether there wasn't a single place where I could study the dynamics of all of these social relationships. The result of these consultations was that markets, such as the one at Tsukiji, with their many micro enterprises would provide the opportunity to interview people regarding their families, the economy, the structure of family businesses, etc. Tsukiji, however, was so interesting with such delicious food readily available that my original interest grew to

include food culture and the culture of Edo.
Without a general knowledge of fish or Japan's food culture, I was unable to successfully interview the people at the market about their family relationships or business relationships. In order to improve the accuracy and results of my research, I realized that I had to learn about the local food culture, the fishing industry and the culture and history of Japan.
The more I learned about the market, the more interesting it all became. Therefore, while I don't find the family and small business relationships uninteresting, my research for the past ten years has taken on a clearer focus on foods.

K: Whenever I go to a foreign country, I always want to visit local markets. It seems that the true lifestyle of the people is most visible in markets. I think that there must be a lot of the old Japanese lifestyle to be found in the fish markets around Japan.

B: Three or four years ago, my family and I took a vacation in Spain. On the way, I bought a guidebook about Spain while killing time at Narita airport. While we took both the Japanese guidebook and an American guidebook that we had, the Japanese guidebook provided very detailed descriptions of the fish markets. The American guidebook didn't include any information about such sites. I realized that this, too, illustrates a major difference in the cultures of the U.S. and Japan


Sakana-ichi no Zu, Edo-Tokyo Museum)

"Edo Behavior"—Still a Worldwide Standard

K: Let's discuss how "Edo Behavior" came to be a rule applied the lifestyle and way of thinking of the people of Edo

B: Certainly, let's do.

K: Though there are many ways of describing it, "Edo Behavior" teaches us the importance of three major issues; health, interpersonal relationships and peace. Though originally part of a single concept, the three issues have been separated as this "Edo Behavior" was handed down over the centuries. Following this separation, I think of the issue of health as being addressed with the specifications for creating an Edo-style meal. We tend to think of Edo-style cuisine as simply a type of gourmet food, but actually, it was simply the best way to provide nutrition and energy using the ingredients and methods of cooking available.
As for the issue of interpersonal relationships, an example of this would be the economical division of an entire fish in a manner most suited to all. For example, the red meat of mackerel and bonito, being easily digested, was best reserved for the elderly while the fatty meat of the bluefin tuna was more suited to the energetic young men. Added to this was the idea that the same dish (a specific ingredient prepared in a particular manner) should not be eaten again for at least three-hundred sixty-five days. Despite a lack in the abundance of ingredients available to us today, the people of the Edo era were able to make a wide variety of dishes using even familiar and inexpensive ingredients such as daikon radishes and tofu. It appears that they truly enjoyed changes in cooking. It seems that this was one "rule" followed by everyone at the time.

B: Perhaps this was because eating was a group activity in the Edo era.

K: Though there is not much recorded, it seems that there was also food created especially for the sick and elderly. At the beginning of the Meiji era (1866—1912), centers somewhat similar to the hospice programs we see today were established. The patients were served a special dish known for its nutrition and rehabilitating effects. This dish, created by placing five mounds of rice on a plate and then topping each mound with a separate ingredient such as tiny shrimp, dried and flavored fish flakes, and vegetables flavored or pickled in a variety of ways, was excellent due to its high nutritional value as well as being easily digested. The variety of colors, flavors and aromas made for an interesting meal that often encouraged even those with no appetite to eat.

B: That is the sort of generosity and consideration that should continue regardless of the time period.

K: When people of my generation were children, an upset stomach was treated by discontinuing solid foods and resetting the digestive tract beginning with broths or very thin gruels. Gradually the amount of rice and other ingredients was added until we were finally able to hold down solid food. People who can only eat broths and thin gruels are considered quite ill. When a variety of colorful and aromatic ingredients are added to these thin gruels, even patients with no appetite are likely to at least taste the food and gradually increase their intake as their appetite and health returns.
The meal of five mounds of rice with various toppings prepared in the Edo era was excellent for people with weak stomachs and it is said that this type of dish was served in hospitals specializing in stomach and intestinal disorders up until the Showa era (1926—1988). As some sort of meat or fish was used for three of the five ingredients and vegetables for two of the ingredients, protein and general nutritional value was very high for a healthy and easily digested meal. This seems to be an almost artistic example of the kindness of the Edo people.

B: This example really seems to show the true depth of humanity of the people.

Edo—A Symbiotic Community

K: Edo is said to have been a city that enjoyed two and a half centuries of peace. As a castle town, however, the possibility of war was a constant consideration. The people were constantly prepared for a siege. Rice was steamed and then shaped into sticks which were sewn into clothing. These rice sticks generally came in two sizes; one size for adults and one for children. The flavor of this rice, which was eaten simply by

adding hot water, is said to have been quite good and this habit of the people appears to have continued until the beginning of the Showa era. Practices such as preparing for the possibility of war despite a long and continuing peace is evidence of the wisdom of the Edo era.

Let's talk about the communal dining style of the time. The residences of Edo were single long buildings divided into separate quarters. These divisions most commonly served as both residence and business. One long building would often contain individual businesses based on a single industry. For example, one division would be a noodle restaurant, the division next door specializing in noodle-making, the next specializing in broth making and so on, so that a single long building covered each step involved in a particular industry. As people lived in their shops, they often didn't have time to do their own cooking. This led to the establishment of community cafeterias where everyone would eat together. This cooperative lifestyle of the people of Edo seems to have been very advanced.

B: That is wonderful.

K: I find the notion that people of Edo enjoyed a symbiotic lifestyle very interesting. At a recent meeting, I was asked if this wasn't a lifestyle forced on the people by the shogunate. As I responded then, it seems that this way of living was actually due to the thinking of the community leaders of the time. The leaders seem to have been intent on developing a peaceful and prosperous system with very little bickering or quarreling.

The same sort of leadership has been applied in recent years in New York city. Mayor Guilliani applied principles of the Broken Window theory[1] to clean up the city's subways and reduce crime. By eliminating the graffiti and enforcing laws against it, the crime rate, including murder, was significantly reduced over a period of just three years.

As with the example of New York city, the creation and enforcement of even a single, simple rule can act as a form of preventive medicine against crime and unrest. Such rules devised by the leaders of Edo, and today referred to as "Edo Behavior," made a harmonious and thriving lifestyle possible for the people of the time.

B: As with the rules applied to the traffic in fish markets discussed earlier, the creation of a single rule can protect everyone.

K: I mentioned the acquaintance who was so impressed with the almost artistic way in which the workers at Tsukiji come and go. This type of "Edo Behavior" could, in this case, be considered a behavior by imitation. Leaders in a community must behave not with their own interests in mind, but rather in a manner that can be used as an example by the entire community. "Edo Behavior" exemplifies this type of leadership.

B: I also think that this is an extremely important point.

Encountering the Wax Reproduction of Dishes

K: Is sushi your favorite food?

B: I would have to say that my favorite food is grilled eel. The first time I came to Japan, I was just sixteen and living in Sangenjaya in Setagaya ward. One evening I went out in search of a place to eat dinner and had my first encounter with the excellent wax reproductions that act as menus in Japan. At that time, I couldn't speak any Japanese, but the reproduction of the grilled eel at one restaurant looked so delicious. Of course, when I entered the restaurant, the smell was wonderful and I had my first delicious taste of grilled eel. I went back to this restaurant two or three more times with no idea of what I was actually eating. Had I known that it was eel, I probably never would have tried it. I'm sure that I would have been thinking only of the similarity to a snake. (laughter)

K: I've heard that the people of other countries somehow think of eels as evil or of having some relationship with the devil.

B: After first seeing the excellent wax reproduction and then encountering the wonderful aroma, I just knew that the dish would be delicious. I know that sushi and eel have been common dishes since the Edo era, but I wonder when these wax reproductions were first used.

K: I've heard that foreign visitors to Japan buy them as souvenirs to give as gifts when they return home.

B: I think I'll pick a few up on my trip to Kappabashi in Nishi-asakusa tomorrow! The wax reproductions of sushi are quite popular in my office. These wax reproductions are so much more appealing and interesting than any sign could ever be. I guess this is another example of the wisdom of a lifestyle.

A Kanda vegetable market of the Edo era (Edo Zu Byobu, Tokyo

K: When I was a child, there were peddlers of snacks made of rice flour and shaped into small figurines representative of characters or scenes well known to Japanese children. We don't see peddlers like that these day as mothers probably consider such foods as unhealthy or unsanitary, but I think it's too bad. From a child's point of view, such craftsmanship is surely an art form. The development of the wax reproductions we see in restaurants today however, was probably an easy jump from such traditional trades.

Countries such as Japan and China maintain the idea that food and medicine are combined. Do western countries have the same sort of concept?

B: Though the concept is probably quite different, western people don't totally separate medicine and food either. However, there has long been the general idea that food is food and medicine is medicine. The ingredients used in food and the methods for preparing them for maximum nutritional value are primary considerations in both the East and West. But in Asia and in the West, ideas about the integration of mind and body were different, so perhaps this is why food and medicine remain separate in the West.

K: Though not directly related to food, another theme from the Edo era is referred to as the "Edo Child-rearing Behavior."

People were taught that a human being consisted of a brain and a body (face, torso and limbs) connected by the spirit, which acted much like the strings on a puppet. Children were then taught that the use and movement of the string, or spirit, determined personality, physical characteristics and general character.

B: At what age were children taught this?

K: Children were very aware of this idea by the time they were three years old. This was how they thought of the spirit, and believed that movement of the spirit allowed them to perform physical activities such as raising their arm or leg. Comparing the spirit to a string and teaching this idea to children seems very wise.

B: That's very interesting.

K: This type of metaphor is very specific and quite easily understood. I'm sure that children learned this idea not by having it drilled into them, but rather by learning from the behavior of and imitating their parents and elders.

National Museum)

B: I'm sure you're right.

K: My husband was a doctor who also studied eastern medicine. Today, medicine is divided into very specific specialties. If you have a problem with your eyes, you go to an eye doctor; a problem with your skin, a dermatologist; vascular problems, a vascular specialist and so on. The human body, however, cannot be so easily divided. Everything is connected. If, for example, you have a problem with your eyes, then relief or a cure may come from correction or treatment of some other related part of the body.

B: In that way, you can certainly say that food and medicine are related. Learning this sort of concept as a child is amazing.

K: It is said that children learn by mimicking their parents. However, it seems that there are no parents who want to be mimicked. I teach "Edo Behavior" at Culture City, and young women are constantly telling me, "No one ever taught me that." Too many basic concepts are being left out of children's education these days. Children spend so much time and effort studying school subjects that they miss out on basic "human" education. This lack of basic social education has continued for the fifty years since World War II ended.

When I was a child, I was never told to do my homework. But if I ever lied or picked on someone smaller than myself, I really got into trouble. This doesn't happen today. These days, parents only seem to get angry when their children don't study or do something which negatively affects their school record. Despite the fact that happiness is not found by entering a good school or getting a job in a prestigious company, we can't seem to wake up from this bad dream.

B: By the way, there's a question I'd like to ask you. Do you think people living in the Edo era at the end of the Tokugawa shogunate would recognize today's Japanese food?

K: I'm sure they would. Though we import a lot of foods and ingredients from foreign countries these days, the popular cake, baum küchen, was available in Japan even during the Edo era. Our diet today, though, is certainly more varied than it was during those days.

The traditional Japanese breakfast of soup, rice and one or two side dishes has been replaced in many households with spaghetti or bread. Cooking methods are also quite different, so I imagine that while a person from the Edo era may recognize many of our dishes, they would be surprised by their preparation.

B: You're probably right. Are there any foods or cooking styles common to the Edo era that have completely disappeared today?

K: I'm sure there must be. There are certainly cooking methods that have disappeared. For example, the people of Edo must of had extensive recipes for preparing tofu and sea bream, though only a few remain today. In addition, it seems that the tradition of handing recipes and such down from parent to child has become less and less common in recent generations.

Even regular events previously celebrated have lost their importance as modern lifestyles no longer support the extended family residence. This is especially true of those living in large cities where everyone in the family gets home at a different time and eats at a different time. It seems a waste, though today's lifestyle requires much more attention to economy.

Markets—Windows on Lifestyles

K: Returning to the subject of our discussion, were you able to see any of the old Edo at the Tsukiji market? How do Japan's markets compare to those of other countries?

B: I've visited many markets over the world and there are a variety of comparisons to be made. I find markets much more interesting than churches or museums. My first impression of the Tsukiji fish market was that it really felt like a separate country and society. At first it seemed like a very closed world and I worried about whether it was ok for me to enter or to try and fit in.

K: And when you did enter?

B: I made friends immediately! That was when I began to understand the true meaning of a market. Markets not only regulate the flow of products, but also society. More than anything else, markets function on human relationships. When researching Tsukiji, I asked everyone, "Is your job selling fish, or is it developing personal relationships?" The answer was always, "Both." Just as with the temperament or skill of a craftsman, it is each person's skill with other people more than a skill or knowledge of fish that is required.

K: Have you noticed the "Edo Behavior" style of movement so intriguing at Tsukiji in the markets of other countries?

B: I, personally, find fish markets especially refreshing. Being necessarily located near the sea with the winds off the water, the true nature of the people is visible. We must also

remember that markets deal with food, the most basic component of any lifestyle.

K: Though there must be slight differences in the movement of the people and the workflow in markets around the world, there must be great similarities with the markets of the Edo era. Have you ever been to a prosperous market that gave you the impression of the markets of Edo?

B: That's a little difficult, but any discussion or research into work at the Tsukiji market ends up with discussion of the Nihonbashi fish market of the Edo era. Asking about the Nihonbashi market eventually leads to discussion of the Edo era and finally the Tokugawa shogunate in general. These subjects all seem to be connected in a variety of ways, including the terminology and language used, the general spirit of the places and even the tools used. When I first visited Tsukiji, I had no idea that history would be an aspect of my research, but the more I learned, the deeper in history I found myself.

Of course, the Tsukiji area itself is very historic. Development of the area began after the great fire of 1657, and reflects not only Edo history, but a general history of Tokyo as well.

K: It seems that Edo was an extremely lively city. There is literature which addresses the fact that when Dutch sailors paraded through the streets of Edo, the people seemed completely oblivious to them. The reason for this was the fact that nobility of all levels from throughout the country were constantly parading through the city. The people were so accustomed to such showy events that they didn't even seem to notice.

B: I think that that sort of zest for life remains in the Tsukiji fish market.

K: It seems that even the word "life" had a different nuance in Edo than it did in Kyoto. The word simply referred to something being alive in Kyoto, while it implied a passion for life in Edo.

B: That is very interesting. It sort of describes their whole way of life.

K: In the Edo era, mothers blew on their small children's food to cool it before giving it to them, but when the small children learned to say "hot" themselves, it is said that a celebration called the "Celebration of Life" was held. This custom celebrated the ability of children to stand on their own and to protect themselves from a variety of dangers including burning. That seems to fit into our discussion of the different nuances in the word "life". This use of the word seems to illustrate the liveliness of "Edo Behavior."

Even America is Infused with Japanese Food

K: These days, Japanese food is considered very healthy in America, isn't it.

B: Japanese food has become very popular with a particular image that is rather difficult to explain. Of course part of the image is that it is healthy. Japanese food is low in fat, and the protein comes mostly from vegetables and fish. Another source of this popularity is the extremely good relationship currently maintained between the U.S. and Japan. This has led to a strong interest on the part of many Americans in Japan and Japanese food. It is not unexpected that the many Americans visiting Japan on business or some sort of exchange program try Japanese food and like it.

However, while the food from countries such as Italy, Mexico and India was introduced to the U.S. by natives of those countries, Japanese food has not been assimilated in the same manner despite a significant Japanese American population. Americans have the impression, partly due to the effects of World War II, that Japanese people do not want to share their culture or food culture with other countries.

I don't think that many Americans knew much about Japanese cuisine in the 1970s. The World Expo held in Osaka, however, led to an increase in tourism to Japan as well as economic ties between the U.S. and Japan. Businessmen from both countries began traveling more frequently, making personal relationships between Americans and native Japanese more common. The Japan boom began at that time and has lasted these thirty years. As I mentioned before, most Americans knew nothing of the fish dishes such as sushi and sashimi so common in the Japanese diet before this time. Though knowledge of sukiyaki, tempura and teppanyaki was far from universal in America, they were certainly the representative dishes of Japanese cuisine.

I recently took a look at some old American cookbooks to see if there were any Japanese influences in the recipes. In cookbooks from the 1950s and 60s, there were virtually none. There were just a few explanations of the use of soy sauce, and a few noodle, grilled chicken and grilled fish recipes. I think that today's general cookbooks include quite a variety of Japanese recipes. I wouldn't be surprised to see even instructions for preparing sushi and sashimi, though there are certainly directions for preparing miso and tofu.

K: Aren't Americans a little reluctant to use soy sauce?

B: Oh, not at all! Soy sauce seems to have become quite a main staple in American cooking. I've even seen it used on hamburgers.

K: Americans call soy sauce "kikkoman," don't they?

B: Soy sauce became a standard in the U.S. in oriental cooking in the 1940's, and since the 1960's Kikkoman has been the most famous brand.

K: On a visit to the U.S. about twenty years ago, I ate some Japanese food. It was terrible. There were no good Japanese chefs at that time. Chinese cuisine was very popular, and I thought that perhaps Japanese cuisine simply couldn't compete. Chinese food was inexpensive, very delicious, and available for take out. Scenes with Chinese food even appeared in movies. The lack of good Japanese chefs and the flavoring of the food to suit the American palate made the food almost inedible to Japanese people. Though the food I ate in Santa Fe at that time could hardly be called Japanese food, things seem to have changed quite a bit. San Francisco, with good, fresh fish readily available now has a sushi restaurant called "Samurai" that is quite good. I think that soy sauce has become the deciding factor. Is it then acceptable to say that these are reasons for Americans' increased consumption of fish?

B: Yes. I think that Americans' consumption of fish increased considerably from 1970—1980. And good soy sauce and other

authentic Japanese ingredients made Japanese cuisine more popular. I have no data to support this, but I am quite certain that it is true.

Japanese Food—Flavor, Aroma and Appearance

B: Americans maintain the impression that Japanese food is not just created for its flavor and aroma, but also with an importance on appearance. The entire presentation is wonderful and very beautiful.

K: Japanese food is very attractive, isn't it. It is true that Japanese people place great importance on the presentation of food. Do you have any hopes regarding Japanese food for the future? Today's young people seem to be moving away from traditional Japanese foods.

B: I think that is extremely sad.

K: But it's true. Our consumption of both rice and soy sauce has decreased. Regardless of whether this is a good thing or a bad thing, our palate definitely seems to be changing. I think that improvements are ok, but somehow, we seem to changing in a strange way.

B: Young Japanese women today can't even bring themselves to touch a fish. Unbelievable! (laughter) I think that modern day convenience stores are a primary factor in the changes to Japan's food culture. Convenience stores only sell instant ramen and other noodles or mass-produced versions of the most common Japanese dishes. There is only a very limited selection of fresh fruits and vegetables, and those are pre-packaged; two onions, three or four carrots, eggs, salt, etc. Adults raised with this "convenience store lifestyle" are at a loss should they have to actually prepare a meal.

K: I've tried some of the dishes sold at convenience stores a few times when I was very busy. They're really terrible. The seasonings were far too strong, and generally too sweet.

B: I think that they contain very high quantities of sugar and sodium.

K: I definitely think that home cooked meals are the best. I believe it was around 1986 when the "slow food" concept became popular in Italy. Though this idea has been introduced to Japan, it has yet to take hold.

B: I think that there is a "slow food" movement in the U.S. as well, but as with Japan, it's still quite small. The first problem with "slow food" is that only people with a certain amount of free time are able to spend the time required. Those who work or have small children definitely don't have the time to spend on slow food. "Fast food" is a definite requirement of these types of families. Though "slow food" is definitely a concept with its benefits, it's simply not feasible for most modern people.

K: I agree that slow food is basically impossible unless a person has quite a lot of free time. A lifestyle that allowed that free time, however, would certainly be agreeable.

B: I agree completely.

K: It was very nice to meet you today. I hope we can meet again.

B: I would enjoy that, too.

We would like to thank Ms. Koshikawa and Professor Bestor for their time in conducting this very interesting discussion.

References

1. The Broken Window Theory

The Broken Window theory was developed to explain the process of urban decay. Researchers parked an expensive car in New York's South Bronx. The car was left for four days and nothing happened. When researcher broke a small side window and left the car, the entire car was stripped, torched and turned upside down within four hours.

Similarly, when the windows of an apartment building were all closed, nothing happened. When researches broke one window, however, several windows were broken and graffiti began to appear until tenants moved out and crime moved in.

From "Don't Live with Broken Windows—A Conversation with Andy Hunt and Dave Thomas" by Bill Venners of Artima Software, Inc.