

Consuming Identities: Contemporary Japanese Foodways in a Global Locale

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Contents

Contents	i
Synopsis	iv
Declaration	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Chapter 1: <i>Food and Identity in the Global Locale</i>	1
<i>A Man is Whatever Room He is in: Contextual Identities in Process</i>	4
<i>Rooms Within Rooms: Food and Identity in the Global Context</i>	12
<i>Where in the World?: Locating the Locale</i>	15
<i>Inquisitive Observation and Methodology</i>	17
Chapter 2: <i>Common Foodways and Everyday Identities</i>	25
<i>Managing Home and Identity with Food</i>	27
<i>Consumption Practices Within the Home and Food Provision Roles</i>	34
<i>Food and Eating Outside the Home</i>	42
<i>Round-the-Clock Convenience</i>	49
<i>Conclusion</i>	56
Chapter 3: <i>Locally Grown Identities</i>	59
<i>Local Families Local Foods</i>	60
<i>Food from Nature</i>	67
<i>Foods from the Fields</i>	74
<i>Vegetable Connections</i>	82
<i>Eating Local</i>	85
<i>Conclusion</i>	89
Chapter 4: <i>Being Japanese: Eating Japanese</i>	91
<i>National Cuisine</i>	93
<i>Consuming the Past: Traditional Dining in Contemporary Japan</i>	97
<i>Endorsing a National Cuisine</i>	108
<i>Everyday Culinary Nationalism</i>	116
<i>Cooking the Image of Japan</i>	125
<i>Conclusion</i>	134

Chapter 5: <i>Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life</i>	137
<i>Sweet Globalisation</i>	143
<i>Blurring and Defining the Boundaries</i>	150
<i>An Instance of Incorporation</i>	161
<i>Conclusion</i>	162
Chapter 6: <i>Food Safety and Risk</i>	164
<i>Dubious Origins and Guests Bearing Unwanted Gifts</i>	165
<i>Co-oping with Mistrust</i>	179
<i>Domestic Concerns: Problems at Home</i>	182
<i>Conclusion</i>	185
Chapter 7: Constantly Consuming Identities	186
Reference List	201

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Synopsis

This thesis is the outcome of 12 months of fieldwork undertaken in a semi-rural community in Osaka, a major city in Western Japan, and examines how food and foodways are central to the articulation and maintenance of Japanese identity. My objective is to show how my informants understand and represent themselves and where they are in the world with food. A predominant theme is how local and regional foodways contribute to a sense of distinctive local identity. At the same time, I also seek to demonstrate the place of imported foods and international cuisines in everyday life. In this thesis I propose that ‘traditional’ cultural identity and contemporary globalised cosmopolitanism are mutually constitutive in that Japanese foodways reflect both a desire to maintain the distinction of local and national identity as well as the incorporation of the transnational. The Japanese appreciate the diversity of foreign influences and ingredients within everyday life but also value what are widely considered to be timeless and authentic representations of Japan. I argue that mundane everyday food habits demonstrate how Japanese identities are shifting products of peoples’ experiences of the global and the local world.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Micah David James Peters and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library catalogue, the Australasian Digital Theses Program (ADTP) and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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Chapter 1: Food and Identity in the Global Locale

This thesis is an ethnographic investigation of the everyday food habits of people living in Senri Yama¹, a semirural community on the periphery of Osaka city in Japan. Food is fundamental to Japanese identities and in this thesis I contend that food is a valuable avenue of inquiry into how people understand themselves as 'being Japanese'. I argue that my informants understand and represent where and who they are in the world with and through food. While on the surface a contradiction generally seems to exist regarding the binary relationship between 'traditional' cultural identity and contemporary globalised cosmopolitanism, I argue that they are mutually constitutive. In this thesis I explore the dialectics of how foodways in Senri Yama reflect both a desire to maintain the distinctiveness of 'local identity' as well as a desire to incorporate aspects of the wider world. Food consumption reflects how people value 'cosmopolitan' identities as well as identities perceived to be 'traditional' and historically legitimate or 'authentic'. People appreciate the diversity of international influences and ingredients within everyday life while also valuing what they consider timeless and authentic representations and experiences of Japan. In short, in this thesis I explore how mundane everyday food habits demonstrate and embody how Japanese identities are shifting products of peoples' experiences of the global and the local world.

I use 'foodways' to refer to peoples' elementary habits of food production, procurement, preparation, presentation and consumption (Harris, Lyon and McLaughlin, 2005; Lévi-Strauss, 1983). The study of foodways also goes beyond these basic involvements with food and can incorporate taste, nutrition, economics,

¹ In accordance with the research ethics agreement designed at the outset of my fieldwork, I use pseudonyms throughout this thesis to refer to many places, businesses and people.

advertising, social, international and global relations, politics, culture, history and environment (see Bestor, 2001; Douglas, 1997; Goody, 1982; Mintz and DuBois, 2002). Foodways offer insight into how people understand themselves, their experiences, others and the world. As such, food is central to personal as well as socio-cultural identities (Cook and Crang, 1996; Fischler, 1988). Food and eating are routine aspects of peoples' everyday lives so that people do not constantly reflect upon their deeper meanings. Significant meanings are, however, discernible through inquiry into peoples' ordinary involvements with food and this is what I examine in this thesis.

I frequently utilise the terms 'cosmopolitan', 'authentic' and 'traditional' to describe many of the activities and foods in which the people I study are involved. Before proceeding I would like to define exactly what I mean by these terms. Cosmopolitanism refers to peoples' increasing tendency to explore, be open to, and knowledgeable about new and previously unavailable or international goods and experiences (Hannerz, 1990:239). This is especially evident in the study of foodways in Japan where in previous decades people did not have easy access to imported ingredients, cuisines and information about international foodways. In Senri Yama today the international world and its influence is all but inescapable and, correspondingly, today's average resident of Senri Yama can be 'worldly' without having left the city.

'Tradition' and 'authenticity' are two related and, as I use them, interchangeable terms that also arise in this thesis. I consider both terms as values that people ascribe to both objects and practices in order to confer legitimacy. In this manner, tradition and authenticity stand in contrast to cosmopolitanism and infer a looking back or will to remain the same, rather than an urge toward

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*

diversity and progress. Authenticity and tradition are also often linked intimately with place and at least the assumption of longstanding repetition. For example, a traditional practice is one that is believed to exhibit historical accuracy and an authentic meal is one that is believed to incorporate time-honoured ingredients and preparation methods. Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983:1-3) definition of traditions as often invented practices that foster a sense of historical continuity and legitimacy corresponds well to peoples' relationship with the 'traditional' and 'authentic' foods and foodways of Japan. As I demonstrate, however, many foods and food practices in Japan believed to be authentic and traditional are more recent inventions or have seemingly contradictory features. Senri Yama's foodways are a complex mix of cosmopolitanism and traditional authenticity, as people seek to encompass the contemporary internationalising world and maintain their continuing affiliation with certain historically legitimate Japanese identities. The distinctiveness of both traditional authenticity and cosmopolitanism is mutually constitutive through their juxtaposition. Through peoples' everyday comparisons between what they consider traditional and what they regard to be modern and cosmopolitan, the categories are rendered increasingly discrete. In this way, traditional authenticity and the cosmopolitan is legitimated and distinguished by the peoples' evaluation of the contrast between them.

This thesis is centrally concerned with the ways that Japanese 'tradition' and international influences coexist within everyday foodways. I explore the social importance of food within peoples' everyday lives as a way of interacting with others both within and outside of the home. The way that food is procured, prepared and eaten reflects many significant features of peoples' routine practices, such as their responsibilities towards work and home and their desire to spend

time with family and friends. Foodways also reveal peoples' attachments to local places, the maintenance of local traditions and perceived historical continuity with the past. I explore how locally grown foods and face-to-face interactions involving these foods contribute to peoples' sense of authenticity and belonging. While 'localness' is important, no contemporary discussion of foodways would be complete without an investigation into the salience of international influences and this thesis also explores the importance of, and anxieties associated with, the incorporation of extra-local foods and food practices into local foodways.

A Man is Whatever Room He is in: Contextual Identities in Process

In this thesis I do not provide an essentialised account of 'Japanese identity' or selfhood. Instead, I seek to provide an exploration of my informants' identities as ephemeral and temporarily constructed through foodways within a variety of contexts (Cohen, 2000; Rosenberger, 1994:1). I assert that identities must reflect the transient and multi-contextual nature of contemporary food culture and see identity making as strategic and procedural. My position is that identities are fluid; built, in part, upon an array of shifting influences, referents and contexts in contemporary food culture that impel my informants to express themselves in certain ways. Peoples' foodways involve not only the immediate locale but also the nation and the world, as well as both cosmopolitan and traditional foods and practices.

I recognise that a degree of uncertainty surrounds the concept of 'identity'. 'Identity' and 'self' are slippery, which is reflected in anthropology's often ambiguous use of the terms (see Sökefeld, 1999:417). Post-modernist authors have gone far to erase essentialised theorisations of identity. However, identity is still

very real in peoples' everyday experiences of being in the world and is often coupled to objects and practices like food and foodways. Identity is used to refer to uniqueness and also to shared markers of similarity (see Erikson, 1980:109). Thus, common foodways are especially apt as a marker and method of shared identity. The Japanese word for 'self' (*jibun*) emphasises the belonging of the individual to a larger group of others. My informants express belonging to particular groups by eating similar foods in like ways. This can be the local community, through the consumption of locally grown produce, or the Japanese as a cultural entity, by eating the national cuisine. People also distinguish themselves individually or as members of other groups, such as the fashionably cosmopolitan or the health-conscious, by making food choices that mark themselves out in different ways.

In the context of the contemporary world and its foodways, 'Japaneseness' as a national identity is an important way that people identified themselves to me throughout fieldwork. For many informants, Japanese identity is established upon food and foodways. Anderson (1983:6-7) explores the extent to which national and cultural identity arises from collective imaginings of sameness. As I have asserted, commensal foodways, or even the supposition that one is sharing in a like-diet and involved in the same food practices as others, aids significantly in the maintenance of a shared identity. I employ Anderson's (1983) notion of the 'imagined community' to explain how my informants identify themselves as members of the nation through food. Imagined communities foster an essentialising of cultural identity, connecting people through ideas of shared traditions, affinities and values. However, imagined communities obfuscate the fluid nature of 'real communities' that contain internal variability, permeable and contestable boundaries and multitudinous associations with other communities which are especially apparent

when one considers the contemporary transportable nature of food and food culture. These are the kinds of global locales of which Hannerz (1990:237) writes. The kinds of identities that exist within communities are thus best understood as fluid themselves despite peoples' tendency to believe them to be stable.

Identities, which are comprised of many elements and conditions, orient people within the world, as Ito Kenichi (2005) also notes. Identities are relational because people use the products and ideas of disparate communities on a daily basis, not only finding similarities between themselves and others, but also emphasising difference to support perceptions of uniqueness. I argue that peoples' sense of their identities and their place in the world encompasses an unprecedented variety of influences as places throughout the world have become involved in closer interface with one another. The things that people use to fashion identities shift over time and I contend that the contemporary era impels people to think closely about their own identities with respect to the rest of the world (Hannerz, 1990; Kitaoka, 1999). This is why it has become so important to maintain 'Japanese identity' at the same time as embracing new 'internationalised identities'.

While identity can be strongly centred and reified, identity is also innately reflexive – constituted through what it is not (Giddens, 1991a; Hall, 1997:174). This is evident in food also, as there are few other areas where everyday products display and are imbued with such an apparent 'flavour' or identity of a culture or region. Ohnuki-Tierney (1994: 456-457) contends that Japanese identity has always been formed reflexively through discourse and comparison in contexts of intercultural interface (Kitaoka, 1999; Yoshino, 1998). Comparisons leading to distinctiveness are not clear-cut however. Each of the above authors acknowledges

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*
that identity incorporates a multiplicity of factors. I add that these factors may be contradictory and can appear, on the surface, to be mutually exclusive. How can Japanese people insist that their unequivocal 'Japaneseness' is maintained through a 'traditional' Japanese diet, when this diet actually incorporates little in the way of domestically produced ingredients and is based on foods that have been historically introduced from abroad? To address these inconsistencies and to gloss over issues of contradiction, people mobilise their identities selectively and contextually. This point will be explored further in this thesis.

I understand that while identity is amorphous, people are inclined to consider identity as objective in order to define themselves. Food and eating, widely thought among my informants to represent Japanese uniqueness, is one area that is important in defining identities. Befu (1993:107) notes that among the Japanese, discussions about what exactly constitutes Japanese identity are something of a national pastime (Kitaoka, Ito and Kanji, 1999). Indeed, many of my participants tend to see their identities as natural and constant. Essentialising identities, as Ruth Benedict (1946) does in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, assumes the Japanese possess a pervasive shared cultural identity (see Sökefeld, 1999:416). Many people do indeed see themselves as unequivocally Japanese and typical of the national population. Often this is raised in terms of 'Japanese' food consumption. As Giddens (1991b) suggests, people select from the array of available options what they wish to constitute their sense of identity. Food is a significant constituent based upon an ongoing tendency for people to affiliate with the kinds of food they consume (see Bourdieu, 1984). Within many inquiries into Japanese identity, food regularly arises as a cornerstone (Bestor, 2004; Cwiertka, 2002; 2006; Dale, 1986: 42-43; Goldstein-Gidoni, 2001; Hiroko, 2008; Krämer,

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale* 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993; 1999). I contend that this is because food allows people to experience what they commonly assume to be stable traditions, historical continuity, geographical connectedness, national character and authenticity².

The *Nihonjinron* (theories of the Japanese) school is centrally concerned with the variety of ways, both specific and general, that Japanese people, culture and society differs from others (see Benedict, 1946; Doi, 1973; Nakane, 1970). Among my informants 'Japaneseness' as a specific 'thing' or 'way' is a popular notion that I will demonstrate circulates around foodways. Japanese food is understood as emblematic of Japanese uniqueness and constitutive of 'authentic' identities. National cuisines are prime examples of collectives of signs and symbols used to convey national belongingness within everyday scenarios – what Billig (1995:93) terms 'banal nationalism'. Banal nationalism is present in many mundane everyday contexts and is rarely reflected upon consciously. I see national Japanese cuisine as a good example of an everyday representation of the nation because most Senri Yama residents have a clear sense of what Japanese food is and furthermore, relate its consumption with being Japanese. To account for this fact that essentialising identities is common, I treat identity as strategic, able to be deployed and consolidated. As Hall (1997:175) notes:

What is the point of an identity if it isn't one thing? That is why we keep hoping that identities will come our way: because the rest of the world is so confusing; everything else is turning, but identities ought to be some stable points of reference that were like that in the past, are now and ever shall be, still points in a turning world.

² A number of authors have explored the importance of tradition, authenticity, national character, historical continuity, nostalgia and geographical connectedness with regard to domestic Japanese tourism (Creighton, 1995; 1997; Ehrentraut, 1993; Hendry, 2003a), experiences of internationalisation (Robertson, 1997), rural revitalisation (Knight, 1994), consumer culture and commodities (Creighton, 1998; Francks, 2007; Knight 1998; Whitelaw, 2006) and nationalism and nation building (Cwiertka, 1998; 2002; 2005; Hiroko, 2008).

Hall's point is that identities are never stable, especially in an era of intense globalisation where a presumed link between national cultural identity and the nation state is dissolving (du Gay, Evans and Redman, 2000). Borders are highly permeable and contemporary urban lifestyles mean that a 'pure Japanese life', let alone 'pure Japanese' foodways, untrammelled by external influences is all but impossible. My informants' identities are flexible, as it is difficult to attach identity securely to a changing locale and its contents. For example, while the remaining Senri Yama farmland, a source of local produce, is important to local peoples' sense of identity, it is being rapidly urbanised and peoples' sense of localness must be flexible enough to deal with its probable disappearance. Bauman (1996: 18) notes that if the problem with identity during the modern era was with construction and stability, the postmodern problem lays in maintaining flexibility. Indeed, Japanese identity is described as contextual (see Erez and Earley, 1993: 132), however today the contexts from which identities arise are themselves shifting. Meyer and Geschiere (1999:10) note that "Precisely because identity is subject to constant reinterpretation and adaptation, it inspires a quest for unequivocal signs and for a purified 'true' identity." Identity is in continual process, never solidifying but constantly being reworked through processes of identification (Hall, 1996:16). Giddens (1991a) also treats identity as something continually worked upon – an account of a person's life that incorporates interpretation and outside influences rather than something objective and given. Thus, I argue that the stuff of diverse everyday foodways has the capacity to be incorporated into identities. Hall (1996: 17) sums up the current state of identity concisely:

... [I]dentities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and

positions. They are subject to a radical historicisation and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

Because identities change over time, I argue that identities are arranged according to shifting referents and factors³. Indeed, the kinds of identities based upon foodways are ever changing because foodways are also transforming based upon factors such as international trade, fashion, taste, cost and knowledge about nutrition, safety and production and cultivation methods.

Japan is intensely reliant, both historically and especially in the present, upon international influences of many kinds, and not least upon food. Various linguistic categories are used every day to categorise foods as either '*yō-shoku*' (Western influence food), '*esuniku*' (ethnic or foreign) or 'traditionally Japanese' food (*wa-shoku*). The reality of the situation is that no category is exclusive. Each category is riddled with contradictions and similarities that are more or less obvious and that can also be disguised. A seemingly authentic Japanese dish is possible using ingredients of international origin by selectively ignoring or veiling international sources by using domestic cooking techniques and flavourings. The kinds of food choices my informants make are more than simply choosing what to eat, where to eat and with whom. Seemingly contradictory identities can be created at different times for different purposes. For example, in chapter 3, I argue that the selection of locally grown vegetables reflects locals' interest in the maintenance of Senri Yama's historical traditions. Even within an increasingly internationalised locale, people feel it is important to maintain a sense of what it means to be a local Japanese person through traditional foods. Choosing local and traditional produce represents ties to the past as well as local land and thus to an imagination of an

³ Befu (1992) explores how referents of Japanese identity shifted markedly from those associated with the war effort and military nationalism to things that did not have warlike connotations (Ito, 2005). Food is one of these new referents.

intrinsically local cultural identity. I assert that the ephemeral nature of Senri Yama and its evolution from rural to urban as the reason why specifically local produce is so important to residents.

Identities are legitimated as uniquely Japanese by choosing authentic and traditional foods. While internationalisation and industrialisation have wrought extensive changes upon peoples' relationships with food and eating, there has also been a nostalgic turn that encourages people to use food as a means to experience and consume the past and its tradition and authenticity (see Ehrentraut, 1993; Creighton, 1997; Knight, 1994; 1998; Robertson, 1998; Sutton, 2001; Tam, 2001). Cwiertka (1998: 126) concurs with this view:

Hobsbawm (1983) sees the contrast between the constant changes and innovations of the modern world, and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, as one of the reasons for inventing traditions. This mechanism was partly responsible for the creation of Japanese modern "traditions", as Japan underwent a rapid economical, political, cultural and social transformation within the past century.

Tradition appeals to people's sense of the timeless and implies the possibility of identities that can be grounded in historical significance. Traditional foods represent something immutable, the 'heart of Japan'. Such foods and the practices associated with them such as their methods of production or sale lend them a sense of the romantic (Pratt; 2001). I link these perceptions of authenticity to Hobsbawm's (1983) 'invention of tradition' as people attempt to identify with supposedly historically continuous representations of community and tradition.

Rooms Within Rooms: Food and Identity in the Global Context

This thesis is an examination of globalisation at the local level. While located within a specific locale I recognise that local places cannot be conceptualised as separate enclaves within the wider global system (Hannerz, 1990: 237). There are a multitude of interconnections that take place between Senri Yama and the international world. This interpenetration of the global and local is especially apparent in everyday food habits (Philips, 2006:38).

Hannerz (1996:131), echoing Gupta and Fergusson (1992:9), recognises that in the contemporary world of transnational connections, cultural goods such as food and culinary knowledge, can travel without the movement of actual populations. This results in the development of 'cultural marketplaces', especially within 'world cities' like Osaka (Hannerz, 1996:139). Global interconnectivity allows people to transcend the local through their consumption choices in order to live and experience wider contexts (Cook et al., 2006; Cook, 2008). I argue that the consumption of international cuisine and *yō-shoku* are ways of fashioning modern identities within the locale in relation to, and influenced by, 'external' sources (see Baudrillard, 1981; Sugishita, 2008; Yan, 1997). Mathews (2000) invokes the metaphor of the supermarket as a valuable way of understanding how citizens of especially post-industrial nations like Japan fashion their identities. As foods and cultures from throughout the world become increasingly available to my informants, they have more opportunity to choose from and identify with the foods of different societies and places (see Appadurai, 1996; Ashkenazi and Jacob, 2000; Beardsworth and Keil, 1997; Bestor, 2004; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1999). Senri Yama residents eat a variety of locally grown, domestically produced and internationally imported foods and each of these have distinct meanings and connotations for how

identity is articulated. While explicitly privileging localness in their food choices and habits, my informants are also highly sophisticated cosmopolitans selecting food from the global supermarket. This is evident in the popularity of diverse international cuisines both within the home and outside (Bestor, 2004:160-161). Even commonplace, everyday meals are typically influenced or produced using the products of international trade and culinary influence.

Hannerz (2003:203) considers local areas and the everyday goings on within them as sites of “globalisation at work”. Despite the impact of the wider world and the increasingly problematised boundaries between places, local places are still important to people. Within this thesis I will show how maintaining distinctions between the local and elsewhere, through food, contributes to the maintenance of peoples’ identities. I recognise ‘local communities’ as something of a misnomer. Like identities, local communities are imagined to be distinct and natural. Gupta and Fergusson (1992:7) recognise that there is a tendency for people, not least anthropologists, to unproblematically map cultures onto physical places (Hannerz, 1996:127). Often these are nations and regions within which certain ‘local’ societies are supposed to exist. Understanding the inherently porous barrier between local places and the rest of the world circumvents the kinds of problems analysts face when studying ‘cultures’. Appadurai (1990: 196) poses the question ‘[w]hat is the nature of locality, as a lived experience, in a globalised, deterritorialised world?’ Indeed as Clifford (1988:275) states, notions of the “native land” have become increasingly indistinct. Senri Yama, like the rest of Japan, possesses an almost entirely Japanese population. However, Senri Yama’s population can be described as ‘local’ only insofar as they live, in one sense, within the same geographic area. Peoples’ lives, however, are by not restricted to one place.

Senri Yama is a globally interconnected place suffused with products, people and practices that refuse to “stay put” (Gupta and Fergusson, 1992:9). Like its geographical boundaries, the edges of the locale are indistinct. For my informants’ families that had historically lived in Senri Yama, it is not that home is elsewhere, it is that home is continually shifting around them. Ohnuki-Tierney (1999:246) notes that within Japan:

Japanese cuisine (*wa-shoku*) has made a tremendous comeback precisely because of what Japan is undergoing as the result of the dynamics of global geopolitics that have created an urgent need to redefine its national identity. The world-wide phenomenon of ethnic or cultural revivals must be seen as the presentation and representation of the self, using food as a metaphor of self, when social identity must be reinforced or redefined. The resultant cuisine is always a hybrid, like all “traditional” Japanese dishes. (Brackets in original)

This quotation highlights two important aspects of globalisation in Japan. One is that globalising forces have been at work for some time and have resulted in a “traditional” cuisine that incorporates ingredients and elements from abroad. The other is that processes of globalisation encourage people to think about their identities and that food and eating are important constitutive tools in the fashioning of identity within the context of the global system.

Local places are not the powerless recipients of global goods, as the influx of international influences does not go unmediated. I emphasise the usefulness of the term ‘glocalisation’ in contemporary discussions of globalisation as it recognises the simultaneous nature of universalising and particularising propensities throughout the world (see Robertson, 1992). Wilk’s (1995; 1999) work emphasises this point extremely well. In the contemporary world, people from diverse places continue to demonstrate not only marked difference in indigenous culture and practice but also in the ways that they incorporate globally disseminated things,

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*
practices and ideas into daily life. Wilk (1999:244) notes that globalisation has the power to emphasise the differences between places. This is highly relevant to the contemporary situation in Japan (Welch, 1999). Globalisation is generated and mediated by and from multiple locations around the world (see Appadurai, 1990; 1996; 2000; Robertson, 1992). Foundational to this thesis is the understanding that the global/local binary is outmoded. This is summed up well by Tsing (2000: 353):

...the cultural processes of all “place” making and all “force” making are *both* local and global, that is, both socially and culturally particular and productive of widely spreading interactions. (Italics in original)

Hendry (2003b) notes that a particularity of Japanese identity is that it is established through the creative amalgamation and adaptation of outside influences to suit domestic conditions. Japan exhibits a particular tendency to absorb difference in its incorporation of the diverse contents of global flow in order to maintain a cohesive cultural identity (Robertson, 1998:102; Cox, 2008:4-5; Tobin, 1994). In this conception, ‘otherness’ is normalised through incorporation into the domestic sphere in ways that speak less about foreign cultures than it does about domestic understandings of them. In a similar way, this thesis looks at how my informants incorporate and utilise both local international foods to learn more about how they conceive of themselves within their globalising local world.

Where in the World? : Locating the Locale

Senri Yama is a small district located within a larger municipal ‘bed-town’ largely populated by commuters who work in the centre of Osaka. Senri Yama is an ambiguous and transitional zone, occupying a liminal niche between urban and rural states. Within the district the natural and the technological, the domestic and

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*

cosmopolitan, the traditional and modern, the local and the international each coexist in mutually constitutive ambivalence. Several decades ago, before Osaka's urban sprawl largely erased the separateness of locales, Senri Yama contained a small town centre surrounded by farmland. My informant group is partly made up of people who still work the remaining land and by families who are descended from those who once owned the land within the district. These informants consume foods that are grown locally; this is unusual among contemporary urban Japanese. Bestor's (1989) ethnography reveals that within contemporary Japan's suburban neighbourhoods, some practices still follow patterns reminiscent of the traditional, pre-industrial village. Bestor (1989:10) explains this "traditionalism" as central to contemporary Japanese responses to social change; residents invoke idealised historical/traditional practices in order to legitimate and mask the present fluidity and changing face and experience of the contemporary Japanese social world.

The Kansai region, where Osaka is located, is the nation's second most populated urban region after the Tokyo area. Osaka's enormous area is broken up into many separate wards and cities with Senri Yama located approximately 15km from central Osaka. The locale is bordered by a large, mountainous national park that marks one edge of the Kansai plain. Residentially, Senri Yama contains no large apartment blocks, though they do exist along the main roads nearby. Within Senri Yama there are old town and farm houses, dilapidated ramshackle buildings, small, inexpensive apartment complexes and larger Western-influence houses. Some large businesses line the main roads while backstreets are typically the home of family-operated establishments. Along an ancient road to Kyoto many venerable Japanese-style houses stand, many with substantial vegetable gardens. A number of these are

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*
historically significant and protected from developments that mean the destruction of other old houses (Harootunian, 2001).

Inquisitive Observation and Methodology

The data discussed in this thesis is from fieldwork carried out over a 12-month period in 2007. I use data primarily from within Senri Yama and also supplementary data from other areas within the Kansai region⁴. All of my informants live in Kansai and are residents of inner city, urban and semi-rural areas of Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe and Nara districts. Eight families and four individuals form the core of my informant group and the majority of these informants reside within Senri Yama. Half of the families in my research are descendents of families who have lived in Senri Yama for many generations.

I find Bestor's (2003:317) term 'inquisitive observation' most appropriate in recognition of the fact that anthropologists can seldom claim to be true participants within the societies they study. In this thesis, I report upon my observations and inquiries within homes, businesses, restaurants, shops and a number of public places within Senri Yama and Kansai. I also rely upon verbal and written reports from in-depth, semi-structured interviews as well as diaries and other textual data received from informants, their families, friends and acquaintances. Arnould and Wallendorf (1994:493) note that verbal and written reports represent "perspectives of action" while participant observation allows the consideration of "perspectives in action". This distinction is important, as informants' explanations and practices around food and identity are often contradictory and contextual. Inquisitive observation is therefore useful in order to gain realistic impressions of

⁴ The Kansai region contains several important prefectures (Osaka, Kyoto, Nara, Hyōgo, Shiga and Wakayama) and lays South-West of Tokyo on the central island of Honshū. The region has an important place in the history of Japan as the seat of many original capitals.

everyday activities that are often taken for granted. I use interviews and diaries to clarify the information assembled through observation.

Hendry's (2003a) insight into Japanese culture and society are most valuable and analogous to my own understandings of Japanese society and her comprehensive volume *Understanding Japanese Society* is a helpful and illuminating overview of many aspects of Japanese culture and society. Hendry's (1999) *An Anthropologist in Japan: Glimpses of Life in the Field* stresses the importance of the windfalls of impromptu events and encounters during fieldwork. This perspective influences decisions in my own work to follow certain paths and opportunities as they present themselves (Hendry, 2003b). I recognise that my informant group itself is comprised of individuals and families I encountered serendipitously. In this way, my fieldwork methodology informs the theoretical underpinning of my work as both privilege the ephemeral and the contextual. There can be no encompassing Japanese worldview, and I recognise that other Japanese may not share the perspectives I convey within this thesis in the same ways, if at all. Furthermore, I must also concede that the views of my informants have been passed through a filter and as such, my assertions, as close to those of my informants as I have tried to make them, must be regarded as my personal understandings as an individual and an anthropologist.

Each of the chapters that follow deal with the ways that food and identities intersect in everyday life as lived within the contemporary Japanese global locale. Identity and food are caught up in issues of spatiality. As Bell and Valentine (1997) suggest, 'we are where we eat' (Cook and Crang, 1996; Lockie, 2001; Philips, 2006). I consider location to be a pre-eminent factor in the arena of foodways as food choices have a great capacity for the articulation of identity

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*

at the local, regional, national and global-cosmopolitan level (Crouch and O'Neil, 2000). For the most part, my focus is upon simple everyday practices and the minutiae of daily life rather than upon spectacular rituals or occasions. In chapter 2, I describe common everyday dealings with food among my informants to examine the various kinds of food choices that are available in Senri Yama and look at some of the common 'traditional' and contemporary ways of food provision and preparation in Senri Yama.

This chapter focuses upon food habits both within and outside the home and looks at some common everyday meals to inquire into the fashioning of identities among my informants. Foodways in Senri Yama are marked by a wealth of diverse foods and ways of obtaining food. Nearby restaurants and public eateries, food shops and supermarkets are testimony to the contemporary profusion of public eating and modern food provision avenues in Japan. Many people, especially those who work and people of younger generations, eat a considerable proportion of meals outside the home.

Chapter 3 is concerned with how locally grown and produced foods are used by my informants in everyday practices that affirm a sense of defined identity. Locally foraged foods and the perceived traditional and historical practices surrounding this food provoke imaginative experiences of identity as connected to the area. Local people are involved with each other and with the land itself in ways that they perceive to pre-date the contemporary period. The apparent transparency of locally farmed food confers a greater sense of trust and safety for the local customer. Within Senri Yama, traditional practices such as farming, produce trading, the production of traditional foods and foraging for wild foods establish a sense of local pride among my informants. Robertson (1991:176) advances the

notion of 'nostalgic praxis' to explain how the cultural construction of community identity and distinctiveness is encouraged by present-day recourse to the past (Robertson, 1998). Robertson's (1991) account focuses upon how the Japanese government is involved in *urusato-zukuri* (creating hometowns) in a bid to popularise neighbourhood cultural nationalism by encouraging residents to identify with an idealised local history. Bestor (1989:2) notes that relationships within Japanese neighbourhoods are based upon residents' supposition that theirs is a distinct place held together by intrinsically local and cultural practices and senses of community. Identities are thus partly constituted by peoples' involvement in local matters and particularly in the case of my informants, involvement in the growing, selling, trading and consumption of produce. Cook and Crang (1996) among others (Urry, 2000) may have focused upon the attenuation of peoples' connections with the diverse global origins of their food, but as I find within my field site, it is through food that people maintain connections with local people and places. This chapter also examines how 'authentic' local produce conveys senses of value and tradition that privilege the historic over the new.

In chapter 4 I look more closely at how the foodways of my informants and food in Japan contribute to the construction of a 'national cuisine'. In this chapter I also enquire into how foods and dishes become standardised and how this is involved in the creation of senses of Japaneseness. Japanese national cuisine is used by people in Senri Yama to articulate their belonging to the nation and to endorse the uniqueness of Japan. I argue that this is spurred on by the increased presence of international foods and practices and the dissolution of the distinctiveness between local and regional places.

Chapter 5 returns to the themes of nostalgia and historicity to consider how dining experiences that involve nostalgia and 'authenticity' operate as a means of experiencing historically continuous and 'authentic' ways of identifying. This chapter explores the importance of notions of tradition and authenticity as well as the widely held beliefs of Japaneseness as something contingent upon foods and food practices. Within this chapter I investigate how elements from the past come to be appropriated and simulated in the present to fulfil peoples' desires to associate themselves with a timeless and therefore legitimate Japanese identity. This chapter also discusses Japanese food as a national cuisine, an important cultural artefact that carries with it elements of national belonging and uniqueness.

At the same time as recapturing the past, my informants also use internationally mobile foods to fashion their identities variously as global cosmopolitans. Chapter 6 focuses upon how globalisation is an appreciable feature in the lives of those who made up my local community. Bestor's recent work (2001; 2004; 2005; 2006) elucidates the sheer depth of Japan's global interconnections, specifically from a point of view that considers the international seafood trade and how it centres upon Tokyo's massive fish market. Instead of following commodities as they travel long distances from producers to consumers, the scope of the sixth chapter focuses upon how local people use international foods in the process of everyday identity. I propose that contemporary experiences and sentiments of globalisation, modernisation and hybridisation are wrought and expressed through peoples' involvement with food in everyday life. I also discuss how foreign foods are themselves incorporated into everyday diets and effectively re-emplaced within Japanese cuisine. A number of studies have addressed the global movement of food in relation to how food is variously appropriated and incorporated by recipient

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*
communities (Miller, 2002; Wu, 1997; Yan, 1997). Cwiertka (1998, 2002 and 2006) discusses how Western foods were introduced and popularised by the Japanese government and a number of these foods have become widely perceived as Japanese culinary traditions (Edwards, 1982). These examples raise questions of cultural ownership (Allen and Sakamoto, 2006:3). Allen and Sakamoto (2006:3) explain that:

...the production and consumption of each cultural product takes place both inside *and/or* outside...at the conjunction of multiple forces and cultural influences...there are many 'insides' ('localities') and many more 'outsides' ('extralocalities') which informs ...production and consumption. (Italics, quotation marks and brackets in original)

I use this notion in chapter 6 to explain how foreign foods are reworked within Japan to suit domestic uses and tastes. This process, I posit, is how Japanese people come to terms with the unproblematic incorporation of global foods and other flows in their everyday lives.

Yō-shoku and other adaptations of international cuisine, as Japanese adaptations of Western food and the cuisines of others illustrate this notion perfectly. *Yō-shoku* and *esuniku* food is enjoyed as an internationalised alternative to Japanese *wa-shoku* without going 'all the way' and including all the elements of foreign food that make it different from Japanese food. This conceptual divide between Japanese and 'foreign' is extremely important to my informants, as it is upon this binary that they base their everyday understandings of being Japanese.

Chapter 7 provides a counterpoint to the optimistic view of globalisation in the previous chapter, on the understanding that global flows are rarely without incident (Tsing; 2000:339). The study of global interconnection is as much about paying attention to where flows do not progress smoothly in particular societies and locales as it is about inspecting globalisation's capacity as a seamless

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*
transnational interface. Tensions between global regions may be expressed in the kinds of flows that fail to occur between them and also in the tensions that arise from the flows that do. This chapter discusses instances where anxiety and suspicion arise around particular imported foods. I discuss how feelings of mistrust and scepticism are often associated with foods that are imported from overseas and how this impacts upon the daily lives of my informants. In this chapter I also explore how similar sentiments of mistrust and concern have also sprung up around even domestically produced foods and how this reflects peoples' growing apprehension regarding unfamiliar, new and attenuated food production practices. This chapter shows how a perceived level of trust and transparency associated with local foods is integral to peoples' support of local foods.

This thesis seeks to add ethnographic detail to contemporary understandings of Japanese urban places and of the people living within them. Throughout this thesis I report on work conducted in Senri Yama – from talking with neighbours in their gardens, in shops and homes and between these places. I refer to home-cooked meals and a good many outside the home. Data for this thesis has been gathered from wandering the streets, shopping centres and markets. From speaking to shop owners and farmers, fishing and helping to harvest, tend and plant vegetables and fruit, sloshing about in rice paddies and trudging with informants along mountain paths. Osaka is suffused with bars, family restaurants, clubs, shrines, temples, late-night noodle joints, exclusive restaurants, kerbs, back-alley yaki-tori-ya (fried chicken restaurants/stands), fast-food establishments and subterranean gourmet havens. In all of these places food, as such an important part of everyday life, is in some way or another involved. Identity too, is a prominent issue, as my informants and acquaintances are often themselves concerned with

1: *Food and Identity in the Global Locale*

portraying to me their particular experiences and understandings of who they are within the contemporary world.

Chapter2: Common Foodways and Everyday Identities

Food and eating is more than the simple desire for sustenance. As Fischler (1988: 276) posits,

...[S]ocially constructed norms and representations become internalised, inscribed... in taste buds and metabolisms.

Identities and relationships of both individuals and groups arise through food and eating practices and the socio-cultural meanings ascribed to these. Food is both sign and signifier within the particular everyday cultures in which they are consumed. As Douglas (1972:61) asserts, food is a system of communication within and between societies and individuals. Food is a social object that is incorporated into social life through consumption practices and these practices are themselves invested with markers of distinction and meaning (see Barthes 1982; Bestor, 2004; Bourdieu, 1984). Different societies and their smaller sub-groups differentiate themselves through their different foods and ways of eating. Summarily, food choice is a significant way to fashion, act and present particular identities within a variety of contexts. Understanding the significance of foodways in Japanese peoples' everyday lives elucidates the various social contexts of consumption and the daily practices of individual and family identity.

Identity performance is evident within contemporary consumption and lifestyle choices (Featherstone, 1991; Firat, 1999; Thompson and Hirschman, 1999:403). My perspective is that this understanding neatly circumvents falsely essentialist approaches to identity by recognising that contemporary consumer culture provides people with diverse arrays of consumption options from which to shape identities. People can portray multiple identities at different times that may

be internationalised, traditional, fashionable, gender normative or aberrant.

Identity, as I stated in my introductory chapter, is fluid, temporal and contextual. A further recognition is that like consumer behaviour, food locates people within particular categories of identity not of their own making. So while I will explain how Senri Yama residents use food for the purposes of creating identities, many identities that are taken up, such as the dutiful mother, the busy salaryman or the fashion-conscious young woman, are not unique.

Anthropology tends to assume that individual and social behaviour follows specific patterns constrained and adapted by influences such as cultural standards, economic factors and political concerns (Douglas, 1966). One finds the combined influences of each of these factors and more reflected in foodways. Daily food choices are underpinned by multifarious considerations of cost, nutrition, safety, convenience, sociality, tradition, social distinction, individual and cultural taste, availability and cosmopolitan desires. Thus, food choice reflects a highly significant relationship between food and people as food is incorporated into everyday life.

This chapter explores both the home and public places as sites of consumption by focusing upon the social context of food consumption and the emplaced, everyday practices of individual and household identity within a range of homes and contexts in and around Senri Yama. My discussion includes nuclear families with teenage children, single households and 'traditional' multi-generational households made up of adults and children of different generations who live together but lead quite separate lives. This chapter provides several short case studies of different households and individuals but is not intended to provide a conclusive picture of the 'Japanese household' in a general sense. Instead of focusing on 'general' household patterns, this chapter seeks to provide a more

nuanced account of some of the multifaceted ways that foodways and identity coincide in different everyday lives. The cases I draw upon are presented to depict certain practices and as such cannot give an exhaustive picture of each household's situation and experience. Firstly I will discuss female gender roles and then move on to some instances of food provision both within and outside the home.

Managing Home and Identity with Food

This chapter provides a general introduction to food consumption among my informants within and outside the home. Home and family, for many Senri Yama residents, are central in everyday life. The home is where people rest, relax, play and eat, and, for many, family members are the most important social relations. Within Japan, despite the expected historical and regional variations, the family has historically been of central importance to both identity and the social system. The 'family system' influences many aspects of Japanese life. Indeed, many scholars arguing for Japanese uniqueness assert that the Japanese family system and ideology is a critical marker of cultural distinctiveness. However, to characterise Japanese society as consisting of tight-knit family groups obfuscates the fact that contemporary Japan contains a variety of household styles (Hashimoto and Traphagan, 2008). The living situations of my informants reflect this diversity of possible living arrangements. In the majority of families it is exceedingly rare for all members to be at home at one time. Work on food in everyday life must provide a broader inquiry into new household forms that have become widespread in Japan as traditional family structures give way to modern nuclear families, single parent households, stay-at-home adult children and single young people (Nishioka et al, 2010). It is surprising to note that, notwithstanding the diverse and multifaceted

2: Common Foodways and Everyday Identities

nature of the modern household in Japan, the rise of the single-person household has eluded sustained inquiry. Many young people live alone and are solely responsible for their own food choices and habits. Likewise, when people living in a family situation miss out on meals in the home, they are of course, getting their meals either alone or with others elsewhere. The household is thus not an isolated site of food consumption, but one whose members regularly eat elsewhere.

Home-cooked meals are an important element of home and family life and women who do cook, especially those with husbands and children, explain the value of cooking as a way of representing not only their own identities, but also those of their families. Eating meals together confirms and promotes family relations, however, families with working adults are often unable to take regular meals together. As one working mother explains:

I do really want to get home every night to cook dinner for my family. I feel bad when I don't...but now my children are older they are usually busy with club activities after school. Even so, I want to be able to come home and cook for them and my husband so we can all sit together and eat and talk about the day. I think, when we do get time to do this, it is a very important way of feeling close to each other as a family.

Family meals, when possible, unify families and strengthen peoples' sense of familial identity by affirming members' sense of connection with one another through not only the social interaction that eating together affords, but also by imbibing the same dishes. Eating together as a family affirms the central importance of the family in the lives of its members and also perpetuates peoples' perception that Japanese society is made up of family units. While many informants express that families and the importance of families are a critical aspect of Japanese society, it should be noted that the actual number of families, in the traditional sense, are in decline; many people live alone or cohabitate with

partners. This is why the family is such an important factor relating to identity for those in Senri Yama who do still live with or close to kin. Reflecting upon the fact that shared, home-cooked meals have in recent years become increasingly rare in Japanese households and have been replaced with pre-prepared meals, Hachiko, a middle-aged housewife says “I really feel sorry for those people. Eating this way would be very lonely.” This reveals a common supposition that many young people lack the social and familial support and sense of belonging that previous generations enjoyed. Reflecting upon today’s widespread eschewal of cooking, Hachiko explains that:

These people might be very lonely when they get older...They will wish they had learned to cook when they were young. When they want to settle down in a home, maybe they will realise that they don’t have the skills they need.

Hachiko’s opinion concurs with those of other, often middle-aged or older women, who also see young peoples’ departure from the kitchen as indicative of the demise of erstwhile traditional household structures that many older people regard as emblematic of Japanese society. The ways that food is produced, procured and prepared is integral to peoples’ perceptions. Fast-food and convenience food represent modern lifestyles and attenuated family relationships while communal meals represent the continuation of what people understand as traditional family life, despite modern responsibilities and influences. In practice, most people and families integrate food practices that are both modern or international and traditional. That is, people tend to consume an assortment of traditional foods and modern dishes depending upon context, occasion and preference. Because of this, a precise distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘international’ becomes problematic. Both categories overlap and influence one another, particularly with regard to ingredients, cooking and presentation methods and flavours.

2: Common Foodways and Everyday Identities

In many societies, it is women who are most closely involved with food provision, especially in the home. The households in Senri Yama are no exception and it is generally taken for granted that it is a woman's task to cook for both men and children. Few married men cook meals at home. For those that do, it is a special occasion such as for their partners' birthday or as a treat. Even men who live alone tend not to cook for themselves and instead eat with friends or colleagues or purchase pre-prepared meals. Following Charles and Kerr (1988:1), I see women's relationships with foodways as integral to any inquiry into food habits in general. Within Senri Yama – and I would expect the same could be said for other places in Japan – women are largely responsible for most households' food needs (Holloway, 2010:99). Because of this, food provision and eating are fundamental touch-stones of personal and social identity for many women, because it is through the provision of food and its consumption that women shape and express their own identities, as well as those of their families. Goldstein-Gidoni (2005) notes that Japanese women are particularly responsible for maintaining the society's 'traditional' identity. I reason that this assertion is intrinsically linked with women's prominent involvement with the provision of food and in particular, food that is widely considered to be emblematic of Japanese cultural distinctiveness. I will explore the definition of such foods further in chapter 4. Women can embrace or resist the task and identity of guardian and perpetuator of 'traditional' identity by accepting, rejecting or modifying cooking duties in the home. Many young women use food to perform fashionable cosmopolitan identities. This is achieved by circumventing the common expectation to learn to cook and eat Japanese food by instead becoming knowledgeable about and consuming international foods.

Some young women refuse to cook at all and either rely upon their mothers to cook for them or upon premade foods and restaurants.

As providers and cooks, women are not only responsible for their own identities through foodways, but also those of their families. While not exclusively located in the home, Allison's (1991 and 2000) work, which partly focuses upon Japanese mothers' creation of lunch boxes (*ōbento*) for their young children, emphasises how the practice of preparing nutritious and aesthetically appealing meals for children perpetuates and endorses particular understandings of the importance of 'proper' Japanese food as fresh, natural and home-made. These *ōbento* travel with children from home out into the social world as reminders of the home and mothers' love and nurturance. Allison (1991: 196) understands *ōbento* to reproduce feminine roles as food providers and carers of children and childrens' roles as obedient, socially cohesive members of society. Allison (1991 and 2000) concludes that *ōbento* are a part of the ideological indoctrination of both children and mothers into Japanese society. Food is thus important in the preserving and reinforcing social ideologies and values. From my own observations of female university students and workers who make *ōbento* for themselves, *ōbento* making is understood as practice for a future role as a housewife and mother.

Young women who cook for themselves and others are proud of their skills and see them as valuable markers of their own personal identities as well as their affiliation with a social identity as Japanese (Holloway, 2010: 57). However, women are also able to resist homemaker roles. For other young women who do not aspire to becoming wives or mothers, at least in the near future, making *ōbento* can be ridiculed as denoting meekness and a lack of ambition to assert an individual self-identity. To young women who avoid food preparation, women that embrace roles

2: *Common Foodways and Everyday Identities*

as food-providers are subscribing to an identity that they see as antithetical to modern, cosmopolitan identities. These young women assert that their avoidance of food preparation demonstrates a desire to forego what they see as outmoded gender expectations and to challenge widely held views on female roles in both the home and society at large.

While domestic food choices may be largely dependent upon traditional gender roles, the state is also intimately involved in peoples' food habits and choices. While many pre-prepared convenience foods are available in supermarkets to cater for busy meal providers, home-cooked foods are widely regarded as 'real food', nutritionally, and as qualitatively superior to pre-made foods. The Japanese state's concern with nutrition has a long history; it established the world's first nutritional institute almost a century ago, in 1914 (Melby, 2008: 394). The goal of what was then called The Imperial State Institution of Health and Nutrition and its founder, Dr. Tadasu Saiki, was to establish and implement widespread dietary change within Japan, which began with recommendations to reduce rice consumption and the promotion of meat, which until then, occupied only a marginal place in most peoples' diets (Melby, 2008: 394). Melby (2008:395) notes that two of the first nutritional programs popularised in Japanese society by institute graduates were cooking classes teaching the use of European-style fry pan cookery and how to cook with meat, wheat flour, dairy products and eggs, all recent additions to the Japanese diet. Today, the Japanese government is still actively involved in the nutrition and dietary habits of its people. In 2005, the *Shokuiku* (food and eating education) act introduced new nutritional guides for the Japanese community as well as food industries, schools and companies. In these new nutritional guidelines, rice and other cereals have once again become

prominent components of a health diet, while meat, dairy and fats have been drastically downgraded to occasional foods. Another prominent thrust of the *shokuiku* act is the promotion of family meals based on the notion that eating home-cooked meals as a family encourages healthy diets (Adachi, 2008: 180). Many western inspired dishes contain meat, sugar and fat in high quantities, so it is for this reason that the dietary guidelines now in place have also come along with the promotion of what is widely regarded to be a 'traditional' Japanese diet, which places rice and vegetables as the central ingredients.

As I noted earlier, with reference to Allison's (1991) work, top-down directives encourage women to be proficient home-cooks and to be especially mindful of their family's diets. Homemakers are thus pressured to cook at least part of a meal. One problem for home-cooks, is that they must accommodate the tastes of their partners and children. Housewives complain that they must cater to other's tastes over their own and buy foods that they do not necessarily enjoy themselves. For instance, women rarely cite meat as a favourite food and often prefer fish and vegetables. Housewives can preserve harmonious domestic life by catering to the tastes of their husbands and children. As one local woman with a small family in her mid-thirties, explains:

Making my family happy is maybe more important to me than making healthy food all the time. I would prefer to eat different foods, but because it makes my husband and children happy to have other dishes with meat and cheese and stronger foods, I often make them instead... Sometimes I will cook different food for myself if really don't want that kind of food.

For women like Iwami-san, balancing external pressure to follow nutritional directives, their family's food preferences and their own time constraints to cook to can be bothersome, especially because children and men regularly prefer meat,

sweet foods and snack foods high in sugar and fat over what is promoted as healthy, such as rice and vegetables.

Consumption practices within the home and food provision roles

As a site of individual and also collective consumption, the home is perhaps the most basic location to study the relationship between people and food. Food is central to the construction of individual identities within families and is especially evident in the conciliation of gender roles and relationships. Within Senri Yama, common understandings of the modern family foreground the notion that families generally take the majority of their meals together and abide by the same tastes and eating patterns and practices. Familial eating practices imply that members of a household are unified as a single unit of consumption. This is often to the detriment of complex intra-household practices, lifestyles and identities that directly affect food and eating choices and habits. As Douglas (1971:64) notes, due to the many factors affecting household foodways, it is likely that almost every household possesses vastly different approaches to food and eating. An accurate understanding of the home as a site of consumption thus requires attention to processes of difference, negotiation and decision-making.

The elderly are centrally involved in the foodways of some Senri Yama families. In the larger, 'traditional' households of almost half of my informants, the paternal parents often live under the same roof and tend vegetable gardens or fields that contribute to the family's diet⁵. Historically, Japanese households are made up of three or more generations living together (Thang, 2002: 157). Negotiations between these householders, particularly elderly parents, children

⁵ I, along with Kumagai (2008), recognise that contemporary Japanese families incorporate both elements that are understood as 'traditional' and modern.

2: Common Foodways and Everyday Identities

and stay-at-home adults, influence domestic foodways and therefore the identities of household members.

Michiko Sasagawa is a member of what I and many Senri Yama residents consider a traditional household: several generations consisting of her husband and his parents, her son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Other relatives also live close by. Michiko wakes very early each morning to prepare a Japanese style breakfast for the entire family. This commonly consists of rice, grilled fish, a number of vegetable and tofu dishes as well as rolled omelette and fresh fruit. Michiko takes pride in this activity, considering it her responsibility because Sachiko, her daughter-in-law, works and does not have the time. Michiko understands Sachiko's responsibilities and does not feel presumed upon, enjoying her role as the morning food provider. By making breakfast for everyone Michiko expresses her identity as a caring mother for her son and his family. Her efforts also provide traditional breakfast foods that allow the rest of the family to experience a shared sense of Japanese cultural identity. As Michiko remarks:

Things have changed a lot, Sachiko is a busy woman and doesn't have time to make breakfast. Because I am up early every day anyway, I don't mind making breakfast for everyone. I would say that I enjoy it, it means we can all sit together before everyone leaves...it makes a closer feeling in the house.

Sachiko appreciates Michiko's help in the home, and unlike some other local women who live with their mother-in-law, does not feel pressured by Michiko to take over the role as the family's sole food provider. Because of Michiko's domestic support, Sachiko is able to maintain her own role as a working woman rather than having to shop for food and cook daily. Michiko demonstrates love and care for her family by providing a nutritious breakfast that she considers 'proper' food as opposed to the now widespread, non-traditional 'Western-style' breakfast. Many

2: *Common Foodways and Everyday Identities*

informants eat Western-style breakfasts because it is convenient and easy to prepare and more appropriate for quick, solitary dining. Conversely, Japanese-style breakfasts allow the whole family to sit together, even if briefly, before going to their various daily activities. Because other members of the family often arrive home late on weekdays, breakfast is, uncommonly for most families, the only time that everyone is able to be together regularly. Kunihiko, Sachiko's husband, often eats with colleagues after work, while Sachiko is often home earlier to eat with her daughter and parents-in-law. Michiko's own parents-in-law often eat dinner separately from the rest of the family because they prefer to eat earlier. Michiko also cooks this meal for her husband Goro's parents and sometimes eats with them rather than waiting for Sachiko to return home to cook.

I argue that Michiko represents the identity of the 'good wife and wise mother' (*ryosai kenbo*), a term that still arises in parlance about Japanese women who possess desirable domestic traditional feminine traits⁶. Many young women are familiar with the term and use it to jokingly label what they wish to avoid becoming. While Michiko does not reflect upon this consciously herself, Sachiko comments that:

My mother in-law is a typical Japanese woman...Maybe not a modern Japanese woman, but really Japanese, traditionally Japanese. She always thinks of everyone else first, and her cooking breakfast everyday shows that.

McVeigh (2004: 220) notes that the representation of the good wife and wise mother is a guardian of Japanese tradition and a pillar of family life. Michiko's

⁶ This term was coined by Nakamura Masanao in 1875 (Seivers, 1983: 22). Traits that the good wife and wise mother possess are gentleness, subservience to her husband and family, grace and proficiency in the domestic spheres of cooking, cleaning and managing a household. Koyama (1991: 4-8) and Nakajima (1984:101-5), while disagreeing on a few points, note that the term *ryosai kenbo* arose from both Confucian and Western influences regarding gender ideologies and womens' roles in the home, workforce and education.

efforts do indeed engender a close family household with a distinctively traditional feel. Michiko's work maintains this through the ongoing cementing of family relationships, the maintenance of erstwhile gender roles and its continuity with a traditional culinary past. In Michiko's words:

I want my family to be able to eat together because it maintains close bonds. With so many people living in this house, we have to all get along. If we can share meals together then that helps everyone.

Mackie (2003: 28) and Roberts (2005: 114) note that while the gendered identity of the Japanese housewife technically preceded the war, both the archetype of the masculine salaryman and the feminine housewife have become cemented in the post-war era. Mackie (2003: 200) also details that the rice-serving paddle (*shamoji*) is the symbol of the old Japanese Housewives association, and reinforces the association of rice, the Japanese staple, with food-provision and women's identities. The *shamoji* is also historically the symbol of the female head of the family or *shufu*, also meaning housewife (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993: 95). While the *shamoji* has become less symbolically powerful, it is often an important family heirloom, passed from mother to daughter or from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law. Interestingly, the Sasagawas possess two heirloom *shamoji*: Michiko's that she uses to serve the breakfast rice and Sachiko's that is used for family dinners. When I ask if this means that there are two female heads of the family, both Sachiko and Michiko laugh and comment that maybe it is so. Without Michiko's help, Sachiko comments:

Our family would not have time to do this. I and my husband have to get to work early and my daughter to school. I don't have time to make breakfast for everyone. We don't always have time to have dinner together, so I really am grateful to Michiko.

2: Common Foodways and Everyday Identities

Outside the home at school and work, family members present other identities through their consumption habits. Michiko regularly takes tea with friends and neighbours in the local area and Sachiko lunches with colleagues and friends in the inner city. Yuki eats at the school canteen and also often has snacks after school with friends at local convenience stores or at the train station. One important fact to also consider is that Goro tends a productive vegetable garden that provides many fresh vegetables for the family's diet through the year. While women are generally responsible for preparing meals for their families, food provision can be negotiated and shared among members allowing each member to maintain their various roles within and outside of the home. Kunihiko reflects upon his family's way of life:

I feel very lucky to be able to see my family as often as I do. When I speak to people at work, often, if their wives also work like mine, they hardly see each other...I'm away from the house a lot but I am very glad that I can see my family in the mornings most of the time.

The example of how traditional Japanese breakfasts are incorporated into the Sasagawas' otherwise busy life illuminates the importance of the family home as both a site of consumption and connection to traditional ways of being a family. It also illustrates how a close family unit can be maintained despite differences in responsibilities and consumption requirements. The Sasagawas' foodways also demonstrate connections between consumption in the home and identity. By maintaining a traditional diet in the morning, the family maintain what they view as traditional family relations in which Michiko takes on the identity of motherly food provider. Yuki comments that at school, people are surprised and envious that she is able to have traditional breakfast each morning as many people view Japanese breakfasts to be healthier than Western counterparts. Japanese food is

thus contrasted with foreign food and consumption of the 'national cuisine' maintains Japanese cultural identity.

The Sasagawas reconcile their individual responsibilities outside the home by eating as a family each morning. This is a luxury that many other families do not have. Many other families' dining habits are marked by disjuncture and difference. Ritsuko works full-time at a nearby university but still manages to be home for dinner a few nights a week. She is a single parent with two teenage children. On nights when Ritsuko cannot make it home, she prepares meals earlier and leaves them in the fridge for her children to help themselves. Convenience foods like noodles and microwave rice that can be prepared with minimal effort are also stocked in her kitchen for the children. Her son generally arrives home from school in the early evening and eats alone in front of the television, preferring to graze on snacks before then. Ritsuko's daughter is a fussy eater and prefers not to eat 'proper' meals. Her insistence upon eating mainly chocolate and meat and nothing unfamiliar is a continual frustration for Ritsuko. When Ritsuko is there to cook, it is rare for the family to sit together. The children watch television or study while eating and Ritsuko cooks and serves them multiple small dishes where they sit. Occasionally Ritsuko joins them for the last dish. Because of the nature of the meal, consisting as it does in the traditional Japanese manner of several dishes served over a period of time, Ritsuko is in the kitchen for some time. Because of her daughter's particular tastes it is often impossible to cook and serve a single main dish. Ritsuko's daughter picks and chooses what dishes to eat while her son happily eats most dishes. Ritsuko does not like to eat much meat as it is not, in her words, to her 'more traditional' taste. Because her children like meat in preference to vegetables and fish, Ritsuko often cooks her own food separately. While adults are

2: Common Foodways and Everyday Identities

commonly understood as pivotal in household foodways due to their economic social position, children are central in household food and eating practices. In my work, these 'children' are sometimes adult students or even working adults who have completed their studies but still live at home. These stay-at-home adults, like younger children, dictate to a great extent the eating practices that occur within the home. Mothers of these people sometimes note that in the past, it would be expected that a daughter would help with cooking and food provision, however, today young women who stay at home with their parents, sometimes for many years, often have little or nothing to do with cooking.

Because of Ritsuko's work commitments and her childrens' study responsibilities it is difficult for the family to be together regularly at meal times. Ritsuko juggles being a mother and homemaker and a determined professional outside the home. Ritsuko sometimes worries that her children will look back upon their time at home and be disappointed that there was not a sense of family togetherness that Ritsuko believes could be engendered by shared meals. Ritsuko's concern seems to be that without a 'normal' family with a father, more importance should be placed upon family institutions like shared meals. Speaking to Ritsuko and her children, I never got a sense that this is a family that has problems getting along or feeling close. The openness and evident consideration each individual bears for one another does not seem to be diminished by their lack of shared meals. Like many families, the members of Ritsuko's family live to different schedules of work, school and leisure obligations and they do the best with what time they have. Unlike the Sasagawa family, there are no members of a previous generation to take on the responsibilities of cooking and growing vegetables while others work. While Ritsuko largely takes on the duties of homemaker, her

responsibilities as a working woman prevent her from being considered a housewife in the traditional sense. Families like this are becoming more common as womens' possibilities beyond the domestic sphere have broadened.

Tradition is implicated in more than just the roles and identities that people take and how these roles are negotiated and have developed. Meals at home are changing too as, increasingly, international foods become desirable parts of the contemporary Japanese diet. While tastes have developed to incorporate many international foods, peoples' desire, time and skill to cook at home has dropped. Michiko explains that "[I]t takes time to cook Japanese food. There are a lot of things you need to do...Little things; how to cut vegetables, how long to boil some seaweed. Now, people don't have time for these things." Most people don't need to know how to slice vegetables and fish correctly because even small supermarkets stock inexpensive pre-made versions along with the appropriate condiments and accompaniments. Modern technologies of food preparation, storage and provision have made it easier for busy families to make food with minimal time, store pre-made foods and buy convenience foods. Pre-made sauces and stocks for many dishes can be purchased and one can prepare a complex and impressive meal from almost exclusively pre-prepared ingredients. Many supermarkets are within easy reach from Senri Yama and these provide an unprecedented range of highly standardised, centrally processed foods. People with limited time, cooking skill or space to cook have easy access to a diversity of inexpensive foods, both familiar and new. Today, many peoples' meals are only possible because pre-processing has made once time-consuming dishes convenient to prepare and serve. These advancements are a boon for families without the luxuries of time, skill, live-in relatives or space. Despite the convenience of modern food technologies, in the

2: *Common Foodways and Everyday Identities*

home, dinner is rarely elaborate unless a family member is at home during the day or early enough to prepare a complex meal. For many families, on weeknights, several pre-made dishes are often purchased and served with rice, soup, pickles and cooked fish, vegetables, poultry or meat. The number and sophistication of these side dishes is mainly dependent upon household income and personal tastes. Most supermarkets stock a wide variety of pre-prepared dishes, but for those with access to the wares of up-market department stores, the variety is comparatively better.

As a longstanding backbone of Japanese cuisine, a standard evening meal often includes rice, soup and pickles. These dishes are regarded as some of the most healthy and delicious and represent to many, the basic components of the national cuisine. Each of these dishes are common both within and outside the home. *Misō* soup is praised for its anti-aging properties especially by women and *tsukemono* pickles are widely believed to be good for digestion. Rice is easily digestible, filling and nutritious and without rice many people do not feel satisfied or full. Apart from rice, most families rely upon packaged pickles and *misō* soup on most days simply for their convenience.

Food and Eating Outside the Home

While the private home is a central location for food consumption, people also eat many meals outside the home. Osaka's public eating possibilities are vast, with literally thousands of restaurants, casual eateries, fast-food establishments and convenience stores throughout the city and surrounding districts. A highly efficient public transport network keeps most parts of Osaka within easy reach and because of the proximity of other Kansai-area cities, like Kyoto, Kobe and Nara, locals can

choose to take meals in an entirely different city. In most working peoples' everyday lives one or two meals a day may be taken away from home, separate from other family members. Working people eat alone, with colleagues or sometimes bring packed *ōbento* lunches from home.

Working people often dine with colleagues on weeknights because it is considered a necessary part of ones' professional life. These meals promote group solidarity among co-workers and superiors in a similar way that having a family breakfast or dinner maintains a close family. An after-work meal might be a casual affair at a nearby *yakitori* bar (which serve grilled meats on skewers and other small dishes), an *izakaya* (which typically serve a wider variety of small dishes, similar in manner to the dishes served as tapas, antipasti or meze in other countries) or a noodle joint. Rounds of draft beer invariably accompany the meal and a participant can expect to return home close to midnight at least slightly inebriated on the last train several nights a week. These activities contribute to feelings of comradeship, allowing employees to relax their usually strict manners around their peers. Social identities are established that prioritise participation and group oneness. Informants who worked office jobs mentioned that it is because their day jobs are so stressful that it is important to show colleagues a 'casual face' in the evenings in order to develop more trusting and familiar relationships in the workplace.

Despite the centrality of post-work food and drink events to maintaining group identities for work, for many families and individuals it is a troublesome obligation. Wives, husbands and children all express regret at the level of commitment that most office jobs demand. If a superior or boss attends such an event, which they often do, drinking can be more raucous as toasts are made while

2: *Common Foodways and Everyday Identities*

the boss attempts to make his employees feel included and exceptional. Dinner and drinks with co-workers and superiors is important in presenting ones' corporate identity at work and a willingness to relax and unwind with colleagues at social events. Nakamura-san, a middle-aged, middle-rank office executive explains that:

I understand the importance of these events, but at the same time, they can be very exhausting. I'm not so young any more and sometimes I even think I'm going to fall asleep at the table! Because of my position in the company, I am obligated to attend. It would not look good for me to go home early. The junior members of staff would think that my dedication was low and might lose motivation. Ah! It's hard!

As this quote demonstrates, the events are widely seen as critical for a smoothly running business. Kenji, a younger company employee, gives a different perspective:

When I began at my job, those events were enjoyable. I made some friends, I got to know people. Now I have a wife and a son and a home, I don't want to stay out late! I think that I would much rather come home early and spend relaxing time with my family. My work is important of course, but it is not the most important thing to me now.

Dining and drinking with colleagues is a shared experience that cements group belonging and affirms corporate dedication. Dining outside the home is also fundamental for the expression of cosmopolitan identities. My informants often take advantage of the assortment of diverse public eating experiences. Cook and Crang (1996) and Spang (1999) discuss the contemporary diversity and availability of foreign foods in local marketplaces and restaurants outside of Japan. They also focus particularly upon how the contemporary restaurant experience can imaginatively transport diners through the consumption of other cultures via the consumption of their foods (Duruz, 2004), a point that will be returned to in chapter 6. Near Senri Yama, the main highway is lined with dozens of family

restaurants specialising in pasta, steak, sushi, beef bowls, noodles, *tonkatsu* and barbequed meat. Many similar establishments are in and around train stations and shopping centres. More up-market establishments can be found on quiet shopping streets and these are favoured spots for people without children, corporate diners and dating couples. Close to Senri Yama there are few international restaurants, so one must travel to inner Osaka for these kinds of dining experiences. Many individuals and families eat out a number of times during the average week. For many families, restaurant dinners are enjoyed, as they require no preparation or washing up. This is perfect for families where both parents work and arrive home too late to prepare meals. For younger people, dining at foreign restaurants is far more common due to their greater interest in novel food experiences. Young people often eat in groups and, especially on weekends might take a train to the inner city or go to a local *izakaya* or noodle joint for dinner. University and school aged people are just as busy as older working people. School, study and club activities occupy a great deal of the week for children and teenagers. University students and young people have perhaps the fewest responsibilities, yet they still have busy schedules filled with study, part-time work and social events. Young people spend little time at home, whether they live with their families or alone. Home tends to be a place to rest while the vast majority of consumption activities occur outside the home.

While many people have extremely busy lives, food is never eaten on the move. One simply does not see people walking while eating or even drinking as this is considered to be poor etiquette. Walking while eating transgresses boundaries as it takes what should be a stationary activity out of its usually sanctioned spaces. Casual dining establishments however, provide public-private spaces for people to

quickly eat before moving on. These cater to the busy population by providing bars and seats for patrons to quickly eat a meal or snack while on a break.

Mid-morning snacks are common among people who do not have the time for breakfast. These people invariably work and have only enough time to stop briefly to eat either on the way to work or during a short break. Inexpensive canned coffee, tea or bottled drinks from omnipresent vending machines are often consumed on train platforms. The ubiquity of vending machines within Japan, not only for drinks, but also for food, beer and cigarettes is testimony, along with the sheer number of convenience stores, to Japan's market of convenience and modernisation.

Foods that are commonly consumed outside the home include sandwiches, rolls, noodles, *ōbento*, pasta and salad. *Onigiri*, Japanese set lunches (including rice, soup, pickles and a main dish of vegetables, grilled or simmered fish, meat or tofu) or one-course lunches, *tonkatsu* (breaded and fried pork cutlet served with shredded cabbage, rice and condiments), *kare raisu* (Japanese-style curry with rice) and noodles such as *udon*, *ramen* and *soba* are also popular. Fast-foods fit well into peoples' busy working lives and the rapidly prepared, served and eaten meals are cheap, filling and tasty. Along with convenience stores and lunch restaurants, fast-food establishments cluster around public transport, shopping and corporate districts in the inner city as well as along main roads.

Bread does not feature centrally in evening meals, however baked goods are popular as snacks and lunches. Chains offer extensive ranges of small baked goods while others specialise in cakes and larger bread loaves. Supermarkets and convenience stores sell a wide variety of baked goods, and train stations and shopping centres and many chain bakeries provide snacks and lunches to hurrying

commuters. While some baked goods would be familiar in Western marketplaces, many are characteristically Japanese; melon bread, rolls filled with red bean paste, sausage buns, green tea buns, curry bread, chestnut buns and dozens more. Each of these are stacked in neat piles for selection with hygienic tongs and placed on a tray to be taken to the cashier.

Variety and novelty impels younger informants to sample from the ever-changing range of foods on offer in convenience stores and restaurants. New seasonal ranges of food, novel flavours and shapes are attractive and desirable, especially to those without the skill, desire or the time to cook at home. Clammer's (1997) observation that trends have a great deal to do with peoples' consumption habits in Japan helps to clarify why this behaviour occurs. Younger people are typically more fashion conscious and because trends are so ephemeral it is important to try any new food fashion whenever the opportunity arises. I consider Bikhchandani et al.'s (1992:994) explanation of fads to provide a useful theory of why food trends are so transient and popular. Bikhchandani et al. (1992) argue that the 'flash-in-the-pan' nature of consumer fads is based partly on peoples' tendency to follow trends with little regard to their own information sources. Bikhchandani et al. (1992: 994)) suggest that 'information cascades' compel people to follow arbitrary trends, that is, other peoples' behaviours, without reliance upon their own knowledge. Fads occur because as soon as another trend appears, consumers will be compelled to move away from it almost unconsciously. As Bikhchandani et al. (1992:1014) also note, the new fad need not be significantly dissimilar to the previous fashion to elicit a shift in consumer behaviour. Young people often comment that simply the fact that others, including celebrities are consuming a particular product, make a new fashionable food or snack desirable.

2: Common Foodways and Everyday Identities

Throughout my fieldwork, 'new' food products are regularly released and promoted in popular media channels. These foods are rarely if ever revolutionary; often variations on pre-existing creations. The continual production of novel foods is especially apparent in the snack food, fast-food and beverage sectors. At the release of the McDonald's 'Mega Mac' with four beef patties and extra cheese, Wendy's follows suit with the 'Double' and 'Triple' burgers. Soon even ice-cream shops catch on and begin marketing products based upon the double, triple and quadruple serve concept. Because trends are ever-changing and developing, one is continually faced with new options. With little time to spare for lunch and a plethora of enticing novel options, people are impelled to try whatever new foods are out there before they disappear. As one young man noted:

I always want to try the new products when they come out. Sometimes they will only be around for a few weeks so you have to be really quick. If they are really popular though, the company might release them again...Mainly I am interested in trying all the new seasonal beers and also some of the fast-foods. It's good to find new favourites.

I consider Mathews' (2000:19) concept of the post-industrial 'cultural supermarket', which denotes the rapid rise in the availability and profusion of global goods, to apply here. Young informants' faddish obsession with novel trends points to an emerging and widespread culture of mass consumerism. In a similar way to new flavoured snack foods the popularity and consumption of international foods can also be considered in terms of fashion and trends. This is apparent when different ethnic cuisines are featured on popular television shows or in magazines and supermarkets. Different cuisines, such as French, Italian or Mexican, become temporarily popular and are featured on television, in magazines and upon supermarket shelves. Restaurants spring up to cater to peoples' burgeoning

fascination with the food and many home cooks attempt to make dishes at home for friends and families. This topic will be considered in greater depth in chapter 6.

Round-the-Clock Convenience

Convenience stores (*konbini*) stock a dazzling variety of pre-prepared, pre-packaged snacks, drinks, alcohol, meals, toiletries, small household items, magazines and comics and are generally open 24hours. *Konbini* have become indispensable to most people for quick, inexpensive meals and snacks and all manner of other useful services (Bestor, 2006). One can buy light meals, drinks, pick up a couple of necessary things for the home, a magazine, some beer and packet of crisps for after work, pay the gas bill, post a letter, pick up parcels bought from Amazon.jp, buy freeway tokens for the weekend, take out some cash, buy tickets for a concert the next month and be out within a few minutes. Bestor (2006) notes that *konbini* are representative of the extensive changes that have occurred across Japan's food distribution and provision networks. *Konbini* represent a significant slice of how the modern Japanese procures food and indeed eats from a diverse yet highly standardised array of pre-packaged and prepared range of food products. Many university students explain that a considerable proportion of their everyday diets are purchased from *konbini*. Because of their 24-hour availability, late-returning office workers also rely upon *konbini* for meals.

Konbini in and around Senri Yama represent all the major companies: Lawson, Circle K Sunkus, Family Mart, Daily Yamazaki and Seven Eleven. Customers can rely upon every store to stock familiar brands and similar ranges. Certain stores provide more varied offerings and might sell a small range of fresh produce and other things. Some cater to particular niche markets such as 'Natural' Lawson, which sells ranges of organic snacks and pre-made foods. As Bestor (2006)

suggests, the branding of either newly developed foods and re-commoditised familiar foods is expected in contemporary Japan. While novelty is important, people are highly brand-conscious and prefer familiar labels that they think can be trusted.

Bestor (2006:127) points out that the anonymity of the *konbini* shopping experience offers a 'freedom from intimacy'. Customers are able to quickly enter and exit stores without having to engage in conversation with staff or other customers. There is little inducement to be friendly and an individual's anonymity is preserved. This impersonal nature affords customers the freedom to stand and read magazines without feeling rude. The context is also conducive to expediency, as customers have no impetus to appear to be refined and discerning consumers as they might be in a specialty shop or a department store. *Konbini* employees are typically university-aged people working part-time jobs or for a temporary employment agency. They neither expect nor are expected to speak to customers beyond the very basic necessities and as such, the stores have a very different atmosphere to the warmer, more personable family run stores that *konbini* have all but replaced. This marks a development in the kinds of identities that can be involved in consumption. While small-scale or local forms of food provision engender personal interaction and familiarity between staff and customers, *konbini* encourage depersonalisation in much the same way as a machinated factory floor. Personal service promotes the expectation of expertise and knowledge. In privately run stores, staff can be asked for suggestions and information about products. In a *konbini* however, the responsibility is entirely the customer's and the staff are merely the facilitators of the economic transaction. *Konbini* staff are unequipped to answer any but the most basic queries and cannot be held accountable for the

quality or availability of the wares, which fosters the consumers' reliance upon familiar brands, as their relationship with their food sources becomes further attenuated. Ritzer (2003) understands these processes of increasing standardisation and impersonalisation to stand for what he terms 'the globalisation of nothing'.

In a district with little entertainment for young people, *konbini* are also sites that facilitate social interaction. Specifically because *konbini* promote minimal interaction between staff and customers, they are favoured by underage drinkers. *Konbini* and vending machines are indispensable to late-night socialising teens. In my neighbourhood, young skateboarders descend upon the nearby construction site almost nightly at about 10pm. Beer, spirits, mixed drinks and snacks are purchased with money collected from those present and the spoils are consumed by the side of the road while the kids skate hoping the police won't show up and send them all home.

Konbini open up public spaces to be sites of food consumption and social activity, especially for young people who are otherwise confined to the home or school. In Senri Yama, where there is very little to do after school, groups of bicycles are often seen parked outside *konbini* as high school boys and girls socialise over drinks (usually non-alcoholic) and snacks in the parking lot or a nearby park. Pre-made foods require little or no preparation and many local adolescents congregate outside *konbini* for casual stand-up meals (*yūshoku* or dinner) with friends after school. *Konbini* and the areas around them afford young people social spaces outside of school and home where they can associate with friends largely undisturbed and unsupervised by adults. As I have noted, eating on

the move is frowned upon, and even these stationary *yūshoku* are scorned by older people as crude signs of adolescent difference and disdain for dining customs.

Like *konbini*, fast-food chains in Senri Yama are places outside the home that young people use to gather and socialise. High school and university students often congregate in small groups to sit and do homework or socialise over ice cream, burgers, fries, noodles and donuts often for many hours. McDonald's is one of the most popular places in the local area, having been recently renovated to provide private booths and relaxed lighting. Fast-food in the area also includes several burger chains, like MOS Burger, Wendy's and Lotteria, others such as KFC, Mister Donut (donuts), Beard Papa (creampuffs), chain cafés like Starbucks and Excalibur and a number of Japanese-style establishments that serve Japanese style curry (*kare raisu*) and *donburi* (meat on rice) such as Coco's, Sukiya and Yoshinoya. Ohnuki-Tierney (1999; 2006) regards McDonald's and other fast food establishments as representing new internationalised manners in contemporary Japanese society. Young patrons there can sit relatively unsupervised for as long as they like, often until very late. Because of the casual atmosphere, teenagers and young people feel comfortable going to these places at night. Such places more obviously cater to a youth culture rather than families.

Unlike inner-city McDonald's outlets that do a successful trade with rushing workers both day and night, the local McDonald's has a more café atmosphere during the day. Parents and children opt for another McDonald's down the highway, about two kilometres away, because it has a play gym. Often parents take their small children on weekends to share a meal before letting the children play in the gym. Traphagan and Brown (2002) have noted that McDonald's is a popular site of intergenerational commensality within Japan; being a place where parents and

grandparents can share food in relaxed and casual environment. Many family restaurants and fast-food establishments are spaces outside the home where family members can bond and share meals together in a similar way that the Sasagawa family does over breakfast. Because McDonald's, like other fast-food restaurants, is so casual, it engenders a more relaxed kind of sociality than is possible in more traditional Japanese establishments that maintain a more serious atmosphere of restraint. Fast-food restaurants like McDonald's are places where one can relax, order familiar foods and simply enjoy sitting with ones' companions sharing fries. Sharing individually packaged foods in this way is very unusual out of a fast-food context, reflecting the fast-food establishments' relaxation of normal restrictions around dining conventions.

Fast-food restaurants allow diners to relax and to practice casual identities that are otherwise uncommon outside the family home. Hamburgers are not widely regarded as meals because they fall into the 'bread category' and do not include any of the recognisable elements of a 'proper meal', most significantly rice (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1999). Diners do not hold the same expectations of correct manners and eating etiquette normally required for a meal. As Ryuji, a salary-man in his thirties, comments while in Mister Donut with his family on a weekend afternoon:

It's really nice to come to a place like this. For the children it is a special occasion and they can play and meet other kids. For me, it's relaxing and fun to watch them; I can sit here and really be myself. Talk to my wife, talk to the kids and get out of the home. No cooking, no cleaning, no worries or responsibilities.

As Ryuji notes, such establishments allow diners to escape the routine tasks of food provision in the home, affording them the opportunity to eat, drink and be together as a family. This is important, especially for fathers, working women and

grandparents who otherwise may not have the time to spend with their children and spouses within their busy schedules. Dining together as a family in a fast-food establishment or family restaurant can also be seen as a product of Japan's internationalisation as many people reflect that the stress-free atmosphere and the casual social relations within are representative of what they view as being a more Western mode of dining.

While most menus do not contain foods that are considered to be healthy 'proper food', fast food appeals to many people because it allows commensal sociality and time to relax. At the same time there exists a pervasive sentiment of social decline and the erosion of tradition that comes along with such standardised contemporary foodways. Reliance upon fast-food and convenience food, together with the lack of social involvement that is possible through its anonymous world, contributes to many peoples' notion that fast-food is partly to blame for a perceived increase in socially avoidant young people. Reliance upon fast-food and convenience food is widely considered to foster socially negative identities, for example the cultural stereotype of the unhealthy and antisocial '*NEET*' or '*freeter*' (young people who are unemployed or engaged in unskilled, often temporary part-time work). Because reliance upon fast-food and convenience food tends to be associated with an unhealthy lifestyle, people who rely upon these foods are commonly imagined to be overweight. Bordo (2003) demonstrates that the body can be understood as a social text upon which particular physical traits can be labelled as positive or negative. Such readings of the body mean that there is socio-cultural pressure to conform to standards deemed good and to avoid aspects considered undesirable (Cassell, 1995). In concurrence with Bordo's (2003) findings, my informants confirm that excess weight is widely regarded to denote

laziness, a lack of self-worth and ambition – all characteristics that people associate with labels of *NEET*, *freeter* and *otaku* (*manga* fans/geeks). These people are stereotypically perceived to lack all but the most basic social skills, to have little respect for elders and also to be generally disobliging and unproductive members of society. Fast-food and convenience food can thus both support positive social identities as well as negative ones.

As in many post-industrial, capitalist nations, fast-food is a source of concern regarding health. Parents worry that their children eat too much junk food outside the home and therefore attempt to limit the number of times fast-food is eaten during the week. Among my informants, it was extremely important for parents to be mindful of their children's eating habits, both within and outside the home. Many people believe that a healthy breakfast or dinner can counterbalance a fast-food snack by making up for their deficient nutritional value. Taro, a male university student expresses this:

If I've eaten a lot of unhealthy foods over a week, like burgers or noodles or a lot of beer, I try to have yoghurt or fruit for breakfast for a few days...juices and maybe bentō or plain rice with nattō for dinner to fight the unhealthy foods I've eaten.

Older people are more mindful of this and tend to regard fast-food, along with other foods high in meat and bread, as detrimental to digestion.

For many young people, everyday food is simply a means to an end; a way to fuel the body. Taro regularly either eats with friends at the university canteen or eat snacks and convenience foods from a *konbini* or gets fast-food. Many university students and young people follow this pattern without considering themselves *NEETs*. *Konbini* foods are portable and can be carried to university to eat outside or while studying and fast-food can be eaten in the establishment either quickly

2: *Common Foodways and Everyday Identities*

before a lecture or slowly while reading or studying. Other eating occasions, such as dinner at restaurants, university club events, barbeques, picnics, meals and drinks at *izakaya* bars or fast-food meals over study meetings are ways of socialising and maintaining friendships. Few university students eat with others at home as rented apartments are simply too small. Food and eating by oneself takes on a peripheral role as a necessary but uninteresting feature of everyday life while eating with friends is one of the most important occasions for presenting oneself to others and establishing ones' identity in a group of fellows. As Taro explains:

Most times when I see my friends we'll eat together. I would say that eating really is actually the most common thing we all do together. Drinking too, that's important. It means everyone can be friendly and relax...it's a really important way of getting to know others around you.

Young people living alone describe the evening meal as the loneliest. If one does not go out to eat with friends in a restaurant, a simple solitary meal at home, instant noodles or pre-made convenience store food are often the only options.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined some of the more common everyday foodways among my informants and how various identities arise both in and outside the home. Peoples' food choices and habits are marked by diversity and especially by the increasing popularity of international foods and necessity of fast foods and convenience foods. Despite that, many people share the view that taking meals together in the home is conducive to family solidarity and the expression of traditional cultural identity. I see the Sasagawa family as close to the epitome of the traditional Japanese family in the contemporary world. They themselves corroborate this view and regard their commensal breakfast habits as one of the

main markers of this identity. This activity stands out in their daily lives because elsewhere, each member of the family generally has their own responsibilities and commitments. In this way, tradition and contemporary lifestyles coexist, neither cancelling out the other. Many families, regardless of their living situations, exist similarly.

In the same way, traditional *wa-shoku* and more modern *yō-shoku* co-exist, each representing Japanese peoples' desire to maintain a distinct and unique cultural identity while at the same time utilising ingredients and influences from abroad. Contemporary Japanese identities at the everyday level also incorporate the stuff of international flows in order to become cosmopolitan, to appear to be knowledgeable and open to the fashionable and interesting cuisines and identities of the cultural supermarket.

Womens' role in contemporary Japanese foodways is changing as women are expected to not only cook, but also to manage their own diets and bodies. Also, many women are moving away from food provision roles to adopt new identities as knowledgeable cosmopolitans and career women. Despite this, many women are still fundamental agents in everyday foodways in my fieldsite as men seldom have much to do with shopping and cooking. However, in the next chapter, I the extent to which many elderly local men are involved in growing local produce that features highly in the preservation of local identities.

Outside the home, eating together either informally or in situations where sociality is especially encouraged allows people to present other facets of their identities. Eating outside the home also represents how the Japanese social sector allows for social spaces for food and social lives outside small, very private homes. Young people especially take advantage of the array of casual dining

2: *Common Foodways and Everyday Identities*
establishments, *konbini* and fast-food outlets as extensions of private space; places to study, socialise with friends and relax.

Unlike convenience foods and the contemporary identities they foster, local food foregrounds basic and traditional ingredients and more authentic lifestyles. In both home dining and public eating, convenience and efficiency figure highly. Peoples' busy lives mean that meal times are often slotted between a variety of other commitments. In contemporary times this means that shops and food distribution systems have grown in tandem to support a population that increasingly seeks convenience and ease of preparation. The following chapter elaborates upon the use of particularly locally grown foods to provide a more detailed account of the fashioning of local identity in Senri Yama.

Chapter 3: Locally Grown Identities

In this chapter I will explore how local foodways contribute significantly to the expression of local identities among my informants as it connects people to place. Senri Yama is typical of Osaka's peripheral urban locales. Within Senri Yama, however, there are many remaining zones of farmland and a number of families who continue to work this land in much the same way as it has been for generations. Many of the families who own and work the local farmland are descended from long-time local families. The neighbouring forested hills are also significant markers of 'localness' as a number of wild foods can still be foraged there and the knowledge of how to recognise and gather these foods has been learned from ancestors just as land has been inherited. Unlike many other urban people, Senri Yama residents can choose to consume foods grown locally. Because of this opportunity, many local residents feel a powerful association with the locale as a place of tradition, historical continuity and authenticity.

Unlike imported foods, local foods arrive fresh from the fields picked by family members and neighbours, which allows local consumers can observe their foods' "...lives before and after they appear on the supermarket shelves...as they move from farm to fork." (Cook et al; 1998:162). Certain foods can signify the home (Sutton 2001; Petridou, 2001); others signify the place where they are bought, such as local markets and are often therefore organic and fresh local produce (Sinnreich, 2007). Rather than seeing people as attached to physical places, it is important to focus upon the dynamic ways that people invest their actions with meaning and thereby construct these meaningful locations (Perridou, 2001:87). Local food stands apart from supermarket food because it has particular symbolic

meanings; local food and local identity are connected in a process of cultural identification through consumption and material food culture (Blue, 2008).

Local Families, Local Foods

Many 'original' families of Senri Yama, as I term them, reside in large traditional-style houses either in the centre of what was once the old township, or further away in houses amongst the fields. Nobu Fukui, a man in his early forties who has recently moved to the area expresses his early impressions of his neighbours:

When we moved here, I was very surprised. In our last home [an apartment in inner city Osaka] we saw our neighbours rarely. When we moved, the neighbours [an original family] brought us some vegetables they had grown to welcome us. Luckily we could give them some things in return. Those people were very friendly and open and I learned that they had lived here for many generations and that they also own those fields to the North. I would like to meet these people more and learn more about the town. It is quite remarkable to live somewhere with people that have such a history here.

Prosperous families such as these have associations with one another that go back generations. Other local families hold these people in high regard and they are considered touchstones of local authenticity and historical continuity. Unlike families that live in apartments or smaller modern homes, these families often include at least three generations living together. The Sasagawas introduced in chapter 2 are one such family. Some of these families also own several houses and apartments in Senri Yama and live separately but maintain close associations with one another. Many of these stately old homes have large gardens that are tended by retired family members. Rice or vegetables fields are sometimes adjacent to these homes or a few minutes' walk away. For these families, Senri Yama is not simply a place to live; local land is significant because it has been part of family biographies.

Growing rice and vegetables in these historical fields allows families to maintain their connection with the locale and a sense of local historical continuity.

The local farmland is critical to the sense of local distinctiveness felt by the residents of Senri Yama. While food is naturally the foremost product of agriculture, local farmers are involved in the maintenance of a particular landscape. Local fields are often divided by paths and small vehicle ways that many residents enjoy walking along. Wider borders contain trees, grasses and shrubbery where wildflowers grow and local fauna like pheasants, stoats and other wild birds live. Some areas are popular for picnics in the spring and summer because cherry blossoms are plentiful along waterways that contain fish, frogs and insects. Children enjoy collecting beetles and butterflies in these areas too. Local fields also have great symbolic value as many residents express that they are representations of Senri Yama's agrarian past. Because of the small size of the local land holdings, local farmers are not involved in any large-scale cultivation. Instead, farmers grow and use most of their produce for their own families and for small roadside markets and stalls. The local agricultural landscape is a public good and one that is in constant peril as ongoing housing and road developments threaten to replace it.

The presence of original families, their houses, gardens and fields signify authenticity; they represent features of the *furusato*, a somewhat mythologised traditional hometown. While Senri Yama is not a *furusato* in the imagined idyllic sense, the elements mentioned above lend the district a rural atmosphere that distinguishes it from its urban neighbours. Robertson (1991:103) shows how the *furusato* in contemporary Japan symbolises an imaginary national community because the *furusato* is widely regarded in society to represent continuity with shared national history. Local distinctiveness is thus also caught up in imagining

the locale as a distinctively Japanese cultural place. By identifying as 'local', people are also identifying themselves as intrinsically Japanese and participants within a shared national identity. This makes Senri Yama attractive in terms of personal identity. For most urban Japanese, home is dislocated from nature and the land. The authentic, traditional Japan is always elsewhere, tucked away in the country and in the collective imagination. For Senri Yama residents however, something of the *furusato* can still be felt, especially in local foodways, in the local landscape and original families.

Locals appreciate direct contact with food producers and this adds value to local produce. Pratt (2007) notes that the valorisation of local produce can be understood to stem from an often commercialised equation that local produce equals good quality. This equation is put to good use in popularising regional tourism and produce in Japan by the media and local governments. Mille Creighton (1997; 1998) shows how in the last couple of decades, domestic tourism and department stores in Japan have capitalised upon citizens' sense of homelessness in a nation where most of the population resides in densely populated urban zones and cities. In these campaigns, the *furusato*, as a symbol of traditional Japan, is effectively mobilised. In Senri Yama, Sohma Yukiko, while showing me around her kitchen and the foods she regularly buys, explained to me that she prefers to buy local fruit and vegetables. Foods that require more extensive preparation, such as *kameboko*, *yuba* (tofu skin), vinegar, *mirin* (sweet seasoning) and *misō* are not made locally, but Yukiko has sourced these from small retailers and department stores. These products are marked with the region or locale of origin. Yukiko explained that:

That *misō* paste [common supermarket brand] isn't as good. It is too sweet, too salty and doesn't have enough real flavour. This *misō* [gesturing to a box of good quality, regionally produced department store *misō*] has a more delicious flavour.

For Yukiko and others, local fruits and vegetables are touchstones of local identity. Their purchase and consumption binds residents to not only the local economy of Senri Yama but also to its identity. Similarly, the flavour of more authentic, less commercialised foods is closer to what people perceive to be the genuine taste of Japanese food and summarily more conducive to their association with tradition and place. Commercial brand foods are widely available and have little value attached to their place of origin. This is especially true of processed foods. Yukiko, like others, also prefers foods with origin labels; this way she can imagine that these goods have come from other local places.

For a few of my informants who live in the inner city, representations of the *urusato* are seldom encountered outside of stylised locations and the media. Katsushi, a busy man in his 30s who lives in downtown Osaka rarely leaves the teeming inner city. His only contact with what many people regard as traditional Japan is through food and in images of the countryside. For most Japanese, traditional rural livelihoods have been supplanted by urban lifestyles, the *urusato* however remains on the plate and upon the tongue and in images and landscapes of rural Japan. In Japan's thoroughly consumer-oriented society, food has been firmly coupled to the contemporary imagination of the *urusato*. *Furusato no aji*, 'the taste of the *urusato*' gustatorially evokes a socially reproduced nostalgia for the imaginary '*Nihon no kokoro*' – 'the heart of Japan' (Knight; 1994; 1998). Divorced from the real countryside, urban citizens express connections to an authentic past they have never experienced first-hand through the food choices they make; this constitutes what Robertson (1991: 176) terms a 'nostalgic praxis'.

3: *Locally Grown Identities*

Department stores stock regional produce from throughout Japan. Many of these items are not simple everyday foods but esteemed gourmet products which also confer cultural capital upon the shopper (see Bourdieu, 1986). A local middle aged housewife, Akiko-san highlights this commonly held view; “*Department stores have the best quality food. Department stores have everything, if they don’t have it, it can usually be ordered, but it is always expensive.*” When people shop at a department store for regional Japanese food, especially for otherwise common or inexpensive items, they are making very clear statements of cultural distinction. The selection of gourmet regional produce from a department store is not simply demonstrating economic and culinary superiority, it is also signifying knowledge, that buying such food is superior to buying common branded goods or imported foods. These foods come from *specific places*. Labelling, signage and salespeople all inform shoppers that these are authentic goods that have been grown and produced by Japanese farmers in ‘real’ Japanese villages in the countryside. Localised foods have thus come to be synonymous with quality and assurance literally because they are conflated with idealised images of Japan’s traditional past. Such producers are assumed to be trustworthy. They are down-to-earth folk with traditional values and good intentions even though such assumptions are generally only couched in popular imaginations and depictions of the rural idyll. The inner city department store basement is usually the closest inner city residents get to the *furusato* in their everyday lives. For Senri-Yama residents though, department stores are only one possible way of consuming the rural idyll. The small tracts of farmland and original local people provide at least a token amount of locally grown produce and aesthetically represent rural Japan and Senri Yama’s own history as a rural township. Growing and consuming locally cultivated foods are one way for people

to demonstrate a connection with Senri Yama and also Japan in a way that many Japanese recognise as a marker of good taste and distinction.

Like local landscapes, the value of local foods cannot be reckoned solely in terms of use and exchange. Things are always categorised according to their relevant cultural values and properties (Kopytoff, 1986: 64). In this way, objects become involved in an inherently socio-cultural world where those involved with them become at once knowledgeable actors or connoisseurs of not only the physical properties of objects, but also of their culturally imposed features. McCracken (1986: 71) too postulates that consumer goods hold and articulate cultural meaning beyond simple economic and functional value. I suggest that local food and land is regarded in Senri Yama in this way⁷. Consuming locally grown food is an engagement in a process of incorporation into the local social network of production and meaning.

Local produce functions in two main ways to promote local connectedness. One is the practice of growing local food and the other is the purchase, collection or consumption of this food. Locally grown foods, especially the practices involved in growing or harvesting them, position people within the passing seasons and thus within the natural cycle. The concept of seasonally appropriate (*shun*) delicacies is also related to this. Fields and gardens are constantly changing as fruits ripen, leaves grow verdant and root vegetables swell. Vegetables and foraged foods are seasonally variable and the tasks undertaken in gardens and fields change with the time of year. By the end of winter, most of the season's vegetables have been

⁷ Bestor (see 2001, 2004, 2005 and 2006) also details a number of ways that seafood, especially tuna, takes on exceptional cultural, social and indeed economic significance within Japan and abroad. Bestor's corpus of work on Japanese food culture focuses comprehensively upon the market-emplaced aspects of seafood, but also effectively ties his investigations in with the many and varied associations that seafood has with worldwide commodity chains, everyday activities within marketplaces and socio-cultural and economic aspects.

harvested. Gardens look empty and rice fields are bare. Farmers and gardeners both know that as soon as the weather starts to show signs of warming, it is time to start preparing for another season. Larger fields and plots can be tilled with motorised hoes, but smaller gardens are dug by hand. This intimate involvement with the land, a literal point of contact with the local soil, is a way that local people maintain connections with Senri Yama. Original families look over their rice fields or gardens with the knowledge that their families have grown rice in the fields for generations. I contend that the biographies of local foods are intimately tied with the biographies of the local people themselves. When Kunihiko Sasagawa looks at the loquat (*biwa*) tree at the edge of one of his family's fields, he remembers climbing it in summer as a child and picking the sweet fruit with his friends. The tree is old now and bears few fruit. Many of its neighbours have been removed or have died and Kunihiko can not help noticing that beyond the field a construction site car park has recently been cleared. Food grown in Senri Yama today links local residents with the past.

One of the major markers of the value of local produce is that it is regarded as fresh. Freshness exemplifies one of the main tenets of Japanese cooking. The perception of freshness manifests itself in two main ways. The first occurs when people appreciate the 'natural' textures, flavours and fragrances of ingredients. Home cooks know what to look for when selecting produce. Kumiko, a middle-aged female Senri Yama resident explained this while we shopped at a local vegetable stall:

This turnip is really fresh. Look at the skin, it is white and glossy. The purple at the top is bright and the leaves are green and have not wilted...It's good to have the leaves left on; you can tell exactly how fresh it is. Supermarkets cut them off so you can't tell and they can sell them older...Even cut off – just by looking at the skin you can tell if it will be crunchy and moist.

The second way that people perceive freshness is when middle-men have been removed and people are closer to the basic state of the food. This is apparent in discussions with people who either grow their own produce or receive it directly from family or local farmers. Long storage or transportation is regarded to lessen the nutritional value of food and also its quality. Commercially available foods are thought to be distanced from the basic, nutritive elements of food. Detached origins impact upon tactile, emotional, sensual intimacy that a familiarity with origins conveys. Fujita-san, an elderly male farmer explains this:

I've grown these persimmons myself. I know they're safe...My father planted these trees and they were here when I was a child. Every day I can see them, I watch them through the seasons and as the fruit ripens...There is none fresher than the fruit I pick myself.

Processed and commercially produced food is often regarded as less healthy. Cup and bowl noodles, packaged snacks and confectioneries and many examples of common fast-foods such as sweet crepes, parfaits, hamburgers, pizza and hotdogs do not channel the images, sentiments, flavours or textures of nature and fresh food. Likewise, eating and growing local foods mean that people feel more authentic, more local and closer to a Japanese identity based upon consumer choices that are more intimately involved with and closer to the origins of food.

Food from Nature

Nature is linked in peoples' minds with the past. Fields represent Japan's agrarian past and typical Japanese landscapes and the natural world is perceived to be representative of Japan's original land (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993). Food as the product of both the countryside and the natural world links people with nature (see Lévi-

Strauss, 1983). The Japanese peoples' relationship with nature and the rural landscape as *Japanese* nature has itself been held aloft by *Nihonjinron* scholars such as Watsuji Tetsurō (1935) as a marker of cultural uniqueness (in Dale, 1986:41-42 and Tucker, 2003: 175-176) and also come under criticism (Kalland, 1992; Martinez, 2005). Societies' relationships with nature have also been seen to pervade understandings of 'otherness' as the 'noble Oriental', a version of the 'noble savage' that has often been characterised as living in closer communion with nature (Kalland, 2003). Indeed, in the *Nihonjinron*, Japanese scholars use this characterisation to bolster various claims about the Japanese national character as opposed to the 'Western character'. Reischauer (1995) sees Japanese nature as central to understanding the Japanese both historically and in contemporary times. For local people, the links between food, nature, the past and Japanese culture are evident in peoples' appreciation of the seasons, the natural world, the rural landscape and the produce of this land.

The hills near Senri Yama provide a food source that is also considered inherently local by some of Senri Yama's elderly residents. Like cultivated foods, these foods also have connections to Senri Yama's history and to an imagined and shared cultural identity. During and after the Second World War, wild foods provided much needed sustenance to local families whose livelihoods were devastated by the war effort and the harsh years that followed. Locally foraged foods can be considered the most intrinsically local of all Senri Yama's food because they grow naturally from the local land. Like farmland, natural landscapes are also a public good as many locals hike, picnic, practice photography and painting and use the hills and paths both recreationally and aesthetically.

Some elderly Senri Yama residents from the original local families forage for wild food. These people have the knowledge to find several kinds of edible wild plants (*sansai*) and mushrooms (*kinoko*) that have historically been part of the local diet. The consumption of these foods represents the maintenance of traditional identities that are not reliant upon industrial and commercial food sources. These people are mainly older women who learned from their parents and other older residents how to find and prepare local *yamashoku* or 'mountain foods'. True *yamashoku* that is not cultivated, is, according to my informants some of the most traditional and rare Japanese foods still around. *Warabi*, *gobo* (burdock root) and mushrooms, like *shitake* and *maitake* are also commercially grown and packaged and are familiar to most people. The value of uncultivated *yamashoku* is higher than farmed and bought *yamashoku* because of its 'localness'. The same also holds for locally cultivated foods versus commercialised commodities. Value, here, is not an intrinsic property of the foods, but a judgement made by local people that Senri Yama produce is rarer and more desirable than readily available supplies of commercial commodities. *Yamashoku*, like local farmed food, possesses a 'biography' that culturally defines its value and use within the locale (Kopytoff, 1986:66-68).

Many *yamashoku* are not part of peoples' everyday diets. One, *kusaya* or "smelly" leaf, requires boiling numerous times to remove the bitter taste and smell from the dried leaves. *Kusaya* is mixed with steamed rice and eaten with bracken shoots (*warabi*), another more conventional and often cultivated *yamashoku*. The dish has a wonderfully herbal flavour quite unlike other dishes. *Kogomi* (ostrich fiddle-head fern) needs little work to be edible, while freshly harvested *warabi* has to be prepared '*aku nuki*' using ash or baking soda to remove harsh flavours. *Sansai*

refers to all wild harvested plants and literally means 'vegetables of the wild'. Japanese wilderness is largely restricted to mountainous areas (*yama*) and the notion of 'the wild' and 'the natural' is synonymous with these elevated regions, hence *yamashoku* (Kalland, 1992). The consumption of *yamashoku* links my informants with the natural world, illustrated by Nakajima-san, one elderly female informant; "*This food is a gift from the mountains... from the wild...with some knowledge one can find plenty of food where one once thought there were just trees and bushes.*" While less valuable and significant, commercially produced *sansai* and *kinoko* has symbolic connotations of nature even though they have little true connection to natural environments. These commercial foods are also marketed as *yamashoku* and are used in traditional 'home style' cuisine. The use of traditional ingredients, flavours and presentation techniques inscribe these dishes with signs of authenticity and convey connotations and continuity with pre-modern lifestyles.

The term *takenoko seikatsu* or 'bamboo shoot lifestyle' encapsulates the post-war era for families who supplemented their meagre diets by foraging for *yamashoku* and reflects the intimate food connections that locals have with the natural environment. *Takenoko* (young bamboo shoots) are one of the most prolific local *yamashoku*. Local parents take their small children to nearby parks to pick *takenoko* on spring weekends⁸. Like picking sweet potatoes from local farms in summer and hunting for large pet beetles, foraging for *takenoko* is a typical childhood activity that adults are grateful to share with their children⁹. Both local wilderness and farms play important roles in peoples' experiences of Senri Yama.

⁸ Two popular Japanese chocolate snacks '*takenoko no yama*' and '*kinoko no yama*' are shaped as mushrooms and bamboo shoots. Their packaging depicts cartoon *furusato*-like countryside.

⁹ Large horned beetles, popular pets and sport for children are becoming increasingly rare in Senri Yama; informants remark that this is a sign of environmental degradation and urban progress in their lifetime.

Natural and rural spaces are regarded as relaxing and culturally important both locally and in the wider social consciousness (Natori and Chenoweth, 2008; Reischauer, 1995; 162). People feel that the countryside, hills and forests embody a Japan that has been untainted by modernity and urbanisation; Japan as it used to be. As Creighton (1997:239) shows, rural areas appeal to the Japanese sense of 'home' in a temporal sense, as they provide an antithesis to the recent decades of progressive modernisation. In Creighton's (1997:239) words: 'In today's modern, urban-centred, postindustrialized Japan, product in part of the "economic miracle" that transformed a devastated Asian nation into a foremost economic power with an apparently Westernized lifestyle, "home" is a "real Japan," which in the collective nostalgic imagination implies a return to a pre-Western, preindustrialized, and nonurban past.' Sometimes, local governments finance the invention of local folk traditions in regional areas (see Yagi, 1998: 142-144), however, this has not occurred in Senri Yama. Following from the association between rural and natural spaces and nostalgic (and sometimes imaginary) authenticity, foods that originate in the country are also widely considered to be authentic.

In Senri Yama, *yamashoku* is an unusual addition to peoples' diets and is not consumed every day. The choice to forage for *yamashoku* thus reflects a conscious decision to remain connected to historical local practices. Nakajima-san juxtaposes *yamashoku* with contemporary internationalised diets: "*Yamashoku is real traditional Japanese food...it is the wild food of Japan and natural.*" Here, the implicit connection between local land, nature, tradition and food is explicitly made. Nagano-san, another elderly local woman, explains her family's long association with *yamashoku* and in doing so, emphasises *yamashoku's* capacity to connect people with the past:

These are the kinds of foods that helped my family in the time after The War...My mother would take me into the hills and show me what plants could be eaten and how much to take...You can only take a certain amount and we had to leave some for others. Take too much and the plant will not grow back, that's why it's hard to find so many these days...People pick too much and leave nothing behind...After the war there was much more to find, but then people were so hungry and would take too much, eventually we had to walk very far to into the hills to find anything.

Nagano-san draws a comparison between past and contemporary people. In the past, even though people were hungry they tried to leave enough so that others could find food in contrast with today's hikers who are seen as greedy. Foraging for and eating *yamashoku* is a physical and culinary experience of 'being local' in a certain way; knowing not to pick too much expresses consideration for the land as well as for other local people. This is a quality that Nagano-san feels people lack today. Engaging in conscientious foraging is a way of expressing traditional values of community mindedness as well as a connection with local nature and history. For Nagano-san, *yamashoku* recalls times of hardship, but even so, her continuing pursuit of *yamashoku* is a way of connecting with her own and her family's history. *Yamashoku* is a way of commemorating an important though painful period in history; both Nagano-san and Nakajima-san feel it is important not to lose local *yamashoku* knowledge because it would also mean the loss of connection to a significant period of local history.

Nagano-san's understanding of the physical environment incorporates knowledge of where certain plants and fungus can be found, what they look like and how to correctly harvest them in order to leave enough behind to grow for the next season. Incorrect harvesting means a lack of respect for the food source itself. Uninformed hikers stumble upon windfalls of familiar looking mushrooms and pick the lot with no regard for the mushroom population itself. Because of this,

many forest areas near to residential areas have been picked clean. Local *yamashoku* enthusiasts lament this degradation of the local environment. As Nakajima notes: “*These parts of the forest are empty. Not even animals come here now. There is no undergrowth...it’s bare and a little sad.*” Farmers with fields near the hills clear under the nearby trees to prevent weeds and insects spreading into fields and also to discourage animals like monkeys and pigs from coming into the fields and ruining the crops (Knight, 2003). This also means that the nearby forest is generally devoid of *yamashoku*.

Because *yamashoku* is considered by foragers as a local resource, respect and consideration for other collectors is important and reflects community spirit. A courteous forager picks only a small amount of *zenmai sansai*, allowing not only the species to continue to exist, but to afford other locals future foraging opportunities. Inconsiderate hikers are known to remove fallen logs, home to edible mushrooms, to attempt to cultivate them at home. These hikers are believed to be non-locals; visitors to a popular temple several kilometres away deeper into the hills, Nakajima-san and Nagano-san say that most local people have enough regard for their community not to do such inconsiderate things. The assiduous forager regards the mountains as the proper ‘natural’ home of *yamashoku* and does not attempt to cultivate *yamashoku* at home. Nagano-san and Nakajima-san both insist that commercially grown *yamashoku* tastes bland and insipid and nothing like the ‘true taste of the wild’. Local *yamashoku* also tastes very different to that which has been grown wild in other areas of Japan. Nagano-san explains that this is because every locale possesses a unique climate and soil balance that cannot be replicated. Because of Osaka’s long, hot, humid summers, local *yamashoku* grows quickly and verdantly. For some species this is a positive thing while for others, colder climates

are regarded as optimal because it allows a greater concentration of flavour and slower ripening.

The exhaustion of the natural wilderness worries my informants who have physical and culinary ties with the local environment. The mountains and hills of Senri Yama reflect their local identity in the same way that the rice fields do for many others in the community. Both rural and wild areas in Senri Yama are endangered by urbanisation. For *yamashoku* foragers, culinary connections with local natural places based upon knowledge, understanding, respect and care are what it means to be a local in Senri Yama.

Foods from the Fields

Local farming and the purchase and consumption of locally cultivated foods are far more common in Senri Yama than foraging for *yamashoku*. Local agriculture, for many residents, is the most obvious connection between food, the locale and local identity. Ohnuki-Tierney (1993:81) explicates how for the Japanese, rice and rice fields are understood as bridging elements that connect humans with *Japanese* land. In Ohnuki-Tierney's (1993; 1994) conception of Japanese identity, rice has long featured as the most prominent metaphor for the Japanese self even despite decreasing rice consumption and its increasingly peripheral place within the structure of common meal patterns. To Ohnuki-Tierney (1994: 459):

Rice stands for "we" i.e. whatever social group one belongs to. To give but one example among many expressions, "to eat from the same rice-cooking pan (*onajikama no meshi o kuu*)" is a common expression for close human relationships and emphasises a strong sense of fellowship arising from the notion that they share meals. If you eat together, you are members of the same social group; you become "we" as opposed to "they". (Italics, brackets and quotation marks in original)

The literal fruits of the earth, the rice grains, are consumed and link Japanese people with the land. In her conception, these rice fields are metonymically interchangeable with Japanese nature itself (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993:132). Indeed, for my informants, it is often necessary to ask for clarification when speaking about the natural world as to whether they mean 'nature as in forests' or 'nature as in fields'¹⁰. Fields and rice are consequently highly significant and nationally recognisable symbols that rely upon an association between people, food and nature. Japanese food and Japanese agricultural land is a powerful way of imagining a localised national community. Ohnuki-Tierney (1993; 1994) contends that rice is mobilised symbolically as Japanese history, spirituality, nature, geography and uniqueness.

Senri Yama mobilises the power of its rice crop to invoke a widely understood symbol of local Japanese identity. The preference of Senri Yama's residents for explicitly Japanese rice, and often for the rice of specific regions or that which has been grown by family members, also attests to the importance of rice to contemporary identities. Rice however, can only be depended upon so much. In 1993, Japan was forced to import rice from abroad to supplement an extremely poor crop. Furthermore, the local rice farmers of Senri Yama explain that the future of local rice production is unlikely. Changing diets and land developments mean that rice might no longer be so fundamental to the Japanese sense of identity especially for communities like Senri Yama. This is because, as discussed in the previous chapter, many people have become reliant upon pre-prepared meals and also have a growing interest in cuisines that do not feature rice as a prominent

¹⁰ Tucker (2003) provides a thorough discussion of Japanese language terms for nature and comments upon this ambiguity as having arisen due to the changes that the language underwent in relation and response to European languages.

component. The main factor that has led to a drop in the production and consumption of local rice, however, is simply that farmland is almost continually being developed into new residential areas as people move away from the more expensive inner city to the comparatively cheaper peripheral districts.

Robertson (1991) explores how modern local governments urge the community to remember a local authentic past in order to perpetuate cultural nationalism at the local level. I suggest that this association has been constructed and utilised historically by the Japanese state as a way of coalescing the people of the islands of Japan into one manageable nation. Prior to the Tokugawa period, the people of the Japanese islands consumed a more regionally diverse diet. Rice cultivation had not become widespread and local people relied upon locally specific crops (Schnell, 2005). Rice cultivation was disseminated throughout the Japanese archipelago in order to unite the population, not only so that the people could be taxed uniformly and governed by centralised official administrators, but so they would also be bound together into the cooperative and communally reliant communities necessary for agricultural work. In the twentieth century, this pre-modern arrangement came to be touted by the *Nihonjinron* as one reason why Japan possessed a distinctly collective culture quite dissimilar from any other (see Befu, 1981; 1987; Dale, 1986). This resonates with many residents of Senri Yama.

As Goro Sasagawa, illustrates:

Maybe it would take you many years to understand us Japanese. Maybe it is not possible for a foreigner. Maybe it sounds impolite; maybe I cannot understand Australian people, but I think the Japanese are very unique...As you say, rice is very important, but it is hard to tell you why. It is something that I think you must be Japanese.

Goro's opinions are shared and were articulated by many informants. Despite *Nihonjinron's* oft criticised perspective on Japanese uniqueness (see Dale, 1986), the relationship between Japanese food and national identity is one that virtually all of my informants deemed to be something innately understood only by Japanese. Senri Yama's local fields were described as the most significant emblem of Senri Yama's singularity. Because Senri Yama has its own rice fields, a slice of true Japan is immediately appreciable for its residents. Senri Yama is closer to the authentic image of Japan than its urban neighbours and because of this is regarded as special by its inhabitants. This conception of Senri Yama is tied up with the popular imagination of traditional *furusato* as a place with the capacity for local food production.

While the idyllic *furusato* is a place characterised by community participation and co-operation (see Hendry, 2003a and Schnell, 2005) Senri Yama's rice fields and vegetable gardens are not sites of community involvement; they are tended by elderly individuals and couples and occasionally (usually only during harvest) other family members. Other local residents watch farming occur from afar with the recognition that while they are not involved, farmers and farms are important nostalgic and picturesque elements of the local area. Older farmers see this attitude as indicative of why the local fields will inevitably be urbanised. Takahashi-san lamented one evening while we drank sake on his veranda:

They [young people] think this [the local rice fields] will last forever. What they don't realise is that it is us [the older generation – their parents and grandparents] that is keeping it [local farming] going. They don't want to farm...the work is too hard for them. But soon they'll see that it's all gone and wonder why they're eating American rice.

3: *Locally Grown Identities*

In Takahashi-san's declaration, a certain bitterness is evident. The apparent slur upon American rice is intentional and shows a mistrust of imported rice that is widely held, especially among older people. These older people often hold the opinion young people take Japanese rice for granted, not understanding the work it takes to cultivate. This is evinced by their unwillingness to participate in local agriculture. While affronted by the younger generation's perceptible ambivalence to the predicament facing local farming, older Senri Yama residents do concede that the changing values and aspirations of people today is impelled by more than their personal wishes. Fujita-san, a local elderly farmer comments upon this:

It is hard work, you're right. And yes, I can see why young people don't want to [farm rice or vegetables]. There's no money in it anymore and it is hard work! Maybe it isn't surprising that they don't want to start.

Even for those not directly involved in cultivation, local farming is still valuable to distinctions of local identity. I explain this value with reference to 'cultural capital' as defined by Bourdieu. Cultural capital is knowledge and expertise that people use to gain power and status within particular societies. In this instance, the cultural capital is peoples' knowledge about food and this knowledge instils the actual foods themselves with value that can be transmitted through consumption, bought and sold. Buying and eating locally grown food has similar connotations of privileged cultural capital as buying regional food from department stores. However, locals are not just expressing a connection with Japanese land, they are showing a connection with their *own* land.

Upon arriving in Senri Yama, the first thing that struck me about the local farming community was its persistence despite the constraints of urbanisation, the industrialisation of the food system and its apparent extraneousness to

contemporary lifestyles. Within the first few weeks of my arrival I began walking the area in order to familiarise myself with it. My apartment was on a gentle rise right at the edge of a densely housed neighbourhood and looked over the large back gardens of a number of traditional homes. These are not artistic gardens cultivated for their visual beauty, but functional vegetable patches that have been designed with practicality and productivity in mind. The elderly gardeners spent hours every day, bent double, digging, pulling weeds, erecting trellises, harvesting, watering, composting and burning rubbish. Further away were other areas devoted to rice fields and more extensive vegetable gardens that are owned and worked by locals who either live adjacent to the land or come daily from further away on scooters or old vans. When I returned to Senri Yama in early 2010, even more of the local land had been developed into residential zones. The construction site that abutted my small apartment complex had been completed and brand new houses and businesses stood where a bamboo forest and lake once lay. One distant hillside was in the process of being cleared and levelled for more houses and several fields that were productive rice paddies had been sold and bulldozed. What pleased me was that residents had simply dedicated themselves even more to filling their gardens with vegetables. Even new residents had begun their own small gardens outside their new houses.

Home gardens provide a few different kinds of vegetable and fruit for a single family. The more extensive fields supply fresh vegetables and fruit for extended relatives with enough left over to sell from local stalls. Regularly grown vegetables are several varieties of onion, scallion and leek, potatoes, bitter melons, sweet potatoes, *shiso* leaves, edible chrysanthemums, sweet peas, melons, yams, pumpkins, various leafy greens, cabbages, turnips, cucumbers, *daikon* radishes,

eggplant and tomatoes. Fruits are also grown in small amounts, including persimmons, apples peaches, apricots and loquats. Oranges, grapes, quinces and lemons are also present.

Rice is a prized local crop and one that takes up the most space. The rice fields are those which most appeal to the local residents as symbolic representations of Japanese land. A staple food that occupies a central position in most meals, small rice fields provide only enough rice to supplement the diets of the families who own them. Local rice, while not as distinguished as the rice of Japan's paramount regions, is a highly valued cultural commodity. Rice is grown in such limited quantities that it is too valuable to be sold to people other than those that are personally known. Without direct connections with the families that still grow rice in and around Senri Yama, it is extremely difficult to procure. In this way, the highly limited production and consumption of local rice explicitly marks the 'old families' of Senri Yama as touch-stones of local authenticity, as they are really the only people to own and cultivate rice locally. Vegetables and fruit are purchased by anyone; rice however is passed along solely personal and habitually familial ties as a way of cementing and maintaining close bonds.

Amongst the fields abutting the hills, a few aging farmers still live in ancestral houses. Those who engage in food production do so with an understanding that they could well be the last of their kind. Their children virtually all have demanding jobs and little interest in taking over when their parents can no longer tend the fields. Contemporary city lifestyles can rarely be reconciled with farming responsibilities. Encroaching residential developments and roads combined with peoples' increasing dependence upon supermarkets and imported foods conspire against local food producers and herald their inevitable decline.

Even so, many locals support their farming neighbours and are highly appreciative of their continuing efforts. As one informant, Nakano-san, commented as we watched some farmers burning dead rice stalks in the distance; *“These older people [the local farmers] remind me of what this place might once have been like. They seem oblivious of the world around them as they go about their work.”* This sentiment is shared by many locals. If one ignores the houses and roads and faces in just the right direction, one can find a view without modern development and urbanisation. For many locals, it is these brief glimpses of local life that draws out feelings of belonging. These people too, bemoan the fact that within the next decade or so, the area will likely be so altered that opportunities to purchase and grow crops and vegetables locally will be minimal. Despite peoples’ apparent frustration with the gradual development of their town, urbanisation in the name of progress is seen as unavoidable. Rouse’s (1991:8) claim that “during the last 20 years, we have *all* moved irrevocably into a new kind of social space” reflects the developments in Senri Yama. One local, Takashi, a man in his thirties commented likewise: *“When I was growing up here, this was all farmland. That’s changed now. In ten years, there will be even less.”* Prospects for continuing local farming are indeed bleak. Apart from small vegetable gardens, at the current rate of urbanisation, Senri Yama will soon appear much like any other urban neighbourhood. This will almost necessarily mean that consumption habits in Senri Yama will be forced to conform to those of their urban neighbours as distinctive local foodways become more impractical.

Fukui-san and his young family moved into the suburb beside Senri Yama six years previously and live in a large Western-style house on the edge of the more traditional centre of town. Fukui-san had just taken up a more senior position in

the shipping company he works for closer to town and decided with his wife that it would be better in the long-term to buy a larger house in a peripheral district rather than a far smaller apartment. Fukui-san and his wife had two children soon after moving and decided that the quality of life in the area would be better because of its proximity to natural areas and farmland. Fukui-san expressed his dismay at the clearing of the bamboo forest and the filling in of the small lake that would have been right beside their house. Many other residents in the local area share these feelings. As Fukui-san said:

It would have been good if it had kept. It was actually the reason why we picked the house we did. Now it wouldn't have really mattered if we'd picked another because we're just going to have more houses next to us anyway...I guess it's inevitable, we moved out here and other people had the same idea. It's too bad that they have to destroy the very reasons for that move though.

Vegetable Connections

For many elderly vegetable growers, selling vegetables is a way of connecting with others in the area. Exchanging food has a long history as a common way of engendering close communal sociality. Goro Sasagawa is a retired grandfather who has lived his whole life in the area. His old friends often drop by to chat and reminisce. Goro and most of his friends attended school together and were playmates as children. When he retired he began tending the house's large garden and found that many of these friends had also retired and taken up similar pastimes. Now, the growth and exchange of vegetables with neighbours and friends has come to occupy most of Goro's time. Trading home grown vegetables with friends and selling excess produce through a small stall by the roadside in front of his house allows Goro and his wife Michiko to participate in the social sphere of Senri Yama far more than they had previously. Goro explained:

When I was working I was rarely at home. My wife still met with many neighbours but I did not have time for this... Now I see our neighbours regularly and many of them are people I knew long ago. It keeps me busy. Now I see neighbours every day... We talk about the gardens and local news.

Likewise, residents that buy produce from Goro and his neighbours feel that they are participating in a community much along the lines of a pre-modern village. Nobu Fukui's wife, Misaki is delighted by the selection of local produce and also the sociality that arises around it:

When we first moved to here, I would walk around and see the little stalls by the road. I felt too shy to take the vegetables and leave money when people weren't there, but when I went to a small market, everyone there was so friendly. The grandmothers there welcomed me and would give me a little extra [extra vegetables] and remember me from earlier. This place is very open like that.

Because Misaki works in the city centre, she has little time to socialise around her home, however she is hopeful that eventually, she will be able to make friends with some of the people she has briefly met while buying fruit. By growing, buying and eating locally grown foods, people participate in the community and express their belonging. This is because buying local foods necessitates direct contact and communication with the people who grow and sell fruits and vegetables rather than the impersonal interactions that occur in supermarkets and department stores. As the basic components of a dish, vegetables also require preparation to become part of a meal, so 'buying local' is a possible indicator of a skilled cook, and as I discussed in the previous chapter, someone who subscribes to the 'traditional' values of home cooking. Selecting locally grown vegetables over the commonly regarded poorer quality supermarket produce also marks one as a discerning cook, someone who prefers quality, flavour and the symbolic importance of 'localness'

over convenience and variety. Trust and familiarity add to a sense of community.

Local growers are directly available to consumers. They can be known personally, addressed by name and one can have conversations about local news and local produce. Relationships like this are impossible with international producers and the makers of commercially produced foods. (I discuss this further in chapters 5 and 6.)

Local produce is important to Yukio-san, a local housewife, because it is through her support of her neighbouring farming families, that she feels like she is participating in a local community. Saito-san commented one day across the counter of his shop, that one of the things that makes his sweet shop distinctive is that, because his family has lived in the town for a long time, he can source locally grown rice for his craft through personal contacts.

Not many shops can claim that! True, because of the quantities, I can't make all the sweets from local rice, but it's good to use it for the special *wagashi* [tea sweets made from glutinous rice].

Saito's shop is one of the only shops in Senri Yama that sells locally grown foods. His use of local rice for only his most exceptional *wagashi* reflects the common belief that local foods possess an intrinsic value. Local rice products are sought after. Only a couple of local farmers still grow the appropriate rice as most have switched to new versatile and pest resistant varieties. Saito's *wagashi* are mostly sold within Senri Yama and bought by locals. On some holiday weekends Saito sets up a small stall at the train station in the next district and sells his sweets there. Saito's handmade goods are comparatively expensive and out-price local supermarkets wares. They are generally bought and consumed for special occasions.

Like the European nations in Parrot et al.'s (2002) study, an interest in preserving local, historically based and culturally significant agricultural and eating habits against the continuing incursion and adoption of foreign eating practices and products is reflected in the value of local foods. This is, however, largely restricted to regions that are deemed special because of their longstanding production of famous foods. Senri Yama is not associated with an important edible cultural property, so farming land and local producers have little protection against urbanisation. From the outside there is little commercial reason to preserve local farmland.

Eating Local

Peoples' choice of local produce reflects a privileging of localness. Rather than buying supermarket Mexican melons many locals buy melons from local vendors. Of course, one has to wait until the melons are ripe and for the vendor to appear on Saturday morning, but such inconveniences are part of the experience of investing in local produce. Buying local produce is not about immediate gratification but about more intimate understandings of local belonging, seasonality and freshness. Locally grown foods are thought to possess virtues of flavour and freshness because of this localness. Apples are especially crisp and flavoursome when freshly picked from local trees. Persimmons hanging from the branch in late autumn and in baskets at fruit stalls evoke sentimental reflections upon the passing seasons and symbolise the common association of food with the seasons and nature. The season's first produce attracts premium prices, as do especially good quality produce like unblemished fruit and vegetables. These are often bought as gifts or reserved for special meals while regular local produce is cooked in the home in

everyday dishes. Most local produce is fairly inexpensive as farmers see no reason to ask exorbitant prices for what they grow. This adds to peoples' trust in local farmers as they are not simply out to make a profit.

People often compare the experiences of local food provision to supermarkets. Bought from a roadside vendor, five apples are handed over in a recycled plastic bag with a friendly smile and a reminder to eat them soon so they will be crisp and fresh. Juxtaposed with their standardised, foam-packed, polished and glossy counterparts in supermarkets, they contain sentiments of personal relationships between the grower and buyer. As one local woman, Kumiko, whom I met at a farmer's stall explained:

I can talk to the people who sell these vegetables and feel included...I don't know these people [the vegetable sellers that day] very well, but they are always friendly. I have bought vegetables from them for a few years now, and though we aren't close friends, they remember me and know my name and will always tell me when a vegetable or fruit is especially good.

Such explanations are common when I speak to people about why they choose to buy locally grown foods. A great part of belonging to a local community and being connected to it is the sense that others know and care about you and that in turn, you know and are helping other locals. This engenders a feeling of communality and belonging. In this way local foods can become edible manifestations of neighbourhood sociality.

Toshii, a middle-aged business man from Nara told me a story about how he began a relationship with a farmer on his weekly bicycle rides through the countryside. On one trip he stopped to rest and noticed a tree laden with persimmons or '*kaki*'. After speaking with the nearby farmer who assumedly owned the tree, the farmer offered him some fruit for free. Toshii returned the next

week with a gift of *kakinotane*, a savoury snack made from rice. This gift has poetic significance as *kakinotane* meant “persimmon seeds”. Over the proceeding weeks, Toshii visited the farmer and each time they exchanged small tokens of food. This is a return to practices that link production closely with consumption in and through monetary and non-monetary transactions and practices. The salient point is that *those* persimmons (or other produce), have been grown *there*, by *that* person. Local produce is a natural extension of the local land and the efforts of local people. To be a recipient of this produce is to be included in this chain, not only as the final destination in an order of food provision, but also as a member of a cycle that feeds back into the local community and land. In Senri Yama, locals support locals and together maintain a feeling of community running alongside contemporary national and global food supply chains. Local foods situate people within the spatial context in which they are consumed and connect them with locally emplaced practises. As locales are increasingly opened up to others around the globe, people find it comforting to associate themselves with people in their immediate situation (Hinrichs, 2000: 295).

Supermarkets manage and standardise foodways through their control of previously local processes of food production and procurement (Freidberg, 2007:321-323). Widespread commercial brands are often region-less and do not have the same authentic credibility. Intensive cooking and preparation can fashion commercial ingredients into home cooked meals, but cannot not convey the nuances of freshness and local connectivity that local produce can. I see the desire to consume local foods as a reaction to the proliferation of contemporary commercial foods. Local consumers want to purchase locally grown produce to signify their authenticity and localness in contrast to the homogeneity of super-

brands and the perceived sameness of common urban lifestyles. To a great extent, this is a generational phenomenon, as it is generally older people who are involved in the cultivation, preparation and consumption of local foods. Younger people do not give so much importance to home-cooked meals, partly because of a lack of interest, time and skill for cooking and also because younger people tend to be more interested in expanding their experiences of international foods. Within Senri Yama, the local food system is consciously juxtaposed with larger-scale international and industrial food systems, represented by supermarkets, convenience stores and fast-food establishments that are depended upon by many local people. My informants made clear distinctions between that which was seen as modern, convenient and well-stocked with variety, and that which represented a historical, authentic and traditional mode of food supply. Ritzer (2003) marks a similar distinction occurring worldwide. As I have discussed, supermarkets, fast food chains and convenience stores are commonly regarded as anonymous and impersonal, despite being central in most, and especially younger peoples' lives. Many of the foods these places sell have been produced and or grown far away, sometimes on the other side of the world.

In contrast, local food systems occur directly in a manner where consumers are able to straightforwardly interact with the very people who have grown or produced the foods on offer. These people are neighbours, old school friends, or just familiar faces around the streets of Senri Yama. For some residents, the farmers' stalls that are set up along the sides of some streets on weekends and some evenings are a novel way of supplementing a diet that is almost completely made up of foods that have been grown in distant locations either within Japan or outside the country.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the importance of locally grown and produced foods in the lives of my informants. These foods, foraged *yamashoku* and farmed vegetables, rice and fruits add significantly to peoples' experience of the locale as a distinctive and intrinsically local place. Food grown locally represents ties to the past because its production is tied up with the biographies of local families. Because many farmers are from original families, for other residents, Senri Yama is understood as a traditional place with manifest ties to the past. Local food also means the presence of particular agricultural landscapes, the passing of the seasons and significant cultural symbols of identity, tradition and historical continuity. Agricultural landscapes contribute to the social imagination of authenticity and the sense that Senri Yama is a 'real place'. Local foods are valued higher than commercial foods because of the connotations of authenticity and tradition they hold. These foods are either grown personally or have been obtained directly. Their origins can be seen and their production methods understood. Rather than being available year-round despite the season, local food represents the seasons themselves. Local food is safe, fresh and thus more highly valued within the Japanese culinary system.

Local foods engender the kinds of sociality that are popularly associated with pre-modern times as locals come into face-to-face contact with one another over the locally emplaced provision of food. This builds a sense of community spirit, pride and trust that is regularly contrasted with supermarket and convenience store food systems of anonymity, efficiency and facelessness. Local people imagine themselves as 'true locals' through participation in local food

systems because it is contiguous with widely held perceptions of what 'authentic localness' is; the *furusato*.

Local agriculture, while small-scale and already dying out, still represents to residents Senri Yama's distinctiveness as a place. By associating themselves with local agriculture people take on some of that distinction in their own identities. In a world where the uniqueness of local places has become increasingly rare and problematic, local people maintain a sense of local identity through consumption habits that place great importance on origins. At the same time however, with the exception of a few elderly people who eat simple diets of locally grown vegetables and rice, everyone consumes a great deal of food that is imported from international sources and bought from supermarkets. While significant, locally grown foods only contribute a proportionally minimal amount to peoples' everyday diets. In the next chapter I discuss how Japanese food, not just local food, contributes to peoples' sense of belonging to the nation.

Chapter 4: Being Japanese: Eating Japanese

So far, I have explored a number of ways that foodways are significant in the negotiation and presentation of various identities. This has included peoples' identification as members of a family, cosmopolitans and as aficionados of tradition. I have shown the importance of home cooking and locally grown foods and how these contribute to peoples' representations of themselves as members of the community of Senri Yama. I have recognised that peoples' identities are multi-faceted and contextual. While the locale, as 'home', is a central part of peoples' sense of belonging and of themselves, people also identify as members of the nation of Japan. In an increasingly interconnected world, where the international arena and the stuff of globalisation has come to be notable in almost every aspect of local life, national culture and distinction are also very important in peoples' everyday lives. I contend that national identity can be fruitfully investigated at the local level, as it is from there, and the everyday practices that occur there, that people develop their sense of belonging to a national community. In doing this, I consider national identity, like local identity to be enacted in the mundane practices and with the commonplace minutiae of everyday life. I treat, food and foodways, as part of everyday life that people strongly affiliate with, as important foundations of national identity. Like the importance of the 'historic land' as a repository of memories and associations for societies, historic foods also provide a bastion of identity. In this chapter I foreground the place of local food and eating in peoples' demonstration of Japaneseness as a national cultural identity. To do this, I refer to a case study that demonstrates the cultural significance of the consumption of 'traditional' Japanese food. I go on to discuss how food and eating represents the

nation and national identification in the lives of my informants by reflecting upon the creation and consumption of a national cuisine that reminds people of their national belonging.

Food is a cultural object often used by both individuals and societies to represent themselves and their histories. Tradition is tied up with this, as the term 'traditional' is used to assign meanings, legitimate authenticity and confer historical continuity to objects and practices. Traditional foods therefore are powerful vessels of cultural identity, representing a collective history of cultural distinctiveness. As I demonstrated in chapter 3, images of authenticity and traditional identities are evident in local foods. Robertson (1998: 111) specifies that:

[N]either Japanese culture nor Japanese tradition constitutes an autonomous, congealed essence except as historically specific, dominant expressions of Japaneseness, in which case each becomes synonymous with *national culture*. (Italics in original)

While both culture and tradition fluctuate over time, there is a tendency for people to see them as invariant (see Hobsbawm, 1983: 1-2). I argue that in the contemporary period, internationalisation and heterogeneity in the cultural marketplace inspire people to seek from the past what they consider to be stable markers of authentic Japanese identity. This is apparent in food choices that often selectively privilege the 'authentic' and the 'traditional'. The first section of this chapter introduces what national cuisine is and the second focuses upon traditional dining experiences and how they contribute to peoples' feelings of national belonging. Following this I will explore how notions of cultural property and Japanese identity are salient in Japanese foodways and constitutive of national identity in Senri Yama.

National Cuisine

Because of the plethora of international foods, the decision to eat or cook Japanese food subtly marks a person in a particular way as being proud of one's national identity. As Honda, one young female informant notes:

Eating Japanese food shows a certain style I think. I mean, lots of people eat different things all the time, but if they go home to cook Japanese food or they choose to eat Japanese food outside I think it means something important. In my case, I eat Japanese food very often because it is something I crave. I don't really feel that way about other foods. I think a lot of people feel this way. Like the body wants it because it recognises it somehow.

Honda refers to a kind of shared appetite for specifically Japanese food. This sentiment was also held by many other informants who spoke of their bodies 'desiring' Japanese style food. In this way, the belief that Japanese food is qualitatively superior to international foods sustains the widespread sense that Japanese food is a characteristic element of national culture and national bodies. Many of my informants took me to restaurants in Senri Yama and in the regions and cities around Osaka to show me their food and culture in much the same way as I was shown around temples and gardens. Eating, however, allows an appreciation of the more sensual aspects of Japanese culture. One middle-aged male informant, Kubota-san explained the various textural preferences of the Japanese as we ate our way around Kubota's favourite dining establishments in Kyoto. Slimy and slippery textured foods he regards as being representative of many Japanese dishes, from slippery *soba* and *udon* noodles to the slimy surface of fresh squid and octopus. Kubota explained that these are textures that all Japanese appreciate and that he would not be surprised if I didn't like them or find them remarkable because I was western and hence could not be expected to appreciate the characteristically exotic nuances of Japanese food.

My informants in Senri Yama regard their eating habits as representative of the national diet. Dishes that signify Senri Yama as a distinctive locality because they contain or are entirely constituted by local ingredients are important, but these meals are understood to represent a national cuisine rather than a local one.

As Nobu-san noted;

There's nothing really special about our food [local diets]. The dishes are the same. It's much the same as anywhere else in Osaka. Other regions might have different kinds of dishes, but everyone will recognise them as Japanese. It's not like looking at French food or Mexican food and thinking 'what's that?'

Having roughly the same diet binds the people of Senri Yama to the rest of Japan in an act of commensally consuming a standardised national diet. The central issue here is that while people have strong affiliations with Japanese food, the national cuisine and peoples' eating habits are anything but clear-cut and distinct. External places have long wrought considerable influence upon Japanese culinary culture. Despite this, many informants still understand Japan and its food as unique.

But what is Japanese national cuisine? While my informants seem to have a clear understanding of what Japanese food is, as Bestor (2004) has asserted, the distinctions they see are not always consistent or clear. Some guide to defining Japanese cuisine can be found in the cooking techniques, ingredients and the aptitude of a food to evoke sentiments and feelings and the imagination of a national identity and culture. However Japanese food is a capricious categorisation. It is immensely difficult to pinpoint exactly which dishes are unequivocally Japanese. People continually gloss over contradictions and inconsistencies. Simmered, grilled and steamed dishes are thought of as Japanese more so than fried dishes despite the large number of dishes that are fried and still regarded as

Japanese. Roasted and baked dishes are, however, more categorically not Japanese; few houses possess ovens and these cooking methods were not present in Japan prior to the modern period. Category crossing occurs constantly however, this problematises the clear differentiation between foreign and Japanese food. Bread (*pan*) with *adzuki* bean filling (*anpan*) is a popular snack and a familiar image for the Japanese (the cartoon character, *anpan-man*, for example), as are melon *pan*, brown rice *pan*, sesame *pan* and *matcha pan*. In such cases, the use of Japanese ingredients and flavours renders an otherwise foreign food into something typically domestic. Ingredients are thus important in peoples' understandings of Japanese food. Tofu, fish, soya beans, *konyaku*, noodles, rice, green onion, persimmon, mandarin, yams, sweet potato, seaweed, soy sauce and rice wine are just some ingredients that people consider characteristically Japanese regardless of their original origins or similarities to foreign foods. Japanese national cuisine is not a primordial menu but a thoroughly globalised and contestable array of foods and influences, held as identifiably Japanese despite evident contradictions and exceptions. For instance, Ohnuki-Tierney (1994 and 1999) and Cwiertka (2006) have shown that red meat, while historically taboo in Japanese diets, became central to late 19th century proscribed diets as a means to strengthen the Japanese race. The rush to disseminate red meat across the nation's diet came as the Japanese state sought to enter the future by selectively dispensing with their past. Gluck (1985:184) writes that in the 1880s, meat-eating associations were springing up in Tokyo, in the belief that red meat would bolster the Japanese physique. Cwiertka (2002: 15) writes that until red meat was considered critical to strengthen the bodies of especially Japanese troops, it was not part of the Japanese cooking repertoire. In the post-war era, military menus were reproduced in

restaurants, schools and hospitals and on into mainstream culture (Cwiertka, 2002:15). Red meat is now ubiquitous in Japan and appears in many dishes and meals widely considered traditional and historically Japanese. It should be noted however, that most people realise that red meat is not the archetypal Japanese diet and are quick to point out that the quintessential Japanese diet foregrounds rice, vegetables and fish in contrast to a “Western” diet of red meat, wheat (bread) and potatoes.

Many ‘typical’ Japanese dishes have noticeable similarities to and influences derived from both Asian and Western sources. Extra-local and global influences have long pervaded ‘national’ cultures and their artefacts including their foods, so it comes as no surprise that even purportedly ‘national’ foods share similarities and influences with other foods globally. At the same time, we must understand that this has long been the case; the transport and dissemination of food and food knowledge over great distances means that few cultures can claim a ‘purely national’ cuisine. This considered, ‘national’ cuisines are important categories for distinguishing difference and identity for people. As Cwiertka (2006) notes, cuisine categories become indistinct over time, as once foreign dishes and ingredients become familiar and widespread. Domestic variation in dietary habits can also become homogenised over time as class differences are erased and transportation and extra-local influence is disseminated. Cwiertka (2006) notes that by the middle of the twentieth century, significant markers of distinction between elite and common foodways in Japan had all but disappeared. Today, the distinction between regional foodways has become equally hazy, despite its continued propagation.

Consuming the Past: Traditional Dining in Contemporary Japan

This section of the chapter examines peoples' consumption of traditional foods in 'authentic' surroundings and focuses upon a particular restaurant in the outskirts of Osaka owned by one of my informant's families, the Onoes. I argue that tradition is an element of Japanese culture that people perceive and use to oppose the transient, fragmented present. People feel that eating traditional foods, especially in traditional places using traditional serving ware, tables and utensils is a way of practicing authentic Japanese cultural identity that precedes modern hybridity and international influence. This is why the triptych of rice, pickles and soup can stand in contrast with Western diets; they hark back to a time before Japanese diets incorporated red meat. As Ohnuki-Tierney (1993) states, the Japanese tend to use juxtaposition to 'the other' in order to cement constructions of the self.

Traditional foods and food practices on a local scale connect people with what they believe to be an authentic and distinctive national identity. This is based upon peoples' belief that the past, and the foods, practices and objects associated with it, represent Japan as a unique nation. The supposition of a historically 'pure' Japanese culture is a mainstay of modern Japanese identity, the 'real history' versus the 'fake present' (see Pratt, 2007:293). It is within peoples' everyday lives that people connect to the authentic past. John Clammer (1997:161) asserts that:

...[D]isenchantment of the world resulting from the rise of abstraction and abstracted rationalities can be very much held at bay by the concreteness of everyday life, the way of life most celebrated in Japanese indigenous identity.

I contend that the 'everyday life' that Clammer writes of, while located in the present, may also refer to what people perceive to be elements of everyday lives of the past. In this way, traditional practices and objects are used to imaginatively

transport people into the past. This past is however, only an imagination of a particular past; the reality of old Japan as a place of quietude, leisure and delicious, delicately prepared foods was but a fragment of the reality of the privileged few (see Rath, 2008). The highly aestheticised meals served at the Onoe's restaurant are not historically common fare but more rightly an imagined representation of the menus of past eras.

People rarely regard authenticity and tradition as the cultural values and ascriptions that they technically are. Rather people tend to suppose them to be actual properties; observable, appreciable, measurable, tasted and smelled. What people believe to be authentic foods are typically compared with others that are considered inauthentic; often foods understood to be products of industrialisation such as premade convenience foods and dishes with international influence. Foods with historically Japanese origins (whether truthful or not) are typically ascribed authentic or traditional status. These foods are understood to precede international or modern influence and as such are characteristically Japanese – apt symbols to represent national identity (Creighton, 1997:2 41; Ehrentraut, 1993: 263; Robertson, 1998: 111). However, modern commercial products can also attain a measure of authentic status. Chocolates, confectionaries, soft drinks and snacks with typically Japanese flavours of *matcha* green tea, red *adzuki* bean paste, *sakura* cherry blossom, fried octopus balls, *shiso* leaf and *kuri* chestnut are signifiers of Japanese cultural uniqueness. As such, even these typically modern foods are also believed by many to be representative of Japanese distinction.

Quintessential authenticity and tradition, however, is most apparent in foods and practices that have fewer associations with the contemporary world. Notions of authenticity are fundamental to particular activities like eating

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*
traditional foods and experiencing traditional places. Tradition and authenticity are touchstones that people use to legitimize their own identities as Japanese. Authenticity and tradition are important selling points for many foods and eating occasions. As Guichard-Anguis (2006:74) states, traditional places are popular among the Japanese because they are: '*[L]ooking for places to remind themselves of their own identity.*' This quotation also indicates that cultural identity is something that the Japanese must recall from the past. Local spaces, especially rural spaces, are authentic landscapes of nostalgia, progenitors of Japan's traditional things and identities (Robertson, 1998:110). Tied up with tradition and authenticity are peoples' conscious and implicit understandings of time and place. Traditions connect people with the past and foster a sense of historical continuity. Rural places are seen as static representations of Japanese past; "*the way Japan was*" in the words of Atsushi-san, one young male informant. Such a view, I argue, is essential to peoples' understandings of themselves as Japanese.

As a guest at the Onoe family's restaurant in the semi-rural periphery of Osaka, we sat around the sunken fire-pit (*irori*) in one of the private dining rooms. Makoto-san was usually an extremely busy man, saddled with the twin responsibilities of his own medical practice and obligations to his family business. On this day however, Makoto wore comfortable casual clothes and was visibly relaxed as he prodded the coals to life under the iron pot. Miller's (1994; 2002) assertion that identities are constituted and articulated within the context of 'the event' is clear. Within the context of the restaurant, Japanese identity is engendered by peoples' interaction with objects and scenery, especially through the investment of special significance into these activities. When Makoto explained that; "*this is traditional Japan... this is authentic... this is the real spirit of Japan*" he showed me a

particular cultural lens through which to apprehend the maintenance of Japanese identity. In this case, it is an identity based upon a perception of food being a tangible link with Japanese mythologised past and culture.

It was one of the last warm days of November and the forested mountains, visible in the distance through the open garden windows, were fiery in the soft autumn sunlight. Outside, Makoto's elderly grand-uncle meticulously raked fallen leaves from the gravel paths that followed the elegant curvature of the carp filled pond. Carefully manicured and gracefully positioned trees and shrubs guided the eye to the ascension of a nearby temple pagoda. Rice fields and vegetable gardens could be seen further away, a patchwork of yellows and greens with slowly climbing turrets of smoke from smoldering heaps of post-harvest rice-stalks. Diners appreciated each of these elements as they sat and ate. Combined in this way, such elements are timeless symbols of Japan's cultural identity. As we sat in a room that could have been the present or two centuries ago, these images represented a traditional and unique Japan for Japanese and non-Japanese alike.

Seeking out transcendental experiences like these are important activities for the contemporary Japanese citizen. They are both consumption-oriented and intended to recapture and instill cultural attachment and pride. As many people note at similar traditional dining events, these are occasions to be savoured and learned from, much like a trip to a museum. Through the consumption and interaction with traditional foods and food practices, people remember what it is to be Japanese. Because of the speed of Japan's modernisation and connection with the outside world, Japanese people value their traditional culture as representations of 'true Japan'. Traditional dining experiences imaginatively

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*

transport diners back into a reified traditional past, and in doing so, make manifest in everyday life, the historical attachments that people have with Japanese culture.

Places, objects and food are all important for historical recollections. Combined in an event, each of these elements operates to intensify diners' perceptions of a traditional, intrinsically Japanese past. Urry (1996) emphasises that for many societies, remembering the past through its reproduction is important. Within Japan, particular sites such as museums, temples, shrines, monuments and other historically significant buildings, gardens and natural spaces are charged with integrating the past into the present. The historical village centre of Senri Yama is such a place. The road and the old houses along it are maintained for the past to be celebrated and remembered. Food is often also ascribed powers of resurrecting the past in the present and in doing so cements national and cultural identities as contingent upon past foodways and the foods themselves (see Duruz, 1999; 2004, Holtzman, 2006; Sutton, 2001; Wilk, 1999). I see food as an especially powerful object of historical recollection because of the multifaceted way in which food is experienced. Food is apprehended with a number of the senses and also enters the body. And rather than an isolated object, food is consumed within a dining context that can also accentuate the experience as particularly Japanese. At these times, those present are particularly attentive to traditional objects and symbols, as their appreciation becomes a large part of the purpose of the event itself. Like visiting a museum, diners in the Onoe's restaurant and others like it, are invited to become absorbed in the experience of the food and their surroundings. Enjoying traditional practices, meals and objects are Japanese leisure activities that involve the consumption of not only food but also the setting (Creighton, 1995; 1997, Ehrentraut, 1993). Lockie (2001:24) posits that:

'Space' is thus conceptualised as both signifier and signified; as both a site at which food consumption may take place, and as a contingent and potentially contested set of meanings that may themselves be consumed through those practices associated with food.

The restaurant is not advertised through mainstream advertising but is promoted instead by word of mouth. Western diners are rare – this is a place for the Japanese to experience their own past unhindered by tourists. The restaurant, like others, offers an everyday experience – eating – as separate from peoples' routine lives. It also invites the diner to escape into an image of the past that people feel is more authentic than the present. Huyssen (1995) suggests that peoples' fascination with remembering the past is impelled by a desire to anchor identity to something concrete within a present of fast-paced heterogeneity and cosmopolitan lifestyles (Cwiertka, 1998; Hobsbawm, 1983; Meyer and Geschiere, 1999:10). Traditional foods and dining events are a respite from the frantic pace of modern lifestyles, as well as a way of incorporating tradition and authenticity into ones' life and body through consuming. As Makoto-san notes about people who visit his family's restaurant:

People come out here even though it's far. They want to leave the city and their jobs behind... A few hours here is a time to relax and enjoy what Japan used to be like. You can't see cars, you can't see modern buildings and trains and rushing people. People see this as the real Japan - the heart of Japan.

Young people also view Japan's traditional places as zones of leisure and respite, as Hiramatsu and Tananaka, two male university students explain:

When I want to relax I like to take a train or drive to a small village area. Sometimes I go by myself when not with a friend or my sisters. There, I walk to where I can see rice fields, old houses and natural scenes. The best time is in autumn or spring when nature is most beautiful...I have a Japanese lunch

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*
in a small restaurant of the season's specialty... the things I have seen and
tasted revitalise me and I can go home relaxed.

We Japanese are comforted and feel relaxed when we see and experience
our history. Japan is a peaceful country and there are many beautiful and
historical things that remind us of that when we look at nature, the gardens
and the art of Japanese countryside.

On a more everyday basis, people come into contact with objects, images, places
and foods that operate in a similar, if less encompassing and powerful manner than
going to an exclusive traditional restaurant. A quiet moment savoured within
temple grounds on a lunch break, a picture of a village in a magazine, a roasted
sweet potato in winter, a dish of traditional Japanese pickles, a bottle of *saké* shared
with a friend. Each of these are ways that people connect with and present
Japanese tradition and identity. Many less expensive and more commonplace
establishments operate upon the same premise as the Onoe's restaurant by
offering traditional dining experiences. Such restaurants can be found throughout
the cities and suburbs around my fieldsite. Peoples' desire for traditional
experiences resonate with Urry's (1996:52) postulation that the present has
become an unacceptable source of cultural identity for many people who believe
that the past was a kind of authentic idyll. As I have explained, however, people also
seek international experiences to be cosmopolitan. Buck-Morss (1989) specifies
that the past people often seek to experience is not a realistic history but an
imaginatively constructed illusion. Indeed, the traditional foods that people
consume today are often necessarily influenced and manufactured by modern
methods.

In the present epoch of plenty and variety, even everyday foods are diverse
and exotic compared with previous ages. Restaurants serve even more regal dishes
and exercise great precision and artistry in their presentation. Gourmet foods are

culinary signs that are central to the diner's experience of 'authentic' Japan, these are foods believed to best represent Japan's unique culture. In the explanations of several diners, the dishes served at the restaurant *taste* of tradition. At the Onoe's restaurant, some particular favourites and specialties of the restaurant were served to us, a number of them seasonal delicacies such as *kamameshi* (seasoned and steamed rice) topped with *kuri* (Autumn chestnuts), *chawan mushi* (a savoury custard), *sansai* (wild mountain vegetables), *soba* (buckwheat) noodles, simmered *huri* (yellowtail fish), *tofu dengaku* (*tofu* topped with a *miso* sauce) and many kinds of sashimi, fish and vegetable dishes. Dishes with obvious foreign influences were absent from the restaurant's repertoire. This creates a culinary experience that diners experience as 'purely' Japanese. Makoto-san and his family guided me through each dish as they were served, and explained the specific and tacit cultural meanings of the dishes. Appadurai (1996: 78) refers to this as 'armchair' nostalgia. The substantive and significant content of the food is a blend of the nostalgic aspect of the food and the physical food itself, the 'lubricant of nostalgia'. Of course food, like culture and identity, is constantly evolving; the reification of a previous era's food falsely renders static what has evolved over time, reflecting both local changes and shifts in interconnections in the global system. Duruz (1999:250) notes that the past, reconstructed through food, privileges the positive imaginary and is often a 'product of desire'. Such histories often exist to provide an imaginary but stable base for modern cultural identities (Holtzman, 2006).

National uniqueness and identity is implicated at traditional restaurants, as they simulate a past that represents Japan as it was before the modern period and extended contact with the West. The simulation also selectively ignores China and Korea's vast influence upon Japanese culinary culture. The pre-modern was a

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*
period when Japanese culture and identity was crystallised through comparative cultural isolation, distancing itself from its Asian neighbours (Ishige, 2001). When contact with the outside began in earnest in the late 19th century, the Japanese worked to assert their identity against their others, through equality with their Western counterparts and supremacy over their Asian neighbours (see Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993). This marked a time of rapid and fundamental shifts from previous traditions to modern global connectivity, technology and modes of production and consumption. Japan changed forever, while the pre-modern period became a reified touchstone of authenticity. From my discussions with informants, it is clear that the pre-modern period occupies a special place in the minds of many. It appeals because they consider it an epoch of authentic experiences; a repository of Japan's cultural heritage and identity.

In the Onoe's restaurant the surroundings and serving wares, like the meals themselves, are designed to be savoured. Every room possesses unique features; antique hand-painted *shoji* by a monk from the nearby temple, a *tokonoma* alcove containing a venerable decorative scroll and an *ikebana* arrangement, hand-painted table tops and unobtrusive examples of traditional arts such as vases, pottery, furniture and calligraphy. The corridors are floored in smooth, dark wood and every room with immaculate *tatami* mats. The air is still and fresh, lightly perfumed by the autumn burning outside and sunlight warmed wood. The sheer amount of carefully placed accoutrements compels one to forget that, for many, the rural Japan of the past was a place of hard work and daily labor in the fields, not of languid appreciation of decorative handicrafts. To the dining voyeur, the surrounding rice fields have been divorced from their role as sites of production and have been recontextualised as aesthetic images and signs of Japanese culture.

Only fragments of 'real' historical Japan remain and these have been selectively retained to depict a sanctioned past¹¹. Representations of the past in media, popular culture and in restaurants focus upon these images of splendor just as *Edo* era woodblock artwork depicts an aestheticised countryside. It is this imagination of traditional, rural Japan that represents Japan's unique character and identity to many Japanese (Creighton, 1997:239).

The identification of what is heritage, authentic and traditional, indicates what can be considered an imagined past; these instances of tradition, memory and material artefacts 'are selected according to the demands of the present' in order to sustain popular and useful imaginations for use in the present and within a possible future (Ashworth and Graham, 2005:4). Suitable pasts are thus created in order to satisfy present purposes and to imply an often fictitious continuity with the past (Hobsbawm, 1983: 1). Baudrillard (1990:90) warns that the media replaces history with a simulated version that becomes popularly accepted as 'authentic'. Collectively, the house, surroundings and contents, the clothing of its staff and the flavours, smells and textures of the food invoke the idyllic past that many informants feel is representative of 'real Japan'. As Atsushi puts it, as we eat at the Onoe's restaurant one time: *'Eating this food here is experiencing real history.'* The media and many people use the phrase *'Nihon no kokoro'* (the heart of Japan) to describe traditional places such as Japanese inns and guesthouses, as well as temples, gardens and shrines (Guichard-Anguis, 2006:71). These places encourage guests to immerse themselves in a mythologised conception of the past that has been shaped through contemporary media representations. Images of traditional places and objects cover the walls of subway stations and train carriages,

¹¹ Conversely, other remnants of the past considered unnecessary or unpleasant tend to be destroyed or avoided to better facilitate forgetting.

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese* magazines and television advertisements. Such places and things exist in the minds of my informants as quintessential elements of what it means to be Japanese.

There is however, no perfect simulation of the past. Even the most authentic scenery is inevitably punctuated by some insinuation of the modern. Virtually every dish, influenced perhaps only imperceptibly by contemporary cooking practices or provision methods. However, within traditional events, contradictions and inconsistencies collapse or are ignored. Naturally, people are willing participants in their own illusions. From wearing traditional cotton *yukata* at particularly authentic *onsen* and on some special occasions, to choosing exclusive restaurants located in rural districts. What is known of history, or what is widely learned, guides its re-enactment. These experiences need not be truly authentic, but can be manufactured simulations specifically for the purpose of inciting transportative memories and nostalgia. Diners draw upon a patchwork of popular representations of history as well as social memory to invoke a past they have themselves not experienced, a Japan that exists in the flavours, smells and textures of the meal, in practices such as kneeling on the *tatami* floor to eat, and in the carefully constructed reality of the traditional restaurant around them (Halbawch, 1980). I concur with Barthes (1982:79) when he states that '[p]ast and present are experienced and formed at once, a mirror that reflects the reflection of another ad infinitum into an emptiness which is form.' This past is not a lost or forgotten past, but a mythologised realm of nostalgia that can be occasionally recaptured through the specific ways of consumption that constitute Hobsbawm's (1983) invented traditions. It is diners, as readers of the signs of history that are calling it into a present existence. A meal never before tasted, signifies and transports diners to a

mythic Japan with origins that are shrouded by interpretation and time (Barthes, 1977).

Endorsing a National Cuisine

A number of authors note that the construction of national identity is possibly the most significant kind of identity formation in the contemporary world, as 'the nation' has come to stand as one of the most critical categories of identification even in a post-modern, highly globalised world (Appadurai, 1988; Counihan, 2004; Cusak, 2005). This statement is just as true for work concerning specifically Japan (Bestor, 2004; Cwiertka, 2006; Hiroko, 2008). Within my informants' everyday lives, Japanese cuisine is a category and representation of national communality and culture. While every region has its own special foods, the Japanese diet is widely considered by people to be a component of national commonality (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993). Despite regional variation, people believe that compared with other nations, Japan's national diet exhibits a more marked homogeneity. While people choose to maintain ties to Senri Yama by growing, trading, buying and using locally grown food, affiliation with Japan as a nation is also of crucial importance. I argue that this is because local foods are regarded by locals as potentially unsustainable. Furthermore, regional cuisines are viewed as variations on the theme of an overarching Japanese national cuisine that exhibits the same basic flavourings, cooking styles and ingredients to a large extent. People see national cuisine as more stable symbol, held together by both its widespread consumption and by its juxtaposition with international food.

Within the contemporary world system people seek identification in everyday life through processes of investing the mundane and everyday with

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese* significance (Giddens, 1991a, 1991b; Miller, 1994). It is through this process that my informants' invest their daily food habits with meanings through which they also identify themselves as Japanese. Articles of material culture such as clothing, buildings, furniture and food, are used as tools to facilitate everyday ways of signifying the nation (Billig, 1995). These are the things that my informants most commonly use to demonstrate and represent their Japanese identity; the presence and appreciation of particular styles of building, the (occasional) wearing of traditional clothing, the collection of Japanese objects and the consumption of Japanese foods. As Belasco (2002) notes, however, establishing the significance of a national cuisine in everyday life can be difficult, since most people take everyday food habits for granted. National cuisine signifies an important part of national cultural identity as each nation is assumed to possess a distinct diet identifiably different from its neighbours (Searl, 2002). Nations rely upon the endorsement of a unique national culture in order to cement their legitimacy (Cwiertka, 2006). As I discussed in chapter 2, peoples' identification with national symbols in the everyday does not simply arise from their own beliefs, but is often carefully mediated and endorsed by state and media institutions through directives and encouragements to maintain 'traditional' diets comprised of domestic dishes and ingredients (Appadurai, 1988; Cusak, 2005; Hiroko, 2008). It is these groups, headed by politicians and food-company executives, that stand to gain the most from the popularisation of cultural and national ideologies through food and maintaining peoples' perception that to be Japanese means to eat Japanese food and vice versa (Belasco, 2002). Allison (1991; 2000) explores this issue in terms of Althusser's 'ideological state apparatus'. Allison (1991:195) achieves this by showing how mothers' preparation and their children's consumption of *ōbento* are

mediated by the state-monitored institution of the school. The daily *ōbento* is thus a ritual and an object that is infused with meaning and dictated by cultural guidelines; the mother must prepare a meal that is acceptable to the school's requirements and the child must eat the entire *ōbento* with the rest of the children (Allison, 1991: 195-198). Following her lead, I note that cuisine is suffused with national imagery that my informants consume every day.

Fish and rice are two of the most commonly regarded foods emblematic of Japan's cuisine. These two almost globally consumed comestibles are suffused with an unequivocal national character within Japan that is likely recognised by all Japanese. Cwiertka (2006:10) notes that for the Japanese, rice, soy sauce and fresh seafood are definitive symbols of 'Japaneseness', contrary to cherry blossom or the national flag. This is because the nation is perpetuated in everyday life in a number of banal ways. As Billig (1995:6) notes:

For such daily reproduction to occur, one might hypothesise that a whole complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices must also be reproduced. Moreover, this complex must be reproduced in a banally mundane way, for the world of nations is the everyday world, the familiar terrain of contemporary times

Billig (1995:8) makes the point that the American flag can hang unnoticed on public buildings in the USA, quietly reminding citizens that they belong to a nation. However, following Befu (1987) in Japan, nationalistic sentiments have moved away from such overt symbols such as the flag, the emperor and the anthem because of a widespread feeling of shame due to persevering links between these symbols and the Second World War. Other less blatant everyday items have thus come to be invested with national sentiment. Billig (1995:8) notes how people are reminded continually in their everyday lives that they are citizens of a nation, in

such an unremitting and familiar way that it becomes almost unconscious. Consuming a national cuisine situates people within their national identity, especially since people also know that other members of their nation are also consuming it along with them as a shared diet. Bestor (2004) and Ohnuki-Tierney (1993) have also respectively established the centrality of seafood and rice in the Japanese national diet. Japanese foods are edible national symbols that can be integrated into one's personal identity through physical ingestion (see Fischler, 1988; Rozin, 1976). National cuisines foster belonging because they are understood to be consumed by everyone, summarily endorsing a sense of commensality and national cohesiveness (Appadurai, 1988; Counihan, 2004; Cwiertka, 2007; Palmer, 1998; Pilcher, 1996; Sutton, 2001).

As Billig (1995:8) remarks; "national identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life". Billig's (1995) notion of banal nationalism suggests that with the decline in importance of family and kinship ties, the nation becomes of primary importance in contemporary political action and ideology. While Billig does not specifically consider the Japanese case, McVeigh (2004) offers great insight into the ways that the nation is put to use in different sectors of everyday Japan. As McVeigh (2004:187) notes:

(T)o be a foreigner from the Japanese perspective often denotes "Japaneseness-less," or being deficient in some inexplicable way, identity-conferring stuff. This may be...something more material and mundane, such as a deep admiration for raw fish and rice.

Foods that incorporate the central pillars of Japanese cuisine are everyday foods such as *sushi*, *tempura*, *tofu dengaku*, *yakitori*, *nabe*, *kinpara*, *sashimi*, *udon* and *miso* soup. Each of these dishes are made up of, or contain ingredients widely

regarded as makers of Japaneseness – soy sauce, fish, fermented soy bean paste (*miso*), seaweed, fish stock (*dashi*) – and do not highlight ingredients or cooking methods that are seldom used in ‘traditional’ Japanese cooking, like red meat, dairy products, baking or roasting. Each holds, for many of my informants, connotations of Japanese identity and distinctiveness. These connotations are apparent in the flavours, textures, presentation and preparation of the dishes. Cusack (2005:361) notes that national, regional and ethnic cuisines should not be considered to be neutral, innocent concoctions. Japanese state policies and discourses directing citizens to nurture their identification with Japanese cultural identity are highly pervasive in everyday life¹². At the level of the everyday, citizens are urged to eat ‘Japanese’ to maintain healthy bodies and minds in an intrinsically Japanese manner, thus contributing to the maintenance of a strongly defined Japanese national character and nation. Allison (1991) looks at how food in Japan is constructed as an aesthetically and culturally codified product. State regulations dictate, to an extent, the kinds of cultural, gendered and ideological meanings present in children’s’ school lunch boxes. Food is thus a constructive symbol in peoples’ lives as it influences how reality is viewed and experienced. By ‘eating Japanese’, people ‘become Japanese’ and express this through their food choices and habits.

Allison’s (1992) focus on the great deal of care and attention to detail represented by the food in a Japanese child’s lunch box is emblematic of Japanese cuisine in general as a cuisine that is highly organised and aestheticised according to rigorous standards of appearance, cooking methods and flavour. Allison’s

¹² Hiroko (2008) likens the Japanese state’s control of citizen’s everyday food habits to the organisation of Victorian era sexuality as examined by Foucault.

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese* (1992:197) use of Barthe's semiology (1952) shows how food carries multiple meanings; food is not only food. Allison (1992:198) notes how the methods of preparation and manner of presentation of Japanese food contribute centrally to Japanese food's aptness as a national symbol and way of being Japanese. In this way, it is not only the consumption of Japanese food, but the very principles behind its preparation – naturalness, visual attractiveness, precision and small distinguishable parts – that continually reconfirm one as a member of the culture. Hiroko (2008) reveals the important connections between diet, physical bodies and nationalism by demonstrating how state discourses perpetuate views that hold that healthy Japanese bodies must be nurtured by Japanese food (rice) rather than an internationalised diet in a way akin to how rice fields are cultivated by farmers (Krämer, 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993; 1994). As I have mentioned previously, in Japan, rice became the national staple after its early dissemination throughout the regions of the nation as part of the central government's plan to unify the archipelago's people (Schnell, 2005). As rice and seafood, especially, are endorsed by the government and other interested parties, such as food companies and farming groups, as the 'authentic' Japanese diet, they are in effect maintaining these foods as a historically authenticated manner of Japanese identification that contemporary people can ascribe to. This, in turn, creates a Japanese identity bolstered by the maintenance and promotion of a particular history that centralises Japanese uniqueness. In contemporary Japan, specifically Japanese rice is not only the core of most meals, but is the food that is most consistently mentioned as a food that defines Japanese cuisine. Nakajima-san, an elderly informant, notes this in the following statement:

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*

Rice is definitely the most important food for Japanese. Everyone will tell you this. Without rice, it cannot be a proper meal. Maybe there can be meals without rice, but I think Japanese people will tell you that they would miss it there. A meal with no rice is unsatisfying to the Japanese.

From this, it is obvious that rice is synonymous with the 'meal', this is reflected in the fact that they share the same name; *gohan* is 'rice' and 'meal'. Rice is thus the 'food' of the Japanese. Following from the undeniable significance of rice to the construction of the Japanese self relative to its cultural others (and their diets), the Japanese state makes it clear that it is through everyday food that the citizen can pledge their everyday allegiance to the nation. Japanese food is central to everyday understandings of Japanese nationhood both within and outside Japan. The Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry of 'MAFF' (2005:1) has noted that:

Some might criticize that eating is such a personal thing that [the] government shouldn't regulate [it] by a law. However, [the] Japanese situation over food has already reached to a crisis point, and that a law had to be enacted in order to address these issues.

This is evident in the state's control and dissemination of standardised foods and food habits throughout the nation in order to create a national cuisine (Cwiertka, 2006). The Japanese government, through the MAFF, developed the Japanese food guide and diagram to operate as a tool for the Japanese population to make healthy food choices. The government defined healthy eating diagram is promoted in all Japanese schools and in many local government offices and also in some supermarkets and restaurants in order to bring national dietary knowledge and practice into alignment with nationalistic agendas. The diagram foregrounds rice (first among other grain foods), seafood and vegetables as fundamental foods to the Japanese diet. Schools use the diagram and accompanying guidelines to teach children and their parents about healthy eating and *Japanese* diets. Jenkins (2000)

4: Being Japanese: Eating Japanese

posits, along with others (Giddens, 1991a and Bourdieu, 1990) that self identity is developed early in life. This self identity can be understood to be bound up with a person's understanding of themselves as possessed of a particular national identity. Children thus learn from an early age about what Japanese cuisine is and that its consumption is an important part of being a member of society. Emi, the mother of a young boy who had just begun school the previous year, comments:

I think it's important for children to learn about Japanese food as a part of their cultural education as well as for health. Many children want to eat a lot of fast-food, but I think by learning about Japanese food, they can learn that Japanese food is healthy and very important to a good diet.

Part of the purpose of the MAFF's intervention is driven by a belief that globalising influences contribute to the erosion of traditional Japanese food culture and as such, a key focus is to foreground the importance of incorporating and maintaining traditional Japanese diets. The widespread view that Japanese food, especially the rice, soup and pickles with vegetable and fish side dishes, is the healthiest kind of everyday diet is promoted and disseminated by the government through education institutions and involvement with labelling practices for Japanese food sellers and producers. In Senri Yama, some young mothers express their feelings regarding the frequent parent's group newsletters mentioning the extent to which this placed expectations upon mothers for their children's food habits at home:

Watanabe: "Well, recently they wrote to us saying that a child's food tastes are decided before 10 years old. So we must cook Japanese food often so that there is not a build up of tastes for unhealthy fast-food and other bad foods.

"Emi: "Yes. I remember that they wrote that Japanese diets are vegetarian and that western diets, like English and American are meat eating and they talked about rising health problems."

Watanabe: "Yes. I know! They say that we should be careful not to cook too much meat, because that can make children begin unhealthy habits. If we cook lots of vegetables, especially in a Japanese way, then children will

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*

develop a taste for them and then not feel so attracted to western foods and fast-food.”

Emi: “The last newsletter had a lot of recipes for soy beans, teaching how to make them delicious for children and that soy beans are important for the Japanese because they are protein like meat but much more healthy.”

Author: “Do you believe that meat is unhealthy?”

Emi: “Well, I think that yes, maybe too much is. Maybe too much fat is bad for children yes. My son loves meat but I have to not cook so much.”

Watanabe: “I think fish can be a lot healthier and children still like fish. So too much meat is probably a little unhealthy.”

As the discussion reveals, school organisations are highly involved in disseminating food and cooking information to parents endorsing particularly Japanese diets as the correct diet for children as opposed to an internationalised diet of a certain type that is regarded as unhealthy. One of the most interesting facts is that the newsletter states the importance of feeding children diets high in ‘delicious’ Japanese food so that they will become enculturated to the taste and develop intrinsically Japanese food preferences to guard against the modern incursion of fast-food and meat-rich diets. These assertions posit an important cultural difference between unhealthy western-nation diets and healthy, ‘vegetarian’ Japanese diets. Among many informants, pasta, bread and cheese as western staples are often criticised for being ‘too heavy’ especially for children and old people. These foods, as one informant notes, ‘stay in the stomach’ too long and hinder digestion and as such are not regarded as appropriate evening foods among many people.

Everyday Culinary Nationalism

Appadurai (1988) points out that cuisine reflects class and hierarchical identity, especially in the realm of cookbooks where the historical documentation of recipes reflects the elite class’ access to complex foods (Bourdieu, 1984; Goody, 1982; Rath,

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese* (2008). I consider the homogenisation of national food habits to reflect Gellner's (1983) nation building – the ways that governments and societies create coherent national identities by the production and dissemination of paraphernalia such as flags, anthems, holidays, myths and foods. This process, as Cwiertka (2006) notes, is impelled not only by state directives but also by industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation. Indeed, as Gellner (1983) would have it, nationalism and the birth of nationhood is an articulation of modernity (McVeigh, 2004). Appadurai (1988) notes that in some societies, such as in France, the progenitors of *haute cuisine* have endeavoured to obfuscate its regional and local roots so a French national cuisine could be said to exist for all citizens.

Japanese food is distinctly a unique cultural property and therefore to eat it is to articulate Japanese affiliation with one of the nation's chosen symbols. Cwiertka (2006) contends that modern Japanese cuisine is shaped by Japan's militarisation in the previous century in order to 'civilise' the nation to join other Western nations in the modern world order. The emperor was mobilised as the symbolic head of the nation and it was his adoption of Western dietary practices that spearheaded modernisation along with the popular catch-cry; 'Japanese spirit and Western things'. Indeed, Japan's modernisation is not about subsuming into the West, but becoming 'modern Japanese'. By 'modern Japanese' I mean the contemporary character of Japan as maintaining a distinctively Japanese identity while at the same time holding its position amongst the world's most technologically advanced and internationalised nations. Japan is becoming increasingly defined, its society and regions increasingly homogenised into the nation of Japan (see Gellner, 1983).

'Japanese spirit and Western things' has carried over into the present. Japan is reliant upon significant food imports - around sixty percent of food consumed within Japan originates elsewhere. Using this food, citizens continue to cook in the Japanese spirit, fashioning foods that uphold the national identity. Even so, this issue concerns the Japanese government and also worries some people in terms of Japan's functional and symbolic ability to stand on its own. The everyday edible symbols of national identity are being made from imported ingredients. Many young people simply have no idea that so much of their food is actually made from American wheat, Australian beef, Chinese pork and vegetables and Thai fish. Reconstituted into Japanese food, foreignness is often disguised and such foods appear unproblematically Japanese. However, worry remains for those who are apprehensive that if Japan fails to secure a sufficient amount of food from other nations the situation where Japanese citizens are afforded not only a wealth of choice but also an abundance of food may be short lived. At the extreme, some claim that they have heard media reports that Japan could realistically be plunged back into subsistence upon basic staples of rice, pickled vegetables and *misō* soup.

Here is where a seeming contradiction lies: how could pre-modern cuisine be at once considered the epitome of Japanese cuisine, untouched by foreign influence and held aloft for its national uniqueness, and at the same time, be regarded as undesirable? Rath (2008:43) highlights Cweirtka's (2006:12) indication of Japan's pre-modern cuisine as "'austere' and monotonous - in other words boring". To many informants in Senri Yama, the valorised pre-modern cuisine was the fare of the noble elite, not the meagre diet of the commoner, though even that simple diet has come to represent the essence of Japanese culture and cuisine. Naturally Senri Yama residents enjoy the wealth of choice of modern

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*

foodways and do not wish to return to pre-modern food habits. International diets and tastes are deeply ingrained. Indeed, there is no real contradiction; people desire both an identifiable national cuisine in order to identify themselves as Japanese, while at the same time having diverse international food choices and flavours to explore cosmopolitan identities.

Rath (2008) elucidates the fact that prior to the modern period, food in Japan did not represent the nation. Rath (2008) explains how early-modern samurai banquets and everyday diets were in principle and structure, much the same as the common folk of the time. The central cereal dish (which was not always rice) and the soup, vegetables and side dishes model predominated in most tiers of Japanese society. Befu (1981) and Goodman's (2005:63) reflection that modernity proceeded with the 'samuraisation', or top-down dissemination of family structures of society rather than 'commonerisation' (Schnell, 2005) is also reflected in the modernisation of Japanese foodways. While simple rice, soup and vegetables remain the symbolic and often functional core of a contemporary Japanese meal, the variety and culinary artistry and innovation which are obvious in many Japanese dishes were once the province of the pre-modern ruling class; these are now part of most peoples' everyday diets.

National identity is implicated in everyday practices and objects that remind the Japanese that they belong to a particular nation. It is the associations that people have with things and practices that specifically remind people, consciously or not, that they share a unifying national identity (Billig, 1995). From the food on one's plate, the manner with which it is eaten and served to the distinctive school uniforms worn by students nation-wide, the Japanese are reminded of their national identity. Food can be 'made Japanese' provisionally,

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*

through the use of cooking and presentation methods that mean that even ingredients of foreign origin can be used to create Japanese food. A review of the purchasing and cooking habits of Senri Yama residents reveals that while a large number of foreign ingredients are purchased regularly for use in the home, ostensibly foreign cuisines are rarely cooked.

A seeming contradiction to the assumption of a homogenous national cuisine arises with the recognition that the cuisine of the Japanese islands exhibits distinct regional variation and localisation. This diversity has itself been promoted by the state and other interested parties in order to revitalise and reinvigorate local places as I have discussed earlier. Such moves seem to contravene the construction of a homogenous nation, although as Appadurai (1988) argues, regionalisation can feed back into the imagination of a nation that encapsulates its internal differences and vagaries (Cwiertka, 2006). In the contemporary world where national boundaries are traversed and subverted, even the imagination of a nation of difference can be mobilised to guard against global influences and objects.

Within Japan, symbols of national identity are built from elements both from the local area and the extra-local world; not only from what is created in Japan, but also by the things that have been adopted by Japan from elsewhere. While significant Western influences are generally accepted, the impact of other nations and cultures such as China and Korea upon Japan's culinary culture is largely overlooked by Japan's population (Ashkenazi and Jacob, 2003; Cwiertka, 2006; Ishige, 2001). Among my informants it was far more important to maintain a strong distinction between Japanese food and the foods of neighbouring Asian nations than western foods. This could be due to the various similarities between

Japanese cuisine and the cuisines of China and Korea. An apt national symbol should not resemble too strongly those present elsewhere. As Ohnuki-Tierney (1993) notes; rice in Japan is necessarily *Japanese* rice and is explicitly defined by its difference from Chinese, Asian and American rice. Undoubtedly Japan's longstanding rivalry with its neighbours, especially Korea and China, adds to the general tendency to distance Japanese food and culture from them. Marked parallels exist between a number of dishes and foods that are widely thought to be uniquely Japanese. *Tsukemono* pickles can be compared with Korean *kimchi*, Chinese pickles and sushi to Korean *Kimbap*. *Misō* and *nattō* are also very similar to several Chinese and Korean foods yet Japanese people are unwilling to admit the likeness and often either claim domestic versions precede others or that Japanese adaptations render them categorically different.

Similarities in national cuisines are not surprising; daily many people encounter foods which have been adapted, adopted or imported from elsewhere. The effects of the twentieth century's economic prosperity are visible in the public places and homes of many Japanese. It is reflected in Japan's diverse culinary culture, and is also apparent in peoples' acceptance, adaptation and sometimes rejection of foreign foods. Many of these foods have long histories within Japan as they were brought to Japan and incorporated into its foodways many centuries ago. Such foods include rice, noodles and soy products, which in contemporary Japan, are mainstays of Japanese cuisine.

While Senri Yama is able to continue to grow a small amount of its own food, a feature that is recognised by residents as a confirmation of Senri Yama's special nature and authenticity, the produce grown there is not particular or unique to the area. There are no special fruits or vegetables, fish or any other foods

that are not readily available elsewhere. There is no locally specific dish or method of food preparation. Knight (1994) discusses how within Japan, local towns and villages differentiate themselves from one another by becoming specialist producers of certain foods and articles of material culture (Yagi, 1998). Some villages have prospered with the increased interest that urban consumers have shown, however others have had only limited success. Senri Yama, as a semi-rural, but largely urbanised district, has not attempted to popularise itself, as this initiative is generally restricted to rural villages. For this reason, Senri Yama's distinction from other urban-peripheries is limited and only truly recognised by those who live there. Its boundaries and the things that mark its uniqueness have been blurred by the contemporary diversity of social and cultural influences. Indeed, as communities become increasingly alike, residents find it more difficult to articulate difference between themselves and their regional neighbours. This process will likely continue as Senri Yama is further urbanised and loses more of its farmland.

Informants can taste that Senri Yama produce is especially fresh and often of notable quality. Those that farm rice also testify to the inimitable flavour of their crops; indeed many informants claim that they can distinguish the origin of rice from its flavour. However, there are no local foods that specifically represent Senri Yama. Instead, certain foods signify the nation. Rice is *Japanese* rice and through its consumption, people partake of the national staple in an act of domestic commensality that is often unreflected upon (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993 and 1994). Cooking in Senri Yama demonstrates the process through which the local, regional and national intertwine in everyday life. These categories need not be mutually exclusive. A cook might choose Senri Yama tofu and local vegetables for common

Japanese dishes, or might buy them pre-made from a supermarket. In either case, like many other Japanese dishes, they symbolise, in an altogether mundane and often un-remarked way, the persistent presence of implicitly national cuisine in Japanese daily life.

Even when domestic produce supplies the least proportion of Japan's caloric requirements; when foreign ingredients appear on the table daily in the lives of the vast majority of my informants, the sense of a nationally unified identity pervades many of the normal week's mealtimes. Wilk (1999:244) ponders how in an age when diets and cuisines are notable for their hybridity and variety, such firm, yet changeable bastions of identity can be built. National identity, rather than being weakened by transnational processes of globalisation, is instead bolstered by peoples' compulsion to value domestic and local uniqueness and culture. This echoes my assertion that familiar objects, practices and cultural forms can prompt national belonging, every day. In my fieldsite, nowhere is peoples' pride in Japanese culture more evident than in their reverence for their food. My informants did not speak to me about global sports, wars or diplomatic disputes in order to assert their identities; instead they placed a dish before me and urged me to eat.

The categorisation of what is 'Japanese food' is an important distinction for many of my informants. Food is viewed as a centrally defining feature of cultural and national identity and the difference between Japanese food (*washoku*) and non Japanese food (ethnic/*esunikku* or Western influence/*yōshoku*) holds important connotations for people. Japaneseness can be conferred upon a food through a variety of ways that does not necessarily need be present simultaneously. Many of the same basic ingredients can make a dish that would be recognisable to any Japanese as either *washoku* or *yōshoku*. Japanese curry (*kare rasiu*) is widely

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*
understood as *yōshoku* even when it uses solely domestic produce. *Kare raisu* is a dish that has been adapted from British versions of Indian curry. Though most informants know that *kare raisu* is of foreign origin, only those with special interest in food know of its complex history. Beef can also be cut differently and used with another similar selection of ingredients, flavoured and served in a different way as *Nabe* stew and understood as unqualifiedly Japanese. Tofu is never made into a Western dish; its cultural associations fit in only with the cuisine of Japan and its neighbouring Asian nations. Sahoko, a middle-aged mother of two can, through the use of different flavourings and ingredients, make a Chinese, Korean or Japanese tofu dish with ease. The Japanese version, as with many Japanese dishes is noticeable because of the incorporation of one or more central and quintessential Japanese flavourings; soy sauce, salt, *saké*, *dashi* (fish) stock, rice vinegar and *mirin* (sweet *sake* seasoning). Japanese flavourings are mild and rarely meaty, spicy, hot or brothy. Japanese flavourings work to complement and accentuate the natural intrinsic flavours of the ingredients that they are added to, not to overpower them.

In correspondence with the fact that presentation is a major element of Japanese food preparation, when evaluating a food's identity my informants generally say that the appearance of Japanese food makes it most obviously different to the food of other cultures. Like flavours and certain ingredients, my informants are also highly conscious of the aesthetic properties of Japanese cuisine as markers of food's Japanese identity. As Hendry (1993) points out, the appearance of Japanese food matters a great deal.

Cooking the Image of Japan

The careful preparation and presentation of dishes and foods was disseminated from Japan's social elite in early-modern times (see Ishige, 2001 and Rath, 2008). Because Japanese elite eating habits were originally such that diners ate individually from separate tables, today serving norms have evolved where a meal is typically made up of a number of separate dishes. While many 'one-pot' Japanese dishes exist, the most readily recalled Japanese meal style among Senri Yama people are meals that involve several small dishes with rice, soup and pickles. As Ohnuki-Tierney (1993) states, rice is the only food shared between all present from the same serving tub. In everyday practice however, it is quite common for diners to serve themselves from shared dishes during casual meals. The aestheticisation of Japanese cuisine is also a marked feature of its purported uniqueness. As Rath (2008) notes, at least for the upper class, pre-modern cuisine was diverse and artistic; it was elegantly tailored to display class and status. Today, because such a high proportion of ingredients are imported, Japanese cuisine relies heavily upon its visual appearance to denote its cultural and national identity. Barthes (1988) writes that a plate of food is a sign to be read. It is through cooking and preparation methods that imported ingredients are flavoured and presented in ways that diners understand as Japanese. The visual apprehension and appreciation of food is prominent in its consumption and enjoyment. The typical look of a bowl of *ramen*, the standard appearance of a convenience store *onigiri*, the ubiquitous shapes of *sushi* and *yakitori* – almost every item of Japanese food has a visual paradigm. These archetypes define how food should look and how it should be classified. When dining outside the home or purchasing premade foods, people

are aware of foods' visual recognisability from illustrated menus or the realistic models of individual dishes before making their selection.

Any public space in Japan that contains restaurants reveals to the hungry observer that almost every dining establishment has furnished their facade with a display of delectable dishes (Cox, 2008). Prospective diners slow and stop to consider these dishes to gaze into bowls of *udon*; chopsticks suspending a single noodle dangling into the opaque soup with *kamaboko* fish cake, sliced *negi* scallions, pieces of sliced meat and tofu. Alongside might sit a glass of foaming beer; condensation on the outer surface and beads of effervescence clinging to the inside of the glass. Other establishments display gorgeously fresh sushi. Each perfectly cooked and firm grain of rice moulded expertly into small oblongs; the shining surfaces of the pale squid and the deep garnet of the tuna. Each of these dishes is a replica of a dish offered within and is intended to lure passers-by. For many diners it is not unusual to base a meal selection upon how delectable the food models look. People know that these are only models, but they interact with them as truthful referents of the food promised within. The copies are realer than real; they are perfect images of the foods they depict. They are what food should be and they demonstrate that food has an archetypal and definitive state. As Cox (2008:257) recognises; *'[T]hese commoditised forms appear to be designed and displayed for their visual effects rather than for their material origins and suggest that they are made as a part of a symbolic system for composing objects into signs of themselves.'* The replicas themselves do not satiate hunger, but they provide a visual feast. This kind of consumption is part and parcel of the entire eating experience regardless of the food's edibility for even with edible Japanese food, a great deal of the pleasure experienced during the dining experience is in appreciating the look of the dish.

With plastic 'sample' foods it is difficult to ascertain whether they precede the actual food or vice versa. Cox (2008:259) elucidates this; a sample company makes many standard samples for establishments to buy and display and also may offer a bespoke service where an actual cooked dish is moulded in silicone and recreated. Standard samples are possible because many real foods in Japan are made according to standardised forms.

Osaka's commercial cooking and restaurant equipment district reveals vast catalogues and examples of plastic foods of all kinds. Cox (2008) suggests that the reworking of foreign foods and cuisines into samples is an act of cultural domestication in which the foreign is re-rendered into an image of Japanese taste. Following from this, it is rare to find an international dish that looks 'authentic' as almost invariably, pasta, pizza, stews, steaks even soups have been altered visually to suit Japanese presentation aesthetics. Food models are also involved in the standardisation of Japanese dishes. Restaurant managers and chefs divulge that because bespoke samples are relatively expensive, chefs of actual food do often strive to craft meals that best follow the look of the models themselves. This results in extraordinarily visually standardised fare in restaurants of similar cost and type. Throughout the vast subterranean shopping districts of Osaka, Kyoto, Nara, Kobe and indeed in the far reaches of the suburbs and outlying towns, seemingly the same *tonkatsu*, *ramen*, *udon*, *sushi*, *nabe* and *bento* can be found. Diners often base their food choices upon their appraisals of the models. Ayaka, a young woman in her twenties notes that *"...by knowing exactly what it is you are ordering, you feel relieved."* Yoshii, a businessman in his thirties also places a good deal of importance upon food models. *"I often base where I eat upon how good the models look...Maybe because I can tell from looking, what dish I most feel like. It takes a lot of difficulty*

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese away from making a decision...You know what to expect.*" These plastic likenesses can be understood as examples of Baudrillard's (1981) simulacra. While food models seem to be based on real food, in many cases, the real food served in restaurants refers instead to the copies. The models have become their own truth and now define what 'real food' should be.

In all cases, the dish subscribes to a standard image of what such a dish should look like. This follows a common convention in Japanese food preparation where dishes are prepared and presented in only a limited number of set, proscribed ways. Masumi (1987: 91) states that such an object is: *'[A] copy of a copy whose relation to the model has become so attenuated that it can no longer properly be said to be a copy.'* The act of consumption begins at the moment of a passerby's visual regard and the actual meal, if it eventuates at all, is a continuation of this (see Freiberg, 1993). The real and the false are visually interchangeable, if briefly, before the real food spoils. Baudrillard (1983: 56-57) states that: *"Objects are images, images are signs, signs are information..."*. Diners look to the fake samples to find information to help them decide whether a food is good to eat. When this information tells them that the food is delicious and that they are hungry, as Masumi (1987:90) states: *"We absorb through our open eyes and mouths."* While modern Japanese cuisine may owe a debt to the sample industry, modern 'Nuevo' cuisine and the artistic and minuscule serves of the elite Western restaurant owe a great deal to the inventive influence of Japanese cookery. Chefs worldwide take inspiration from the artful presentation methods of Japanese cookery and have reworked the cuisines of their own and other nations to reflect Japanese culinary refinement and aesthetics.

How has Japanese cuisine come to take on such standard forms? I connect the characteristic 'look' of Japanese food to the Japanese concept of *kata* (form) which emphasises the aesthetic of the pre-ordained form or way. *Kata* explains how many foods in Japan appear to follow carefully prearranged production methods. *Kata* is also especially apparent in Japanese martial arts and theatre forms that stress the importance of following exactly the proscribed motions, expressions and movements in order to achieve the ideal appearance and therefore execution (De Mente, 2003; Carr, 1993; Lebra, 1993). De Mente (2003) understands *kata* to explain the distinctive traits apparent in everyday Japanese life and culture. *Kata* are idealised forms, correct forms – the way things should look. *Kata* sets a standard by which other things should be measured.

Shikata (the technique of doing *kata*) refers explicitly to the way that a process should be carried out in order to realise its proper form. As many of my informants taught me how to cook various Japanese dishes, it was often explained that certain procedures have to be effected in a precise manner in order for the result to 'work'. Different fish had to be cut into sections and fillets in different ways. Vegetables were sliced into specific shapes and sizes, even sauces and mixtures of ingredients had to be stirred in a particular way. This also extends to foreign cuisines as part of their incorporation into Japanese foodways. Western recipes taught at an evening cooking school for young women require the cook to stir to the rhythm of certain common folk songs. Cox's (2008) interviews with company executives reveal that even the process of making food samples requires considerable skill and practice, such that the technique in itself is actually considered uniquely Japanese and unable to be properly taught to the members of other nations. *Kata* and *shikata* implicitly suggest the distinctively Japanese aspects

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese* of life and the Japanese way of life. *Kata* therefore underpins Japanese etiquette, ethics, style and social relations (De Mente, 2003). In this way, practices, from the wrapping of presents to the cooking of Japanese dishes follow defined prescribed procedures in order to arrive at the final correct form or *kata*. The Japanese tea ceremony, a highly ritualised and aestheticised cultural practice, is often suggested by informants as representative of unique Japanese culture (Kōshirō, 1994; Sadako, 2009; Varley, 1994). Each movement and gesture of the tea ceremony follows a proscribed form in accordance with its *shikata*, correct execution often only comes with many years of study and practice (see Durrance, 1999; Kondo, 2005). Similarly, chefs of the *kaiseki*, the stylised high-cuisine of the tea ceremony and the precursor to contemporary modern haute Japanese cuisine are masters of a repertoire of culinary *shikata*.

Because *kata* and *shikata* explicitly refer to the right form and way, there is also the possibility for wrong ways and forms. Thus foods and many Japanese practices and artefacts are stylised in standardised ways resulting in the strict policing of paradigmatical forms. Bestor (2004) notes that Japanese specifications dictating the correct and desirable form and treatment of fish regulates whether or not a catch is bought from international supplies. Specimens that fail to measure up to the specified *kata* detract from value or are rejected. *Kata* could then be said to support the policing of quality and food safety at least at a visible level, while at the same time setting a high standard for food's visual aesthetic (Bestor, 2004).

In a similar vein, supermarket and department store products that exhibit marked visual uniformity of form are consistently perceived by my informants to be good quality. Visual uniformity and perfection are of considerable importance when selecting fresh food such as meat, fish, vegetables and fruit. Premade foods

are also expected to be prepared and presented to demonstrate standardised and aesthetically pleasing appearances. Items which do not subscribe visually to standard forms are sometimes mistrusted. A pumpkin grown in Senri Yama can afford to be motley coloured and unusually shaped, because local farmers are trusted neighbours, but an unusual specimen in a supermarket is be avoided precisely because people do not trust such suppliers. Aberrant produce from commercial suppliers is indicative of cost-cutting, possible health risks and often imported and therefore lesser quality produce. Because of this, the correct form and visual characteristics of food are relied upon by many consumers to confirm origin and identity.

Japanese produce is often equated with perfection of form because people regard the privileging of *kata* to be a uniquely Japanese tendency; shoppers do not expect other nations to hold produce foods to such high standards. The presence of *kata* in everyday food encounters confirms to my informants that Japanese food has a defined form, this is supported by the uniform appearance of like dishes on home and restaurant tables Japan-wide. Nationally held aesthetics and understandings of the correct *kata* of food demonstrate to my informants an intrinsic Japanese identity in food preparation and presentation.

People regard 'good quality' Japanese food as time consuming to make properly in the home and expensive to buy pre-made. This is partly because of the skill levels required to reproduce 'good' *kata* and therefore 'proper' Japanese food. Care and attention has to be executed in order to make dishes that look 'right'. A knowledgeable cook knows that one must bevel the edges of a cylindrical vegetable before cooking so that its corners will not fall apart in a visually unpleasant manner. Because many Japanese dishes are not cooked for very long and also

because the purpose of many dishes is to best represent the fresh, natural flavours of ingredients, the freshness of ingredients is tantamount to quality. Allison (1992:197) also remarks at the centrality of freshness in Japanese food and connects it to the appreciation of a food's 'naturalness'. Through the careful use of seasonal ingredients and symbols, reflected in the presentation and serving ware, a Japanese meal makes reference to the natural world and the seasons. Allison (1992:197) also points out that the nature created in Japanese cuisine

...appears not only to be natural, but more nearly perfect than nature without human intervention ever could be. This is nature made artificial. Thus, by naturalization [sic], nature is not only taken in by Japanese cuisine, but taken over.

This aspect of Japanese cuisine, the artful and aestheticised re-production of nature as perfect can also be viewed in other Japanese cultural forms such as gardening and flower arrangement (Bestor, 2004; Kalland, 1992). When consuming food, my informants 'read' the symbols evident to them in the visual appearance of the dishes for signs of Japaneseness. One important sign is naturalness or freshness, others are the stylistic signs hinted at in the manner of presentation; small portion size, contrasting textures, consistencies and colours; fresh seasonal ingredients and seasonally appropriate serving ware (Allison, 1992; Ishige, 2001 and Richie, 1985).

Freshness is found in firm textures and vibrant colours, shiny surfaces and moistness. Freshness is an essential property for a food to exhibit its full potential aesthetically as well as in texture and flavour. Freshness is a fundamental component of a food's value and also its *kata*. Old vegetables tend to soften, wilt or wrinkle and fresh fish and meat tend to discolour and spoil. Fresh ingredients possess the required vibrant colours and recognisable textures required to make

4: *Being Japanese: Eating Japanese*

the highly stylised dishes that are emblems of Japanese culinary culture. To make Japanese cuisine 'properly' demands that one use fresh ingredients, bought daily and prepared from the basic ingredients up; a task beyond the skill and time of many. Department stores and specialist retailers offer pre-made foods that have been carefully and skilfully prepared, but with price tags often out of the question on a daily basis for most people. My informants regard the eminence freshness in the ingredients and flavour of Japanese food as an inherent feature of Japanese cuisine that sets it apart from other cuisines. In the same way, Senri Yama people consider the Japanese to possess a nationally unique appreciation of fresh food that has come about due to Japan's historical dependence upon seasonal agriculture and fishing. Western foods are conversely understood to be highly flavoured with additional ingredients and spices and thus rather removed from the natural world and freshness.

Japan's *kaiseki-ryōri* (tea ceremony food) and *osechi-ryōri* (New Year's food), in many Japanese peoples' minds, are representative of the 'spirit' or 'heart' of Japan. Both of these cuisines foreground typical Japanese ingredients, cooking styles, presentation and culinary artistry. The dishes served at the Onoe family's restaurant also fall into this category of characteristically Japanese fare. Each of these cuisine types are constituted by a range of recognisable dishes and a uniform presentation format that make up the proper *kata*. My informants were of the opinion that these foods represent refined Japanese cuisine, culinary culture and the deep historical roots of modern Japanese food. Because these are foods for special occasions, it is at these times that people most consciously feel their connection with their national and cultural identity. This is a mindful and noted consumption of national symbols and a reflection upon Japan's unique cuisine. The

consumption of such foods is ritualised and follows its own *shikata*. Certain *osechi-ryōri* are consumed at specific times over *shōgatsu* (the new year period); such as *toshikoshi soba* at midnight on January 1st, symbolising longevity through the stretching of noodles over the changing of the year and *nanakusa-gayu* (seven herb soup) on the seventh day to ease a stomach tired from a week's libations and feasting. Also, people know that all over Japan, their countrymen are also partaking in similar activities, cementing their cohesiveness and belongingness to the nation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have set out my inquiry into the constitution of Japanese identity among Senri Yama residents. Images and understandings of Japan abroad and domestically tend to portray a nation starkly contrasted with the West and indeed other nations. Authentic and traditional foods and foodways are often considered to be historical connections to a distinctly Japanese past and identity and because tradition and authenticity are closely linked to history and to specific places, the consumption of local and regional food connects the everyday Japanese with a common sense of national identity.

Moeran and Skov (1997: 184-185) identify two co-existing modes of consumption within Japan; the trend-based consumption of fashionable items and commodities (which will be discussed in the next chapter), and the slower consumption of traditional objects, places and experiences. These two modes are apparent particularly in food consumption, as my field site contains a vast array of opportunities for both modern cosmopolitan foods and foods that are tied to the traditional Japanese past. 'Authentic' Japanese culture is readily accessible in everyday life through the food and leisure choices available to my informants. This

4: Being Japanese: Eating Japanese

mythologised Japan exists simultaneously within the present and together with modern technology, such as mass media, communications and entertainment have made the appreciation of this traditional authentic culture tantamount to being Japanese. For my informants, understandings of contemporary Japanese culture go beyond the fact that Japan is becoming increasingly interconnected with the rest of the world. Authenticity is attributed by my informants to what they perceive to be the stuff of Japanese culture that preceded and therefore stands against artifacts of contemporary inter-cultural bricolage. However, authenticity often ignores features that would render it problematic and glosses over imported ingredients, cooking techniques, modern technology and historical ambiguity. Particular foods and objects such as buildings, clothes and scenery could thus be understood as distinctly Japanese regardless of almost any number of elements that would indicate otherwise. Many informants selectively ignore the issues of globalisation, intercultural influence and cosmopolitanism in order to support their understandings of Japanese culture and identity as being concrete and distinct.

Tradition and authenticity are explicitly bound up with time. The passage of time allows the accumulation of indicators of these values and impels their appraisal. To be traditional or authentic means that the thing in question, whether an object, a food or a practice, has to be understood to precede the present, preferably by as long a period as possible. Place is also important, as for a thing to be counted as traditionally or authentically Japanese, its existence throughout time must occur within Japan and not be too obviously linked to other places. Because foods are bound up with notions and experiences of historical commensality and cultural identity, they are particularly appropriate of authenticity and tradition. A morsel of food, tasted in the appropriate signifying surroundings resounds with a

person's understanding of *what that food means*; it carries with it a cultural heritage – another time, another place. While I understand authenticity to be a value imposed in the present, for my informants, authenticity and tradition are not subjective appraisals but concrete and observable details, the cultural sediment of history. Tradition and authenticity are things of the past that are ascribed as such in the present, but they are also implicitly produced with relation to an uncertain future. Tradition and authenticity stand against progress and change; they are the concrete representations of Japanese identity intended to stand as bastions against its demise. These are practices, objects, foods and places that are held static by their authenticity in order to maintain a symbolic juxtaposition with the present and the future.

Japan's food culture is a long standing amalgam of foreign influences and ingredients as well as domestic ingenuity and creativity. Food, as an apt conduit to the creation and maintenance of identity, is utilised by the Japanese state to fashion a national identity and is also used by people in their everyday lives to connect with a social imagination of what it means to be Japanese. To be Japanese is to eat Japanese and to eat Japanese is to maintain one's Japanese identity. Food is regarded by both the state and everyday people as an important and distinctive cultural possession and it is the appearance of foods in particular, cultivated by specific methods of preparation, which lead to its categorisation as Japanese. National identity is established through incorporation of certain foods, as food functions to distinguish boundaries as well as identities.

Chapter 5: Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life

This chapter explores how international foods and foodways are adopted by my informants in Senri Yama; from the incorporation of international ingredients into Japanese foods to how the consumption of apparently foreign food products contributes to internationalised and cosmopolitan identities. In the previous chapter I explored how the nostalgic consumption of the past through traditional and authentic foodways and the construction of a standardised national cuisine are central to the representation of national identity on a local scale. In this chapter I demonstrate the place of international foods and culinary influences in local peoples' everyday lives. In order to accurately understand contemporary Japanese foodways, the everyday interface between Japan and the world must be explored. The ways that international foods are consumed and understood in contemporary Japan reveal a great deal about how the Japanese engage with and think about the world. This chapter inquires into how imported foods are adopted in everyday foodways in order to show how in contemporary Japan, international influence is mediated by local transformations of substance and meaning.

Despite the importance of local foods, peoples' everyday lives are filled with objects, foods, images and ideas from abroad that I contend represent a dialectic in which some international foods are incorporated and domesticated while others are maintained as examples of 'foreignness'. I suggest that by keeping foods 'foreign', the distinction between Japanese identities and other international identities is maintained. However, the maintenance of this distinction is problematic, as home cooks in Senri Yama are necessarily dependent upon international imports for many of even the most basic food items for daily Japanese

cooking. Just as the boundaries between geographic regions are blurred, so is the distinction between Japanese and foreign food.

While many prominent features of Japan's culture, including its food, have been influenced by, if not adopted from other nearby societies such as China and Korea, in everyday life this fact tends to go unacknowledged by most people (Cwiertka, 2006:148). Many of these influences occurred long ago and have become completely domesticated and unremarkable parts of everyday Japanese food habits. Immensely popular noodle dishes such as ramen and udon, dumplings, even tofu, soy sauce and rice have their origins on the mainland. While my informants are attentive to the Western influences and origins of more recently adopted foods, they often fail to note that many domesticated dishes and foods originate from mainland Asia. This is partly due to the fact that many mainland influences occurred in pre-modern times and have had generations to be incorporated and adapted. However, I also contend that while the paths of some foods remain highly visible and are consciously reflected upon in everyday life, the paths of others are disguised and unclear based upon the kinds of relationship that Japan has with the foods' origin. Today, while people do consume many Chinese and Korean cuisines and foods, peoples' tendency to acknowledge the mainland's foundational contribution to Japanese foodways remains low. I propose that this is for two reasons. One is that the blurred lines between Japanese cuisine and other mainland cuisines do not provide the strong markers of difference that people like to maintain between Japan and others. To acknowledge that some Korean dishes are similar to their Japanese counterpart, such as Korean kimchi pickles, lessens the cultural uniqueness that people feel is demonstrated by Japanese cuisine. This is also evident in peoples' rejection of Chinese rice in preference for Japanese rice.

To admit to a strong similarity in food is also to admit to a resemblance of identities. This is based upon the second reason; that many peoples' perception of mainland Asia is characterised by ambivalence. Japan's past relationships with its Asian neighbours, particularly China and Korea, have been characterised by imperialism and subjugation. Furthermore, upon contact with the West, Japan has sought to dissociate itself from other Asian nations in a bid to align itself more closely with Western modes of civilisation (Cwiertka, 2006: 148). Today, there are common perceptions that China and Korea feel resentful of Japan and also that Japan must retain a strong sense of its own cultural identity in the face of mainland Asia's increasing regional and indeed global influence and power.

While Japanese food shares many ingredients with mainland cuisines, over many centuries, through Japanese cooking and presentation methods, the addition of indigenous ingredients and flavourings as well as the attribution of native meanings and names, the Japanese have adapted many Asian influences and ingredients to create a distinctive domestic cuisine (see Ishige, 2001: 48; Rath, 2008: 50). However, this is not to say that all mainland Asian food in Japan has been subsumed, merely that many of the earlier foundational dishes and ingredients have been assimilated. Indeed, many Asian cuisines and dishes are widespread and popular in restaurants but are rarely cooked in the home.

The contemporary global network of food provision and distribution operates with a finesse aided by previously non-existent technologies, global infrastructure and relations (Bestor, 2001; 2004; 2005; 2006). Today, as an unprecedented amount of international food and culinary knowledge is involved in peoples' everyday lives, yet more international dishes and ingredients are incorporated into Japanese cooking. Contrasted against the explicit 'placed-ness' of

local and regional foods and the relative domestic domain of national cuisines (however mobile), many foods are displaced from their origins and available outside their 'usual' season or locale (Cook and Crang, 1996: 133; Cook, 2008: 128). The profusion of displaced foods in Senri Yama is prominent and while many people do not realise the extent that Japan has come to be dependent upon other nations' food, all of my informants are conscious of the diverse array of international cuisines and ingredients on supermarket and department store shelves, in homes and in restaurants.

Little of everyday culinary life exists that does not in some way involve international products. However, people often do not experience this as an adulteration. I use the term 'glocalisation' to explain the ways that global flows of food and culinary practices are adapted to suit local preferences and conditions (Robertson, 1992:173-174)¹³. Processes of glocalisation account for globalisation's tendency to simultaneously homogenise and differentiate according to particular cultures and places and I see glocalisation as an intrinsic process of globalisation rather than a contradictory process. The analysis of glocal processes addresses the need to study, in Urry's (1995: 152) words, "the complex interconnections of *both* local and global processes". Glocalisation captures the notion that local people are involved in and define themselves through constant negotiation with global processes as well as other localities and cultures. The term is particularly apt when coupled with a socio-cultural analysis of food. The perceived particularity of food and eating practices between cultures is readily used by my informants to define and articulate differences, or indeed sameness. Local cultures and communities are

¹³ The word is derived from the Japanese word '*dochakuka*'. Many of my informants therefore easily understand its meaning and recognise how international foods are adapted to suit a Japanese context. This word however, did not enter into common daily parlance about food.

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life* understood to be actively involved in staking claims of uniqueness and dissimilarity to others, a process that I see taking place significantly in the area of food and eating¹⁴.

The global dissemination of food renders the boundaries between places problematical and is also implicated in the practice of identity among local people. Categories of foreign, domestic and local are obfuscated when transnational foods are re-placed within local food systems. I use glocalisation to account for the capacity of local communities like Senri Yama to negotiate specific, localised forms of globalisation. I argue that through adoption and incorporation, foreign foods become domesticated and localised through their incorporation into everyday foodways. Irish potatoes, strawberries, Spanish onions and many other introduced varieties of fruit and vegetables are grown in local gardens and now constitute a significant proportion of local produce. Localised, or as I see them, 're-placed' foods benefit from the kinds of associations that more intrinsically native Japanese local foods enjoy. These adopted crops now share the same level of trust and assurances of safety that locally visible production methods confer. Such foods also exemplify how the international world has become incorporated into the most mundane local settings and local ways of life. As Goro Sasagawa notes:

Years ago, we didn't grow these foods here [meaning vegetables like onions, pumpkins, carrots and potatoes]. Now these vegetables have become popular and useful in cooking...They have become important crops.

As a largely middle-class population, Senri Yama's residents have the ability to selectively appropriate or reject international influences and foods. This means

¹⁴ See Giulianotti (2002) and Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) for discussions of glocalisation and local identification and differentiation in the arena of local and global sport.

that while Japan as a nation relies heavily upon imported foods, the local population has a measure of freedom as to what extent they themselves will purchase or grow imported foods. The re-placement of foreign foods within the local food system exemplifies the operation of glocalisation as local people choose to grow and include them in everyday diets in ways that would be unfamiliar in the place of the food's origin. One informant, Kubota-san, sums up his understanding of Japan's experience of international influence:

No. I can't really say that Japan has become like the West. There are many Western things here but it is very different. I think Japan's history means that while there is a lot of foreign things in Japan, they are not just taken in freely...People still think it is very important to have Japanese style, Japanese tradition. I don't think Japan is becoming the West because there is a very strong feeling that it is important to keep a Japanese way of doing things...Well, because of that, foreign things don't work here, they have to be changed to suit Japanese taste.

Glocalisation recognises the global heterogeneity of places, rather than regarding global influences as homogenising, unidirectional currents from largely Western sources. As Kubota notes above, things do not simply arrive from the West, they are adapted to reflect Japanese tastes and uses. As I noted earlier, this is what occurred with many foods from China and Korea. While on the surface, many things from abroad seem to have taken root in Japan, this adoption is not unmediated. While Japan once endeavoured to become abreast of the West by adopting foreign practices and things (see Cwiertka, 2006: 11), in contemporary Senri Yama, people understand Japan's experience of globalisation to be characterised by the selective adaptation and adoption of international goods.

Most people are very open to the idea of foreign influenced dishes and cuisines and consume them regularly. While some international influences are adopted and incorporated, others are appreciated for their difference and novelty.

Foreign foods can be desirable ways of sampling other cultures. Experimentation with international cuisines is a mark of distinction and cosmopolitan identity that is used to demonstrate to others one's international knowledge and modern tastes. The use of displaced foods propagates perceptions of geopolitical, national and cultural distinctiveness and difference. Such understandings entail an implicit structure of “we/here” and “others/there” and the centrality of defining similarity and difference (Sugishita, 2008: 142-144). It is not unusual to hear people proudly telling of their recent culinary exploits or of the things they ate while on holiday. Eating international food is thus a way of positively interacting with the rest of the world as well as keeping the external world foreign.

Sweet Globalisation

As varieties of foreign food are adopted within Japan they are often adapted considerably as local producers and consumers rework their composition, appearance and cultural use. I see globalisation to be as much about the mobility of culture, people, information and things as it is about the capacity of people for adopting, adapting and maybe eventually completely altering that which travels. Western baked goods, sweets and desserts came to Japan after contact with the Dutch, who introduced sponge cake in the 16th century (Ashkenazi and Jacob, 2000). The original cake has been domesticated to such an extent that Nagasaki, where early Western influence was greatest, counts the now popular Japanese cake, *kasutera*, as one of the city's most important local specialties (*meibutsu*). Similar culinary re-workings and adoptions have occurred throughout history and are ongoing in contemporary Japan as foreign foods are embraced and appropriated in daily life as popular foods. In this section I focus upon the adoption

and adaptation of Western sweets and desserts, which have become widespread and popular especially among young women and girls. Among some of my young female informants, an entire midday meal can consist of a highly adapted Western dessert or several smaller items. Entire floors of shopping buildings are dedicated to dozens of different dessert establishments.

Nana is a young woman in her early twenties. She studies computing at college and works part time in an inner-city clothing store. Nana lives with her parents and a younger brother who attends high school. Because both work and college are in the inner city, many of Nana's meals are taken outside the home, often near to her place of work in another large shopping building. Nana confesses that she often eats sweet foods for lunch because at home, desserts are never part of meals.

Mother usually cooks Japanese-style food...Also a lot of fish and meat because my father and brother want to eat those a lot. Because I'm working, I don't often get to eat with my family at dinner, so I eat in the day. Then I often eat sweet foods with my friends because they are fun and not too filling...I work with other girls, so we all go together to one of the sweets restaurants in the next building almost every day.

In the city there is an abundance of restaurants and places to eat, yet Nana and her friends consistently choose to eat sweets because the activity is fun and playful. Nana explains that; *"I don't think that eating cakes is a real meal. It is really much lighter and not as serious as having a whole meal."* One of Nana's favourite places, while ostensibly mimicking European style, is decorated in way that would be unlikely to be taken seriously in Europe. Indeed, such places are not taken seriously in Japan either; these are playful spaces, especially designed with young women and teenage girls in mind, to indulge their fantasies of European and French elegance. Western foods, especially sweets, tap into peoples' imagination of

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life*
the other. Nana and her friends are experiencing outside the standard frames of reference of Japanese food and partaking in something they see as exclusive and other.

Delicate cakes and pastries represent European refinement and are, especially to young women, symbols of fashion, travel and elegance. Nana, like many young women and girls, dreams of travelling to France one day, but until then is content with imagining future experiences through culinary tourism. France and Germany, and Europe more generally, are widely imagined to be the home of such delicacies. It is evident in popular Japanese culture that Europe itself symbolises for Japan, as a cultural other that also admires artfully created foods, beauty and refinement. But this is also an imagined Europe, a Europe that has been condensed as the pinnacle of refined Western culture. Indeed Europe has become something of an object of Japanese consumption, as these desserts are not French or European, but Japanese versions created to represent an imagination of 'European-ness'.

Japanese cuisine has its own range of traditional sweets (*wagashi*) that represent to my informants a native counterpoint to foreign desserts. Saito-san is a maker of traditional sweets in Senri Yama and explains that Japanese sweets and Western desserts occupy very different roles. The contrast between Japanese and Western sweets is highlighted by the different contexts within which they are consumed:

Japanese sweets are much less sugary than Western desserts. Normally, after a meal, dessert will just be fresh fruit. We don't have a sweet dish usually. Japanese sweets are usually served with green tea. Today Western-style sweets are more popular with coffee and English tea because they balance the richness of the coffee's flavour. Japanese sweets are generally too mild for coffee.

Locally, there are also a number of small cake stores that sell Western style cakes. These are popular for birthdays and also as snacks to have with afternoon tea. Saito-san does not view these as competitors because their wares serve a completely different purpose. Saito-san does note however that younger people, children and especially women, often prefer Western style sweets. Saito-san links this tendency specifically with the popularity of coffee, English tea¹⁵ and the prevalence of contemporary café culture. Discussions with my young female informants reveal opinions that concur with Saito-san's. Honda notes the following:

I do like Japanese sweets, but in most cafés they are not served. It's not really the right place. Japanese sweets are more serious, you know? And they're not sweet...If I'm drinking [green] tea with friends in a different place, like at a friend's house or in a Japanese style restaurant or sweets café we would eat Japanese sweets. It's a different thing.

Here it is apparent that Japanese sweets and Western desserts are both appreciated for their distinctive features though conceptually they are separate and are typically consumed in different settings. Japanese sweets are popular gifts to bring back for friends when travelling domestically. Japanese sweets are also often served in the morning or afternoon between meals with green tea when visiting friend's houses. Japanese sweets are appropriate in other situations and rather than denoting cosmopolitanism, confer a sense of traditional refinement through their consumption.

Part of the appeal of Western sweets for young women is their association with modern, fashionable leisure pursuits and lifestyles that markedly differ from erstwhile gender expectations. Etiquette surrounding Japanese foods, including sweets, relegates women to an auxiliary position where women are expected to

¹⁵ English or 'milk-tea' refers to the popular, often sweetened, black tea that is served with milk. Milk tea can also be made without the addition of water, using only teabags and hot or cold milk.

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life*
cook and serve. Western sweets and other foods outside the home however, allow women to forego such responsibilities. My young female informants are typically highly cosmopolitan and fashion-conscious and cafés are fashionable places to relax and chat with friends. The intricate cakes and desserts adopted from the west are beyond the skill of virtually all home cooks. They are not cooked in the home and instead are part of the social world outside. Having coffee or sweet milk tea and cake with friends is a way for women to at once enjoy and demonstrate their freedom in the public sphere as empowered consumers - to be the served rather than to serve others. Cakes and sweets are also novel and touristic as they allow the diner to imagine themselves partaking of the culinary wonders and elegance of an imagined Europe. Food thus crosses boundaries and affords diners the experience of the modern cosmopolitan self. Through the consumption of European-style cakes, and by appropriating them into their food habits, young women are also consuming difference (Cook et al., 1999).

Cakes and other sweets are regularly bought and served at home to guests. Almost invariably, these are female guests¹⁶. Sweet tastes are often classified as feminine while stronger flavours are more associated with masculinity (Bourdieu, 1984; Edwards, 1982). While many young men do not profess an adamant dislike for Western sweets, men do not commonly order them or seek them out in cafés or dessert shops which I see as gendered spaces (Massey, 1993: 25). While female-gendered spaces are often seen as subordinate to male spaces (Spain, 1993: 138), I see these cafés as sites for women to socialise in a space that they feel comfortable often without men or the usual gendered expectations.

¹⁶ Men also enjoy sweet foods, but because sweets are broadly considered feminine, few men admit to enjoying cakes or parfait and are very unlikely to eat these foods regularly in the public domain.

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life*

For women like Yukiko who are generally occupied in the home as a housewife, having friends over for tea and cake is an enjoyable and relaxing way to socialise without having to spend time cooking or clearing up. Women who are married with children or retired also enjoy leaving the home and meeting friends for sweets. Because international sweets (and other ethnic cuisines) are foreign, they are not regarded as seriously as traditional Japanese cuisine. As Honda noted:

When we [Honda and friends] go shopping we'll often also go to a café for coffee and cakes or sweets. It's always fun and relaxing, we talk and joke and laugh and eat sweet things...It's much less serious than going for Japanese food...You have to be more conscious of your attitude and manners, you can't play around so much.

Foreign cakes and sweets are a playful food category that is not controlled by traditional expectations of etiquette and decorum. Eating sweets allowed girls and women to have fun and socialise and play with the fixity of gender roles and identities.

Desserts have not made the journey from the West unchanged and a categorical distinction between Western desserts and Japanese sweets is not so clear cut. Indeed, a number of Saito-san's creations as well as other *wagashi* in department stores and shops are influenced or inspired by Western ingredients. Chocolate, caramel, vanilla, grape, almond and many other 'non-Japanese' flavours and ingredients are used in Japanese sweets without interfering with their characterisation as traditionally Japanese. Likewise, many Western desserts and cakes have been adapted though the widespread incorporation of typically Japanese ingredients such as *adzuki* beans, rice cakes, sweet potato, *matcha* green tea, *sakura* (cherry blossom) and Japanese chestnut.

Parfait has been transformed from the simple French dish of frozen custard layered with fruit puree and served on a plate, to a whipped cream and ice cream concoction, layered with rice puffs or corn flakes, unsweetened jelly (sometimes coffee flavoured), syrup and fruit served in a whimsically shaped glass. Japanese parfait occupies an important niche in contemporary Japanese dessert culture as a standard coffee shop menu item enjoyed typically by teenage girls and young women. Many inner city sweets restaurants exclusively serve dozens of varieties of parfait. Others serve a multitude of sweet crêpe varieties.

Globalisation is characteristically about the transformation of the contents of its flows and also about the reappropriation of cultural ownership as mobile items and influences are incorporated into the culture of their new homes. This is the case because the social and cultural contexts in 'other places' are always different. Mobile goods thus need to be somehow fitted in and understood according to local frames of knowledge. Summarily, the meaning that food possesses is altered when foods are relocated. Western style sweets and desserts in Japan and especially the specialty restaurants that served them represent feminine girlishness, youthful frivolity and the relatively recent consumer status of young women. The dishes are themselves sweet, frivolous and 'pretty', and many cafés, filled with whimsical décor, feminine colours and pop music, are especially designed to appeal to young women and girls on shopping trips with friends. 'Maido cafés' (maid cafés) emphasise the effeminate and playful nature of sweets by coupling the usual café service with girlish Victorian-theme dress¹⁷. The *Maido-san* subculture is also popularly associated with the gothic-Lolita fashion subculture, typified by adolescent girls and young women who dress in intricately

¹⁷ *Maido* cafés are not solely frequented by young women wanting coffee and cake. Male customers go to enjoy the presence and service of the fantastically dressed staff.

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life* stylised, often fantastical, period costume and gothic fashions. These people, whom Gagné (2007: 134) describes as taking cues from the popular imagination of Europe, are typically fascinated with becoming 'princesses', albeit in ways that are characteristically Japanese and which have little to do with the Western conception. Being a princess thus involves a number of aristocratic hobbies and pastimes, a fundamental one being afternoon tea and sweets.

Blurring and Defining the Boundaries

I have previously introduced the culinary category '*yō-shoku*' which refers to foods of Western influence or style. Desserts are examples of *yō-shoku* and other foods such as curry, steak, gratin, omelette, schnitzel, pastas, stews and croquettes are but a few especially common Western-style dishes that have been more or less adopted into the everyday culinary world of Senri Yama's homes and restaurants.

Hiramatsu, a young male informant explains:

Ethnic food is different. *Yō-shoku* is western style Japanese food, but we don't say that Ramen noodles are "Chinese style" Japanese food...Though we say French food is French and Chinese Food is Chinese...*Wa-shoku* is Japanese food, it doesn't have Western or other tastes.

Importantly, *yō-shoku* is not the same as other international foods which is less adapted to Japanese tastes and is counted as international cuisine. In the above passage, a common point is expressed; *yō-shoku* is an intermediate category between discernibly international cuisine and Japanese *wa-shoku* food. *Yō-shoku* is by definition, recognised to have originated elsewhere, but has been assimilated into the Japanese culinary canon. Other foods, especially those from the Asian mainland escape this recognition. Chinese *gyōza* dumplings are often called

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life*
'Chinese dumplings' to denote their origin and their incompletely domesticated nature.

Yō-shoku does not compete with traditional Japanese foods. By this I mean that my informants do not see Western culinary influence as capable of undermining *wa-shoku's* authenticity or superseding traditional Japanese cuisine in popularity. This denotes a particular view of Japan's relationship with the international world. Specifically, that despite the pervasiveness of international influences, things are incorporated into Japanese foodways in expressly Japanese terms. I suggest that the categories that exist around food operate as safeguards; only when ingredients and influences have been sufficiently domesticated or disguised can they be incorporated as Japanese. *Yō-shoku* serves as the porous boundary between Japanese and the 'outside'. Japanese food and international foods occupy different conceptual categories. To my informants this represents Japan's capacity to take inspiration from foreign nations as well as the country's emergence into the contemporary global era as a reflection of its growing cosmopolitan diet. *Yō-shoku* and international cuisine does not threaten a traditional culinary culture, but provides people with another indication of Japanese culinary distinctiveness.

Not all that is foreign can be kept separate though the implementation of culinary categories. Foreign influences and ingredients are used unproblematically and often necessarily as substitutes for domestic produce in traditional and everyday Japanese cooking. I see this mundane absorption as critical to how people experience globalisation in everyday life. Sachiko notes how international foods are now so common that they are difficult to avoid in the everyday task of grocery shopping.

It's interesting. These days when I shop I really have to look for Japanese food; there's so much from elsewhere. If I want to cook only using Japanese food I really have to do my best to try. Often I pick foreign-made food because it's easy and always there.

Reliance upon international ingredients often requires disguising foreign foods through cooking and presentation techniques. In this way, the international is subsumed and incorporated into everyday Japanese life. Akiko-san's neighbour, another local housewife, commented:

Ingredients from outside Japan are in most things I cook but I don't cook a lot of foreign food at home...I use those ingredients to make Japanese-style foods and then you really can't notice.

While many informants prefer to use domestic ingredients for cooking, it is often necessary to resort to imported options simply for the sake of convenience and price. Also, because imported foods are available out of season, international ingredients allow cooks to prepare a more diverse array of foods throughout the year. The large amount of imported food represents to older generations, to which Nagano-san belongs, Japan's contemporary position in the world and one of the benefits of globalisation:

Japan's success in the world has been very good. For people who lived through the war and after, the hardships were terrible. Food isn't a problem now, really, there might even be too much with so much wasted...Because Japan is small, we Japanese really cannot grow all we need, so of course importing is necessary. But it is good Japan has risen to join the outside world as a new powerful country.

Many of my informants understand Japan's modernisation to be exemplified by its increased connections with the 'outside world' (*sekai soto*). The sentiments reflected in this passage are representative of those held by my informants as a

whole – that Japan's position in the global network is favourable and provides benefits for people in their everyday life. Sachiko reflects upon the conditional use of imported ingredients in Japanese dishes.

I would prefer to buy only Japanese grown foods... [but] out of their season it's impossible. Then I buy imported food, but... it does taste different. Even used in Japanese food I think that maybe the flavour isn't quite right or not what I'm used to. One really important thing is how it [the finished dish] looks and that you can get it right, so maybe you can hide imported ingredients especially if you use Japanese flavours and other ingredients.

The use of imported foods in everyday cooking is not always a straightforward case of unproblematically incorporating international products into the diet. Food imports are also a source of insecurity and worry for those who understand the magnitude of the nation's reliance upon international imports. Kunihiko, a man in his mid thirties, notes:

I suppose it is a little unsettling knowing that without imported foods there would not be enough food for our country to support itself. I don't believe that Japan will lose its traditional food. But it is concerning that we have become so reliant upon importing food. Maybe [in the future] Japan will have traditional food made almost completely from imported foods...I don't think that would be a good situation but maybe it will be necessary.

Japan's standing as a sovereign nation that can support itself is in question here. People feel that to be a powerful nation possessed of a strong national identity, it is necessary to be able to rely upon domestic resources. This is especially true for food, which is such a meaningful symbol of Japanese cultural distinctiveness.

The increasing availability of international food products on local shelves and in local diets prompts people to consider what it means to be a local Japanese person living in an increasingly interconnected world. As I have made explicit, the knowledge of a food's place of origin is very important among my informants, even

if it is only so that food can be summarily disguised. The differentiation between local food, extra-local food and imported food is of daily concern to those responsible for buying and cooking. Peoples' geographical understandings with regard to food and eating are defined by Cook and Crang (1996) as consisting of twin parts. One is the knowledge of a food's physical place of origin. Within a supermarket or department store this can usually be ascertained by a quick visual scan of packaging or signage. At smaller family owned establishments or at markets and stalls, customers rely upon salespeoples' assurances. The second part of peoples' geographical understandings of food relates to the social and cultural context of the food's production; namely how a particular food is produced. For locally grown or produced foods this is simple. As I have discussed in chapter 4, people are comforted by the transparency of the local food system and the visibility of the food's journey from field to plate.

Foods grown internationally can also be more or less unambiguous depending upon peoples' knowledge of physical origins and about how the food is produced. People gather knowledge of the kinds of social and cultural milieus around food production from television and magazines. There is however a dearth of information in the popular media about the production methods of all but the more remarkable kinds of food and dishes. Unlike domestic producers, international food companies do little to inform consumers about how their foods are produced and as such few of my informants have any idea about the situations surrounding food production in places outside of Japan. People are concerned that they have no information about the manner in which international foods are grown or manufactured. Worries include the possibility that health standards might be lower and that chemicals and genetic modification technologies could be less

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life* regulated. This scarcity of information means that many people are influenced by the common stances that state bodies and domestic food organisations take upon the quality of international food sources; namely that such products are consistently lower quality and sometimes risky.

The origins of common foods are not always straightforward and even when origins seem apparent from a cursory glance at a familiar company logo, much information can often remain hidden. Kenta-san knows that the fish his wife buys is from a Japanese owned company because of its packaging, however upon closer inspection he notices that the fish was caught in Thailand and likely frozen, shipped and repackaged in Japan. What Kenta doesn't know is how that process takes place. Who catches the fish and when or what kind of fishing technique are used? As I shall discuss in the next chapter, these kinds of information lacunae impact upon many peoples' confidence in both large companies, food sellers and other nations.

Foods, as signifiers and signs of places, convey particular meanings to the consumer, as people are located and locate themselves both socially and culturally through their engagement with these displaced foods and the representations surrounding them. Recall the imagination of Europe in the sweet-eating activities of young women and girls. For others, foreign foods highlight the importance of being local and having knowledge about and access to local and domestic foods. As imported foods constitute a large proportion of the selection in shops, local and domestically produced foods benefit from an elevated level of cultural distinction and esteem. People do not simply situate themselves in their worlds in terms of their actual physical locale and the products of these places. Indeed geographical, national and culinary boundaries are crossed daily by displaced foods. Displaced

foods are contrasted on an everyday basis with those that are regarded as local or domestic. Indeed the local is opened up through its connections with what was once considered external, but is this expansion of the local, enacted at the level of everyday food provision, that causes people to make the distinction and mark the boundaries between the local and the foreign. The presence of foreign options affords people the choice to either purchase them or reject them and thus reflect upon their place within the locale.

Some people studiously avoid all but the most expensive and well known foreign food brands and consciously avoid sellers known to provide large amounts of foreign foods from unspecified origins. By shunning what they explain to be sub-standard food these people portray themselves as local and as Japanese partly based upon the perceived and obvious differences between local and foreign foods. These are often elderly informants who are unmoved by the appeals of a cosmopolitan identity. These people explain that foreign foods are risky and unfamiliar, some even unpleasantly rich, fatty or indigestible. These informants mobilise and maintain identities based upon Japan's local and domestic food system, understanding the world through a particular geography of food categories. These are the localised sites of food consumption or 'spaces of identity practice' (Cook and Crang, 1996:138). Locals, through their purchase and consumption of local foods, articulate their emplacement within 'the local' in stark contrast to those who sampled the wares of the internationalised marketplace and use that activity to enact cosmopolitan identities.

Localness too can be displaced and used as a marker of distinction for the cosmopolitan. By this I mean that local places are not just immediate. People also eat a great deal of food from abroad that is characteristic of famous regional

locales, such as Champagne in France or truffles from the Veneto in Italy. The appreciation of 'authentic' local produce from abroad signifies an appreciation of 'localness' as a commoditised value. The internationalisation of Japanese tastes and diets is conspicuous in the popular media's focus upon elite and speciality foods and produce from abroad. Travel and international culture programmes regularly feature stories that foreground local (either international or domestic) authentic food producers.

Many of the kinds of specialty items featured in these television programmes and magazines can be bought by interested consumers from Osaka's high-class department store retailers and small specialty establishments. These items are invariably marked with their nations and regions of origin and are marketed to appeal to middle-class and wealthy Japanese consumers who desire to develop or indulge cosmopolitan tastes. Hage (1997) notes that many post-industrial nations enjoy a state of being multicultural without the once obligatory migrant population. This idea describes the state of contemporary Japanese multiculturalism. Japan's national ethnic homogeneity is second to none and while the shelves of its import stores are stocked with foods from many nations, the emigrant populations from the vast majority of these nations remain miniscule. Japan's culinary tourism is based largely upon its selective enjoyment of specifically displaced food items and dishes in import stores and on restaurant menus. Little actual face-to-face intercultural interaction between Japanese people and foreigners occurs at all. Indeed, the vast preponderance of 'ethnic' restaurants in Osaka are staffed entirely by Japanese people cooking a wealth of dishes variously offered as authentic tastes of such-and-such a place or as fusion cookery with clear Japanese influences that uses familiar ingredients and flavours to

rework otherwise foreign dishes to appeal to local tastes. Bell and Valentine (1997:135-136) reflect upon the now well-established global cosmopolitanism which: “[I]nvolves the cultivating of ‘globalised cultural capital’ as a form of lifestyle shopping which, crucially, involves possessing considerable knowledge about the ‘exotic,’ ‘the authentic.’” Those who are interested in the distinction of culinary cosmopolitanism, especially the middle-aged, upper middle-class people with the economic capacity of indulge this habit, frequently purchase foreign specialty foods from retailers to consume at home. Senri Yama has one dedicated import store and a large supermarket chain (Carrefour) nearby that also stocks a range of ingredients and foods for foreign cuisines. The inner city however is regarded to be the best place to visit the many import stores that specialise in rare wines, liquors, cheeses, condiments, ingredients and other foods. Such items are usually very expensive and even foods that are commonly available in most supermarkets attract a premium because of their association with an elite cosmopolitan lifestyle. People are willing to pay for these markers of distinction. Because of this, such foods are symbols of culinary and cultural distinction to aficionados – in Bourdieu’s (1984) terms, markers of cultural capital¹⁸.

Many of the specialty foods purchased from import stores by my informants are not regularly used for home cooking unless for a special meal. Such occasions come about infrequently in most households and only adventurous cooks attempt unfamiliar foreign recipes in the home without guidance. For these dishes, a cook will travel to the city centre, list in hand, to purchase such things as anchovy-stuffed olives, caper berries, Scottish oats, foie gras, pickled herrings, smoked

¹⁸ For expatriates and visiting foreigners, import stores often become bastions of home, as the only place one can find things like muesli, dark bread, good jam, rolled oats, familiar bacon, lamb and vegemite (with premium prices of course).

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life*
salmon and prosciutto. Kawasaki-san, a middle-aged business executive and a cheese and wine enthusiast, explains to me in an up-market import store, his preference for French cheeses: “*This Bleu des Causses* [a particular blue cheese] *is from the Midi-Pyrénées* [a region in France]. *It is like Roquefort, but made with cow’s milk. I think it is milder.*” When I ask why he does not choose Japanese manufactured cheese, Kawasaki-san replies that it is made in an unknown factory and that it is bland and metallic tasting. Sato-san, likewise recalls a party at the English language school he attended. He recalls tasting several imported cheeses and was impressed by the different flavours and textures. Sato-san notes that Japanese cheese seems to only have a few tastes, most of them bland. It is the knowledge and appreciation of the specificity and exclusivity of imported specialties that confers distinction upon consumers.

Like Japanese regional specialties, exclusive foreign foods carry a great amount of fashionable cultural cachet. These are foods not made in factories, but by skilled authentic producers and artisans. Specialty items are usually selected to be consumed in the manner of antipasto or sushi; an assortment of small portions, each to individually savour and sensually reflect upon. This is the most popular way to consume these elite foods for a few reasons. As I have mentioned, few of my informants are confident cooks of foreign cuisines in their home kitchens. Furthermore, alone, each morsel can be enjoyed for its flavours and textures; mixing several without the required technical knowhow is considered a foolish waste. A cosmopolitan consumer such as Kawasaki-san knows from magazines and popular television food programs that French cheeses are famous for their quality. Kawasaki-san also prefers to eat his cheese with sliced French-style bread and a glass or two of carefully selected wine from Italy or France and often indulges in

this small cosmopolitan pleasure on a relaxing Saturday evening. In this way, the imagination and consumption of Europe is not solely restricted to young Japanese women.

Regardless of Kawasaki-san's occasional predilections for foreign specialty foods, he assures me that he generally eats Japanese style meals cooked by his wife and that their forays across ethnic culinary boundaries occurs only on weekends, on special occasions and for work related meetings and events. Kawasaki-san's identity as a global cosmopolitan is thus provisional and impermanent; he and many others like him among my informants and acquaintances sample and tour the abundance of foreign foods in Japan while at the same time retain their unequivocal culinary identity as Japanese and as locals. Despite the cultural capital of elite foreign foods, they do not supplant the importance of the national cuisine. Unlike everyday fare and domestic foods, foreign cuisine is novel and exciting and sometimes speaks of a foreign authenticity synonymous with Japanese culinary authenticity. Even so, peoples' attachments to their 'own food' cannot be severed. Duruz (2005:67) writes of peoples' need for a 'safety zone' when encountering the 'other'; a bastion of 'home' and tradition in this world of border-crossing and cosmopolitanism. Similar sentiments are obvious in the articulations of my informants as they shift between exhorting the qualities of Italian smoked meats and pasta to the importance of maintaining a healthy Japanese diet that does not rely upon fatty meats and wheat-rich dishes.

An Instance of Incorporation

Foreign foods are incorporated into everyday practice within the home as they become significant parts of family life and interfamilial relationships. Complex international cookery has not become popular within the home kitchens of my informants, but many simple examples of foreign dishes have. As I have noted previously, these dishes are often adapted to suit individual and more Japanese tastes. This is reflected in the integration of familiar Japanese flavours and ingredients and the omission of other more foreign ones. For example, Mediterranean dishes seldom use the copious volumes of olive oil that might traditionally be requisite, strong tasting black olives are uncommon as are sun-dried tomatoes, anchovies and many other ingredients. This reflects the difficulties home cooks face in obtaining these precise items in shops near to their homes in Senri Yama as well as the expense of including them in everyday diets.

Eiko makes pasta for her family at least once a week. Her young son, Taro, particularly likes spaghetti and because it is convenient to cook, Eiko is happy to oblige. Unlike many Japanese dishes, pasta dishes require significantly less cooking skill and utensils, thus they are feasible to make in generally small Japanese kitchens. Eiko is not one of my informants who regards pasta as being an inappropriate evening meal because of its purported heaviness, but she does note that it would be unfeasible night after night because it is important to have more meals based around rice, fish and vegetables. When ostensibly foreign dishes are cooked at home it is rare for cooks to use an unfamiliar recipe, these dishes had been incorporated into the home cook's culinary repertoire.

Connotations of family are apparent in Eiko's spaghetti as Eiko grows her own tomatoes and basil. Eiko thus articulates her localness based upon her

engagement with the popular local practice of growing and consuming locally grown produce. Eiko has been making spaghetti since university. Pasta expresses her proficiency in the kitchen as well as her interest in foreign food and a cosmopolitan way of life. Today, Eiko's pasta communicates Eiko's investment of care and time into her family's wellbeing as she feels that by spending some time in the garden she is demonstrating her love for her family through making sure her ingredients are as fresh and healthy as possible. Taste and texture also play an important part in why Eiko chooses to grow tomatoes and basil at home. Eiko describes shop-bought tomatoes as flavourless and powdery. Home-made food may be a reaction against the highly commoditised and homogenised marketplace (Holt, 2002). However, the choice to 'cook from scratch' what is available premade is a choice open only to home-cooks who have the time and skill. Premade food of whatever quality does not articulate the same level of intimacy and care as food prepared by hand from home-grown or local sources. Distinguishing features of localness and local relationships have come to incorporate the very kinds of international foods that globalisation afforded in the first place.

Conclusion

This chapter has enquired into some of the ways that contemporary global interconnections add to local peoples' foodways. People have come to understand and use the stuff of global flow and interconnection for their own inherently local and domestic purposes. They alter the very nature and form of imported goods and dramatically change their meanings within a local context. International imports and cuisines are also used as markers of distinction and as ways of imagining the international world. As May (1996:210) notes, it is important to identify the

5: *Global Goods: The International and Everyday Life* manifold “place identities people now draw upon” and to reflect upon how these identities are constructed. My informants are not only local Japanese people, they are, to varying extents, cosmopolitan global citizens drawing upon things from all over the world in various ways. *Yō-shoku* combines Western and Japanese influences and ingredients and represents both inventiveness and the desire to keep non-traditional cuisines separate from Japanese *wa-shoku* cuisine. Western foods can also be consumed as either elite, specialty foods or as cosmopolitan novelties reflecting peoples’ desire to become knowledgeable and fashionable connoisseurs of trendy cuisines. Globalisation means that some ingredients and cookery techniques from other places have become common in Japanese kitchens. Informants cook pasta and other dishes at home and also use foreign ingredients in traditional Japanese cooking.

The duality of the global and the local falls through when one considers the sheer degree of interface between local places throughout the world and its necessity in the everyday lives of local people. Globalisation is not straightforward, even when investigated with a focus upon the foodways of a small group of local informants – it occurs in multiple ways and its understandings and connotations vary within its different guises. While informants are confident that foreign cuisines do not have the capacity to undermine Japanese cuisine, those who reflect upon Japan’s level of food self sufficiency do worry that foreign ingredients represent a threat not only to health but also to Japan’s standing as a independent nation. The next chapter deals with some of the perceived risks associated with imported food.

Chapter 6: Food Safety and Risk

Foods and ingredients from abroad are included in most Japanese peoples' everyday diets. As I have discussed, the contemporary profusion of gastronomic variety is appreciated by both those who enjoy the adventures of culinary cosmopolitanism as well as people who rely on imported ingredients to cook even basic native dishes. However, the globalisation of food is not solely about the pleasures of gustatory, cultural experimentation, the incorporation of new foods into daily culinary repertoires and the assimilation of foreign ingredients into native meals. Cosmopolitan knowledge about foreign cuisines, cooking methods, authenticity and flavours does not commonly extend to knowing whether a food is safe, how it has been produced or what it contains. In this regard, foreign foods, while generally only perceived as an inconsequential threat to a distinct Japanese identity, are foci of concern in a much more tangible way. The unfamiliarity of international producers, their production methods and the possibility of chemical contamination or genetic modification drives sentiments of uncertainty and mistrust among Japanese consumers. In short, imported foods are desirable, but are potentially dangerous specifically because their origins are distant and unfamiliar.

This chapter examines how people understand and deal with what I contend is the other side of globalisation and cosmopolitanism, and what this means for their identities and food practices. As I have established, many people consume international foods to establish cosmopolitan identities but many of these people are also wary of international food sources. Perceptions of safety and issues of trust and familiarity are important factors in my informants' food choices. Smith

6: *Food Safety and Risk*

and Riethmuller (2005:727) have indicated that Japanese consumers are more cautious and are less confident about the safety of the food they consume than Australians. It is important to note that people are also concerned with the safety of domestically produced foods, but because these are grown in Japan by Japanese people, they are regarded as safer. They are also able to find more information about production methods and know that, more or less, the foods are produced for Japanese consumers to 'Japanese standards'. The perceived safety and risk associated with foods is used by people to demarcate boundaries between Japan and the rest of the world.

In this chapter I argue that origins are important markers that people search for when deciding between products. Peoples' tendency to reify domestic produce as both healthy and safe indicates that sentiments of national solidarity circulate around food. Global food systems necessitate dependence upon many international food products and have instigated a situation where normal people feel they must develop their own knowledge about the new competing options and choices they face every day. Common responses to confusion over the safety and reliability of international foods is to become increasingly interested in procuring food from reliable local and domestic sources.

Dubious Origins and Guests Bearing Unwanted Gifts

Previous chapters have discussed the importance of visibility and connection with regard to food choice. Unlike local produce, the production of foreign goods cannot be directly witnessed by my informants and as such is a category of uncertainty and ambiguity in terms of safety. For those whose task it is to procure food for

cooking in the home, peace of mind (*anshin*) through the safety (*anzen*) of comestibles is a pressing concern. As Sachiko notes:

When I go shopping I want to be able to trust that the foods I buy are going to be safe... I look for clean-looking fresh vegetables and fruit with no marks that mean they are old. Meat and fish has to be fresh looking and glossy with good colour...I also tend to buy many of the same brands, that way I am familiar with them...It is also important to know where foods are from and what ingredients they have in them, this is even more important now because there are so many additives it is sometimes difficult.

Sachiko, like many other shoppers, privileges the visual element of foods as an indication of quality. While this can give a rough idea of safety, shoppers also know that perfection can also sometimes come with a price, namely the use of agricultural chemicals, intensive farming practices and genetic modification. This puts people in a difficult position where appearances can be deceiving. Hachiko, a middle aged housewife comments:

The worrying thing about so many imported foods is that while it might look normal, sometimes you hear on television that pesticides have caused poisoning or that there has been a contamination. I feel unsure sometimes when I buy imported foods and try not to [buy them].

As I will discuss, domestic food contamination and poisoning is also relatively common, however, people maintain their beliefs that Japanese grown and produced food is safer based upon what I argue is a preference for the familiar and a certain national pride. Shoppers are compelled to select unblemished produce but feel that in doing so, they may be subjecting themselves and their families to various unknown health risks. To take a little greater control of purchasing choices, shoppers often pay attention to a food's origin as a way of gauging safety.

Peoples' concern with the safety and origin of their food creates what I regard to be a hierarchy of value and risk. Within this hierarchy, foods that are grown closer to home are typically the most trusted and valued. The difference between the reliability of international producer nations becomes more capricious as people generally know very little about how foreign nations produce food and have little more than their reputations in the popular media to refer to. Peoples' opinions regarding the safety of other nations' produce are also affected by how they regard the producer nation in a more general sense. For example, the rest of Asia, especially China, has a poor reputation, while people feel ambivalent toward the U.S.A. but generally trusting of most Australian and European produce. Nations are thus ordered according to their prestige value. Australian produce is commonly held in high regard due to the common association between Australia and untainted natural environments and healthy lifestyles. The U.S.A. in contrast, is more widely perceived to be associated with fast-food and a more urbanised lifestyle. Japan's often tremulous social and political relationship with both China and Korea is reflected in common peoples' reticence to unquestioningly trust their products.

Public apprehension involving origins and production methods is especially evident during food scares. In 2007 and early 2008, *Gyoza* dumplings imported from China were responsible for hundreds of nation-wide food poisoning cases. This particular incident spurred widely publicised claims from Japan's foreign minister, Taro Aso, that while domestic products are expensive, they were at least safe, uncontaminated and delicious. The poisonings quickly became evidence to support and advocate the quality and supremacy of domestic food. Mr Aso went on to muse that Japanese agricultural organisations could be grateful for the value

added to domestically grown foods by dubious international foods (Japan Times, February 3, 2008). Mr Aso's remarks resonate with the attitudes of my informants, who comment that Japan's produce is 'number one' in terms of safety and quality by virtue of its domesticity and familiarity. Nagano-san, an elderly woman who forages for *Yamashoku* and Toshii-san from Nara, both assert that Japanese producers are more reliable than foreign ones. As Nagano-san states:

Japanese farmers are more trustworthy. I think they understand the responsibilities they have for their consumers better. They're not from large companies so they're a lot more careful. They know what the Japanese expect and do their best.

Nagano-san raises an important point: indeed, Japanese agricultural organisations are generally smaller than their international counter-parts. Large agribusiness has not yet boomed in Japan and while large, often multinational companies are prominent in the area of food provision, the importance of smaller producers and agricultural co-operatives in Japan should not be understated. Indeed many of the contemporary problems faced by the citizens of wealthy post-industrial nations are either directly or indirectly caused by industrialisation and the proliferation large, depersonalised corporations. Toshii-san sums up the feelings of many people when he explains why many people are cautious of imported foods:

We Japanese are very worried because generally we don't think that foreign companies have the same guidelines and rules. Foreign companies seem to use a lot of chemicals, but I think in Japan it is used less. People are more aware of the risks and try not to use so many now.

Here Toshii raises a sentiment that many of my informants feel, specifically that other nations are questionable when it comes to trustworthiness, reliability and food safety. Another point that is raised by people when discussing the difference

between levels of trust and safety felt regarding Japan and other nations is that Japanese food is grown by Japanese people. Japanese farmers and producers are conceptualised as being “more aware”, “more trustworthy” and “more careful”. Why this should be is not clear as the informants who expressed this were unable to explain or expand on why they believed this. I claim that these feelings of trust and assurance stem from sentiments of similarity and shared identity. Relatively small Japanese producers are understood to contain like people who can summarily be relied upon and held accountable if necessary. Unlike foreign farmers and producers, their Japanese counterparts can be readily imagined to be familiar, to understand their consumers’ concerns and to be responsible. Faceless foreign producers however, cannot be expected to be concerned for the wellbeing of Japanese consumers’ well-being. Hachiko, a local housewife, notes that the way that fresh domestic produce in Japan is marketed facilitates her trust in the producers. Television and food advertising often depicts Japanese farmers in photos, sometimes with a short passage in which the farmer or company makes assurances of the quality of their produce. Material such as this, and the fact that farmers throughout Japan can readily be imagined by Senri Yama residents to be similar to small-time local farmers, gives consumers comforting assurances that domestic produce is familiar and trustworthy.

These feelings of likeness and trust are not felt for producers elsewhere in the world. Because foreign cuisines are specifically appreciated for their exoticness, familiarity is almost necessarily missing. Imported ingredients and fresh produce however do not have the appeal of the exotic and while they may look familiar, they are still unknown. While people assume that conscientious farmers and producers

do exist in other nations, because of their foreignness, people feel little connection to them. As Kenta noted:

I'm sure one can purchase good food in other countries when it is fresh. There you know who is trustworthy. The food that is exported though may not be so good.

Many people feel that countrymen support each other but cannot be relied upon to look out for the safety of international consumers simply because familiarity and personal interaction is not possible. Globalisation's permeation of borders means that the people of one locality are now affected for better or worse by the practices of people in other nations (Smith and Reithmuller, 2005:725). This is seen as a point of vulnerability to people who are on the receiving end of transnational flows. The decision to use potentially harmful pesticides and fertilizers in one nation affects the decisions and consumption habits of people in other nations, providing of course they know about it. The Japanese media is replete with sensationalised information related to food risks. This adds to a perceptible level of anxiety. State warnings against the risks of imported foods feed the public's distrust of international producers. I see this as a way for domestic producers and other interested parties to popularise and endorse trust and appreciation of local and domestic products as demonstrated by Mr Aso's earlier assertions. Because of the media's influence, international outbreaks of livestock disease, genetic modification and the use of chemicals in food cropping have emerged as salient concerns in peoples' daily lives.

The media tends to downplay the severity of domestic food scandals and accordingly, people feel far more confident in Japanese producers. Sachiko explains

her impressions of the media's portrayal of the food risks that the public face from abroad:

The news often runs segments on unsafe food. They will say that such a food has been discovered to contain something harmful and tell everyone not to buy it or to throw it away or take it to authorities to be tested. It's hard to tell if things are as serious as they say, but you have to be careful in case. People get very upset and worry that they have eaten something dangerous and then they lose trust.

Problems and mistrust consistently arise surrounding many common foods such as meat, seafood and fruit and vegetables. Such issues impact in a very real way upon peoples' daily shopping and eating habits. Akiko-san describes how careful she is in the supermarket:

Well, I have to read all the labels which takes time. And you have to know what all the numbers mean because some of these things I worry should not be eaten. I often worry about foreign foods because maybe the labelling isn't the same or they don't have to put the same information on the labels, but even with Japanese products it's still hard to be sure.

The critical point is that people do not feel that they can rely upon largely unknown and unaccountable international producers to look after their health or wellbeing (Menell et al. 1992). The belief that agricultural chemicals are used with abandon on the Asian mainland and in the U.S.A. impels many to regard foreign produce with trepidation and even contempt. Media reported foreign outbreaks of livestock disease also stimulate widespread rejection of imported meat products. Kenta-san, a middle-aged business man reflects upon breached import restrictions as leading to a situation where many consumers feel that the U.S.'s products and export ambitions cannot not be trusted or safely relied upon. The following explanation by Kenta-san, sums up the feelings of many informants:

American foods are difficult to trust. Japan has put many laws on what is safe and acceptable, but over and over we hear that they have ignored them or made many mistakes. I think many people feel very worried about this. It is very hard to feel that the foods are safe because you can't be sure.

As a result, many Japanese consumers turn away from risky foreign imports to direct their purchasing habits toward local produce and the goods of relatively 'trusted' nations and regions. Though Nygård and Storstad (1998:40) note that the belief that food produced nearby is safer than food produced far away seems speculative and unreasonable, agricultural produce tends to perish rapidly and local and domestic produce is able to circumvent this issue through quick and easy transportation. Furthermore, proximity and familiarity with producers engenders trust and an element of transparency in food production practices that distant producers lack. Indeed, the rapid internationalisation and off-shoring of food production and processing businesses apparent in Japan's contemporary food provision mean that people feel that profit is being prioritised before human wellbeing.

While it is necessary to supplement Japanese diets with considerable food imports, many people express dissatisfaction with the level of reliance upon nations that are perceived to produce comestibles of consistently poor and sometimes dangerous quality in order to cut costs. Kenta-san reflects upon Japan's dependence upon China for pork:

One cannot know the conditions that these animals have lived in or what treatment they receive, what chemicals they might be exposed to.

This sentiment neatly expresses the contemporary global food situation as characterised by the attenuation of relationships and distances between producers and consumers. This is the main locus of concern for my informants where distant,

unknown and unfamiliar food sources are viewed with scepticism and apprehension. Nygård and Storstad (1998) reflect upon how globalisation of the world food market demands that consumers in different countries must now reflect not only upon the safety of international produce but also upon the relationships between the different agents involved in getting food from field to table. Rather than assuming that food is produced safely, shoppers are finding that they really don't know how foods are made abroad. Honda-san, a young woman, mentions this on a shopping trip, raising questions of quality:

Do you know how they grow tomatoes in Italy? Now I keep seeing these Italian canned tomatoes in shops and at first I was interested because I thought they would make very good Italian sauce. I wonder if they're grown in greenhouses or in large fields. I'd like to think they're grown by farmers out in the sun, but you just can't tell.

In a discussion with another informant, Akiko-san, further concerns that are faced by many consumers are raised:

With processed foods...that have been made from a number of ingredients...the problem is worse. Then you might have several producers and producers may even change. They make the food and cook it, freeze it, export it and no-one knows that it is hiding poisons in some packages. Maybe there is testing here in Japan, but maybe there is not. They can't test all of them [food items or packages] so of course you only find out something is dangerous when people get sick.

In such situations, which are becoming common in peoples' lives, the authorities cannot not be relied upon to sufficiently police international food production standards and companies are feared to be operating according to standards that are expected to fall below what people feel are rigorous. Shopping can be a gamble when producers and authorities cannot be relied upon. To combat this uncertainty careful shoppers rely upon their own knowledge to make shopping decisions based

upon the privileging of foods from familiar and often domestic producers. Brand loyalties are built up together with an increasing interest in becoming aware of a food's origin. People are generally of the opinion that nations other than Japan could not comprehend Japanese food safety requirements because of a lesser respect and regard for food quality. Saito-san explained this concisely:

Japanese food is made very carefully. You need to have fresh ingredients that are also good quality. This is because the flavour of each ingredient must be clear. For example, fish for sashimi must be extremely fresh. I think this is maybe more important in Japan than in other places because of the kinds of foods here.

This contains an important sentiment. That Japanese expectations of food quality and safety are tied up intimately with Japanese cuisine and that without an intrinsically Japanese understanding of food, the safety and quality of food cannot be assured.

During a casual conversation with two informants about recent news events unrelated to food, a serious discussion about food safety arises quite suddenly. Both women are in their late 20s, single and working full-time in busy office jobs in Osaka. Watanabe asks whether we have heard of an incident where pork dumplings from China were found to contain flavoured cardboard. Yamada-san replies that she has, but that it was in the news a couple of months earlier. Watanabe agrees but presses on saying that it is an important issue and that she has had suspicions about Chinese imports before having them validated by the news report. Yamada agrees and says that her shopping habits haven't changed much because she always tries to buy Japanese products.

The cardboard-pork bun incident was limited to Beijing, but also received a great deal of media attention in Japan. Food scares in China are obviously

concerning to Japanese consumers as Japan imports such a large proportion of its food supply from there. Both Watanabe and Yamada agree that a great concern is that one cannot always rely on packaging to know where a food item is from. Sachiko Sasagawa tells me later in all seriousness that even if a label says something is produced in Japan it could come from China or another Asian country with less reliable food supplies.

The year ends with media coverage of a Hyogo prefecture family who had fallen ill early in the month after eating *gyoza* dumplings made by the Chinese Tianyang Food manufacturing plant for JT Foods Company, a subsidiary of Japan Tobacco. On the 30th of January, 2007 it is revealed that 80 people had complained of signs of food poisoning (Yoshida, 2008). The next day, several dozen others claim that they too have consumed the tainted dumplings and complain of similar symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, dizziness and stomach ache. Quickly, my informants begin adjusting their diets, avoiding Chinese foods and imported ingredients even more stringently than before. By February, over 450 people in 35 prefectures Japan-wide have been reported as victims. The pesticide methamidophos was found on the surfaces of six packages, in vomit and in the uneaten remains of dumplings consumed by afflicted families. Chinese authorities denied finding any traces outside of Japan (Zhe, 2008). The media reported that one of the six packages collected by authorities has a small hole, as though they had been deliberately tampered with. While most media sources reported that the contamination had been obviously caused in China, there were some who claimed that it was entirely possible that the poison had been planted in Japan. At the time, Kenta-san noted seriously that the usual blame game was beginning, with no one willing to take responsibility: *“When you don’t know who’s at fault you have to be*

6: Food Safety and Risk

cautious of everyone. This is the difficulty; people still have to eat!" Kenta-san noted that the most telling evidence reported in the media was that the pesticide was not approved for use in Japan but was widely used in China on vegetable crops. Authorities commented that the contamination is unlikely to be from sprayed vegetables and probably occurred at some point during processing or distribution (Yoshida, 2008). In Japan, people feel that China is one of the least trustworthy nations to produce food and much suspicion is levelled at China and the perceived low-quality production methods and safety precautions implemented there. This sentiment is not restricted to Japan, in fact, as Knight et al. (2008:146) have demonstrated, Chinese consumers are also concerned about the safety and trustworthiness of Chinese produce. This has resulted in a social trend toward the view that imported foods are safer and more prestigious (Knight et al., 2008: 147). I argue that China bears the brunt of much Japanese suspicion because of many Japanese peoples' beliefs that China is a menacing nation that cannot be trusted to maintain a safe standard of food production or to take into account Japanese wellbeing. These misgivings toward China are based on a number of issues and instances that have had a significant impact upon the Japanese public's perception of China. China's military, economic and political growth are primary concerns, especially because China often ignores Japanese concerns relating to these issues (see Self, 2002: 78). China's negative perception of Japan also instigates a correspondingly nationalistic and aggressive mood from the Japanese, as Sasada (2006: 109) explores. Another large issue, is that unlike China, where most people have only a very limited understanding of genetically modified (GM) crops, despite the fact that China is one of the largest producers and consumers of GM foods (Ho et al., 2006: 476), my discussions with informants revealed that almost all

consumers knew about GM foods and would actively avoid them. This observation is backed up by findings that the Japanese consumer requires considerable discounts on food products before seriously considering GM foods (Curtis et al., 2004). One informant commented quite overtly that China's lackadaisical attitude to food safety was especially insidious in respect to exports to Japan. News reports in the papers and on television regularly report upon the tense relationship between the two nations and many people understand the food safety issues stemming from Chinese foods to stem from China's apparent disregard, even hostility, toward the Japanese. While China is readily believed to be purposefully hostile toward the Japanese, other nations such as the U.S.A. are perceived to be reticent about adhering to Japanese food safety requirements because of their own supposedly poorer standards. A local farmer, Goro, comments:

I don't think that China is concerned with Japan's wellbeing. If there are poisonings here from Chinese products, they are always quickly saying that it was not their fault and that something must have happened here. Even so, when a problem is found there, I don't think they care so much. It's not a problem for them if Japanese people become sick or even die.

Comments and sentiments like this were common especially during food scandals.

A friend of Sachiko Sasagawa's daughter found out about the poisoned *gyoza* in school the day after the first family's illnesses had been reported in the media. She had eaten the same brand of dumplings the previous night and was taken to hospital for monitoring before any symptoms become apparent. I met the 14-year-old girl two days later to talk about her experience. Ami felt that she had been poisoned but because she did not eat many of the dumplings, it had not been severe. Her mother had bought the dumplings a number of days before she ate

them at a supermarket in central Osaka nearby where she worked. The hospital staff monitored her for a number of hours and released her to her parents.

Following the media reports, many of my informants felt hesitant and sceptical toward imported Chinese food. On a trip to Kobe, Atsushi consciously avoided eating at the ubiquitous Chinese restaurants there because of his worries concerning the possibility of contamination. In the wake of the *gyoza* poisonings, Kenta-san's confidence in the safety of common food sources and the authorities that are supposed to protect him and his family was ebbing. Akiko-san, too, could not be sure what other foods might be contaminated:

With the *gyoza* poisonings, it only became known about a month after the first cases happened. What were the authorities doing in this time? Many cases when people got sick could have been prevented, but it took too long for the government or the police to tell anyone. I think many people think this is not good enough.

Many shoppers felt uneasy about buying food in general. Media reports were described as confusing and contradictory and many felt that they were not being told enough information and that what they were being told was not helpful. People felt that they had to be increasingly reliant upon government warnings and corporate claims of safety and risk, while at the same time, they were dubious as to whether these claims could be trusted. Because of this, people felt that the safest thing they could do was to select foods from known sources or at least domestic sources that were easier to envisage as trustworthy.

While people can alter their own buying and eating habits to an extent, restaurants are known to use imported Chinese ingredients in their dishes, but what and how much is often unknown. While some large chains, like MOS Burger publish information regarding where their ingredients are sourced from, other

chains and many small independent restaurants have no such service. SkyLark, a chain of family restaurants vowed to discontinue the use of processed foods of Chinese origin and many department stores also made moves to reduce or discontinue stocking Chinese made foods.

For many consumers, the poisonings confirm that Chinese imports are not to be trusted and the incident is used to point out how accurate their suspicions had been in the past. These people are often very vocal in their assertions that certain brands, shops and types of food (mainly foreign processed foods and vegetables) are potentially dangerous. Chinese food producing and manufacturing practices are spoken of as substandard and dangerous and one informant even says that the poisonings are “*probably intentional*”, directly linking this assertion to his supposition that China does not like Japan and cannot get over the past.

Co-oping with Mistrust

The response to food poisonings from foreign origins impels many people to look closer to home for more trustworthy and accountable producers. Emi, a member of a mail-order food co-op receives food regularly and explains her involvement of some years:

I joined with some friends and neighbours because we were worried about the safety of many foods. With the group [co-op] you receive information about the foods and reassurances about how they are produced. It is more transparent because you are more closely involved with the real producers...You can easily find out where the foods are grown and how, so you don't have to wonder so much about whether pesticides and unsafe chemicals have been used... It is a much smaller company than the large food companies so you are dealing with farmers on a smaller scale... I mean, they're not really trying to make a big profit, they're a lot more concerned with safety and quality.

For Emi, one of the most positive things about food co-op membership is the level of assurance she gets from the group itself that the foods are safely and domestically produced.

In Japan, the *Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative Union*¹⁹, a nation-wide co-op union of over 600 co-ops and 22 million members, that is concerned with food safety and non-GM foods, has been running in Japan since 1965 and is made up of household groups, like Emi's, that order food packages together (Moen, 2000). The Union's members are largely women, and as such, it is also known as the "housewives' movement". The eschewal of GM, agricultural chemicals and food additives such as colourings and preservatives upholds the promotion of food safety, health and environmental consciousness. One of the Union's goals is to reduce risk for members, by offering foods that meet several principles that promote domestic self-sufficiency, sustainable use of resources and appropriately informed consumers (Moen, 2000).

Emi and others feel that in contrast to larger food companies, the co-op objectives are in closer alignment with their own. Emi's co-op prioritises organic produce and is able to reassure her that the small-time producers who belonged to the co-op are also concerned with food safety. One key point is that Emi feels like there is a closer and more involved relationship between her and the co-op rather than the attenuated, producer-consumer relationships that characterise mainstream foodways. Because co-op involvement is more than a simple economic transaction, Emi feels that her concerns are more important priorities for the organisation. Like Emi, a number of my other informants say that they have turned to private food cooperatives that champion organically grown domestic produce in

¹⁹ In 1989, the *Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative Union* won a "Right Livelihood Award" (a Nobel prize-style award to honour endeavours that offer practical solutions to contemporary urgent global challenges).

recent years. Roughly a third of my informant families are active members of mail-order co-operatives. People do not join co-operatives alone; three female informants joined the co-operative several years ago at the same time after deciding that they were interested in organic, natural produce. Emi and Akiko are neighbours and Emi's friend Sadako lives close by. Joining the co-op is also a way of maintaining local social relationships as they regularly meet to socialise and discuss impending orders. The women meet at one of their houses and divide up deliveries when they arrive. Most occasions include an extended afternoon tea and lots of chatting. Fruit from the latest order is sliced and served and the qualities and merits of the produce in the order are discussed. Often the next order is filled out and the women confer over what should be included. Discussions of recipes often ensue as the women discuss the kinds of things they can make with the various products they receive.

As I discussed in chapter 3, reliance upon locally grown foods by trusted neighbours and community members is common and represents the kind of trusted close producer- consumer relationship that these informants value. The co-op members that are discussed within this chapter also buy locally grown food regularly. Co-ops redefine the conceptual nature of food to stress that organic foods – foods that are 'clean' from contaminants such as synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, hormones and antibiotics – are the only kinds that are truly fit and safe for human consumption. Co-ops are also popular because they often tout the fact that their produce is exclusively Japanese grown. People feel more familiar with domestic produce and as I have argued, feel that domestic produce is inherently better quality. People feel more knowledgeable about domestically grown foods, therefore they feel that they are taking a relatively smaller risk in consuming them.

Co-ops alleviate members' concerns by helping them feel that they are seeing behind the scenes of food production and distribution. The risks associated with not knowing and not being confident that one is being told everything are minimised. Members feel assured by being able to imagine the setting where their food is from as well as the people who are involved. Photos of farms, vegetables growing, people picking fruit and dragging in nets of fish, collecting eggs or tending cattle make people feel that they can put greater trust into their foods' safety and quality. Co-ops send newsletters that feature short articles and biographies about producers rather than their products. This draws consumers into a closer and more trusting relationship with producers.

Domestic Concerns: Problems at Home

Almost immediately following the spate of highly publicised contamination scares from international food producers, a number of domestic food scares regarding expiry dates, contaminated foods and incorrect labelling impel consumers to think more closely about problems with domestic produce once viewed as safe. Unlike threats from overseas, domestic food safety issues disturb the hierarchy of risk and value and cause a great deal more disturbance in peoples' perceptions of Japan as a bastion of safe, good quality food. While finding fault with international foods is worrisome, it also bolsters peoples' confidence in domestic foods and food practices, upholding notions that Japanese foods are unquestionably superior. Unsafe international foods, as Mr Aso noted, urge the Japanese to be thankful for the supposed trustworthiness of domestic sources. However, if domestic foods can also be sources of danger, how do people react?

Japan has historically been the site of many food safety scares and indeed instances of sickness and death, these however do not seem to occur to people especially when discussing the perils of imported foodstuffs. People are generally reticent to admit that Japanese food products today are possible sources of serious health risks, and when it becomes apparent that those responsible for food safety scandals are trusted Japanese companies using domestically grown produce, many react with confused dismay. Akiko, who earlier in the year was adamant that buying Japanese produce was a sure way to avoid the perceived risks of buying imported foods is alarmed by the news.

It was surprising to hear that even after all the trouble with imported foods, that some Japanese companies were knowingly putting people at risk...It makes me extremely concerned about buying from any company I do not know and trust.

Like many people, Akiko's reaction is to become even more attentive to the foods she purchases by making certain to buy only products from familiar and hopefully trustworthy producers not implicated in the scandals. People try to account for the domestic scares by offering explanations, either of their own or borrowed from the media, that the foods at fault might be imported. Another explanation that people offer is that domestic companies are suffering because of international competition and are forced to cut corners. For many consumers, Japanese food scares blur the distinction between unsafe foreign food and trusted domestic produce.

The food scandals proliferate and the media warns the public of the risks of institutional food provision in schools and nursing homes. Despite assurances from the schools that all care is being taken to avoid contamination and poisoning, horror stories continually come through the media telling of the latest outbreaks of school-lunch food poisonings. Sachiko discusses this in an interview:

We [parents] get many notes from school telling us to be careful of our children's health and diets...Sometimes it is hard to be confident though, when many schools have so many problems with food poisoning. I wonder where the real problem is. We are given the menus from school to tell us what foods will be there, but no information of where it is from or good assurances of the quality of its preparation. When there are many cases of food poisoning, I think many parents are worrying 'will our school suffer this time? Did our school use that ingredient?'

A number of companies within Japan are tainted by implications of poor food safety practices, making many people critical and worried about the trustworthiness of common brands and providers. Mister Donut, Akafuku, Becker's, Hinaidori and Meat Hope, among other companies, are found to be variously using expired ingredients, containing unacceptable levels of bacteria, tampering with expiry dates and labelling products erroneously. In the case of Meat Hope, the meat packing company is found to be labelling ground chicken, pork and rabbit meat as 100% beef mince. As a result, home cooks begin questioning the composition of many household staples. Fujita-san, a local farmer recalls a number of years ago when the government had to import foreign rice to supplement a poor year's harvest.

They mixed it all out with Japanese rice and didn't label it because they were worried that people would panic and buy up all the pure Japanese rice. I guess they were also worried that if you could tell what rice was Japanese people would start raising the prices of pure Japanese rice. It was okay for us because we grow our own, but for people who had to buy supermarket rice, they had no idea what they were getting...I think that it's difficult to trust large organisations when they keep information secret and label things differently or choose not to at all. It seems to indicate that they're happy to do anything as long as it suits them.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that people have much greater trust in the foods produced by familiar producers and regions, especially domestic ones. Many of my informants are particularly concerned by producers from either nations considered to possess inadequate food safety policing and standards, or nations that have been linked with food safety scandals or instances of infection. People tend to view Japanese produce as generally safer and more trustworthy than foreign imported foods, but even so are concerned that even domestic producers and the government cannot be relied upon to consistently protect them from poisoning outbreaks or illegal industrial practices and dealings.

On March 11, 2011, a powerful earthquake and tsunami caused partial nuclear meltdowns at a nuclear power facility in North Eastern Honshu. Radiation leaks lead to great concern over food and water safety, as cattle, vegetables and ocean products are contaminated. With the understanding radiation poses an undeniable and ongoing risk to food safety and health, this new danger will surely pose a significant problem for many Japanese who are already extremely sensitive to food contamination and safety.

Chapter 7: Constantly Consuming Identities

This thesis has investigated the everyday food habits of people living within Senri Yama, Osaka and has explored how food and food habits are fundamental to peoples' identities. The central premise I have proposed is that contemporary Japanese people use food as a significant conduit for the shaping and expression of their identities as locals, 'Japanese' and as cosmopolitan world citizens while, at the same time, maintaining connections with tradition. Food and foodways in Japan represent to my informants who and where the Japanese are in the contemporary world.

By exploring how Senri Yama residents understand and represent where and who they are in the world with the foods they eat, and those they chose to avoid, I have demonstrated how Japanese identities are shifting products of peoples' experiences of the global and the local world. Peoples' identities are fluid; they are amalgamated through their interaction and use of various and shifting meaningful objects and practices. Throughout this thesis I have shown how 'traditional' cultural identity and contemporary cosmopolitanism do not preclude one-another. I have argued that contemporary internationalised food and eating practices as well as more traditional practices coexist and support the simultaneous presence of both cosmopolitan and traditional identities depending upon contexts and peoples' intentions. In this way, peoples' food choices and the ways that food is prepared and consumed reflect significant features of peoples' identities, lives and relationships.

Senri Yama residents use their food habits to express the importance of locality, nation, cosmopolitanism and tradition in their everyday lives. I have

explained how people appreciate the diversity of international influences and ingredients within everyday life while at the same time valuing what they consider timeless and authentic representations of 'true Japan'. Such practices of identity construction often appear to include contradictory features. Peoples' practices and identities, similar to the places and communities in which they live, are suffused by the stuff of the international world. This reveals that peoples' identities must be selectively and strategically constructed and employed. As I have discussed, both Japanese dishes and meals almost always incorporate imported foods and many international cuisines have been influenced and altered by Japanese preferences and predilections. So while identity, as I have noted, is often defined reflexively by what it is not, its presentation based on food choice is often based upon selective attention to only particular aspects of the food and context.

Foodways are a way of interacting with others both within and outside of the home. The ways that food is procured, prepared and eaten reflects many significant features of peoples' routine practices such as their responsibilities to work and home and their desire to spend time with family and friends. Foodways also reveal peoples' attachments to local places, the maintenance of local traditions and perceived historical continuity with the past. Locally grown foods and face-to-face interactions involving local foods contribute to peoples' sense of authenticity and belonging. At the same time, international influences upon foodways and food itself are important in daily life and this thesis has also explored the significant anxieties associated with the incorporation of extra-local foods and food practices into local foodways. By inquiring into both local and internationally influenced foodways I have acknowledged that people live their lives and understand their experiences within the context of not only the immediate locale but also the nation

and the world, through experiences with both cosmopolitan and traditional things and practices.

National identity, like local identity, is an important way that people identify themselves. For many Senri Yama residents, Japanese and local identity is implicated through their everyday food habits. This is possible because despite the presence of a staggering variety of food choices, people subscribe to very similar notions of what constitutes Japanese food and what does not. In this way, communities foster the essentialising of cultural identity, connecting people through ideas of shared traditions, affinities and values. This process occurs simultaneously with peoples' interaction with internationalised foods and foodways, as people become at once more cosmopolitan and more connected to their perception of Japaneseness.

Identities are relational and are comprised of many elements that orient people within their worlds. The people of Senri Yama have a sense of their identities and their place in the world that involves an unprecedented variety of influences which impels people to think closely about their own identities with respect to the rest of the world. For this reason, it has become important to maintain Japanese identities while at the same time embracing new internationalised identities.

Food is a social object as well as a system of communication and as I have discussed, through everyday food and eating practices, socially constructed meanings and representations become internalised and passed on. In contemporary Japan, for many of Senri Yama's residents, the home is a significant site of food consumption. It is here that relationships between family members are mediated and articulated. Many people consider the family to be a prominent

symbol of Japanese identity and within my local informant group, many families either lived with or near close relatives and shared meals together. To these people, this was an important way of maintaining both family solidarity and it also contributed significantly to the traditional atmosphere of the local area.

In the third chapter I discussed how the local land and its produce is extremely significant for Senri Yama residents' sense of local distinctiveness. The small tracts of remaining agricultural land not only provided residents with a source of locally grown rice, fruit and vegetables, but also contributed to peoples' perception of the area as powerfully connected with their image of traditional Japan and the idyllic village *furusato* that is still kept alive in the minds of many Japanese.

The ongoing presence of ancestral families, their houses and land, represents features of the *furusato*, lending the district a rural atmosphere that distinguishes Senri Yama from more urban locales. I have suggested that Senri Yama residents consider themselves as members of an imaginary national community because the image of the *furusato* is widely regarded in Japanese society to represent the contemporary connection with a shared national history of agrarian life. Senri Yama's local distinctiveness is thus also caught up in peoples' imagination of the locale as a distinctively Japanese cultural place.

The local fields are representations of Senri Yama's agrarian past which, while they do not bring any real money to the town, provide famers and other residents produce for their own families and for small roadside markets and stalls. The local agricultural landscape is highly valued by residents because ongoing housing and road developments threaten to replace it over the next few years. As farmers grow too old to tend the fields and their children haven't the time or

interest to take over, local farm land is being pushed back to smaller and smaller tracts. Many residents anticipate that within the next decade, only smaller vegetable gardens and maybe a few rice fields will remain.

Like local land, the value of local foods cannot be reckoned solely in terms of its functional use and exchange. Locally grown food is inexpensive, but since it is of such high symbolic value, it is involved in an inherently socio-cultural world where those who purchase and consume it become connected with the local area and one another. Local produce is a natural extension of the local land and the efforts of local people that can be incorporated into social relations and the body via trade, cooking and eating. Local rice is a highly valued cultural commodity and the most symbolically significant local product. While vegetables and fruit can be purchased by anyone, rice is passed solely along personal and habitually familial ties as a way of cementing and maintaining close bonds with others in the community. Receiving local food incorporates one into this system, not only as the final destination in a chain of food provision, but also as a member of a cycle that feeds back into the local community and land. In Senri Yama, locals support each other to maintain a feeling of community.

As locales are opening up to others around the globe, Senri Yama's residents find it comforting to associate themselves with people in their local area. The consumption of local foods can be read as a response to the abundance of imported foods in Japan. Locals purchase locally grown produce to distinguish themselves from people with perceived homogenous urban lifestyles. For the people of Senri Yama, consuming locally grown food is part of incorporating oneself into the local social network of production and meaning. By growing, buying and eating locally grown foods, residents participate in the community and express their belonging to

it. The trust and familiarity engendered by local food systems add to a sense of community in Senri Yama. Local growers are directly available to consumers. They can be known personally, addressed by name and one can have conversations about local news and local produce. Relationships like this are impossible with international producers and the makers of commercially produced foods.

The natural world widely held by people to represent Japan's original land. Foraging for wild foods is a way that some locals articulate a link with the local area apart from through the cultivation and consumption of locally grown foods. The capacity of the nearby hills to provide traditional foods contributes to peoples' sense of historical continuity and connection to traditional Japan. For *yamashoku* foragers, culinary connection with local natural places is what it means to be a local in Senri Yama. Locally cultivated foods are as seasonal as *yamashoku* and therefore both hold connotations of the natural world in a similar way. For Senri Yama residents, this stands in contrast to the standardised and generally unseasonal produce available from local supermarkets.

Standardisation of cuisine does not only occur as a result of the modernisation of foodways. Many authors note that the construction of Japanese national identity is possibly the most significant kind of identity formation in the contemporary world, as 'the nation' has come to stand as one of the most critical categories of identification even in a post-modern, highly globalised world (see Bestor, 2004; Cwiertka, 2006; Hiroko, 2008). Today people seek identification in everyday life through processes of investing the mundane and everyday with significance. It is through this process that my informants' invest their daily food habits with meanings that they use to identify themselves as Japanese. Within my informants' everyday lives, Japanese cuisine is a category and representation of

national communality and culture. By shopping for and consuming Japanese food, Senri Yama residents present themselves as possessed of Japanese identities.

I have noted that while the people of Senri Yama actively participate in the maintenance of traditional Japanese diets through their shopping, cooking and eating habits, food companies and the state itself are also highly involved in the popularisation of the association the consumption of particularly Japanese foods and Japanese identity as well as health. Hiroko (2008) notes that the Japanese state's control over its peoples' diets is so powerful, that it can be likened to the organisation of sexuality in the Victorian era in Europe. By propagating a nationally recognisable diet and endorsing its necessity to the maintenance of Japanese identity, the Japanese state effectively unifies its people. I have proposed that the standardisation of Japanese dishes occurs through the widespread primacy of *kata* (ideal form) and *shikata* (ideal method) in the creation of articles of material culture in Japan. Because of this, many dishes in Japan appear identical and are prepared in a very systematized manner. Artificial food samples and cooking classes for both adults and children aid in the propagation of standardised forms and methods of food and its preparation.

While every region has its own special foods, the Japanese diet is widely regarded to be a component of national commonality. For this reason, many Japanese foods exhibit a marked degree of verisimilitude, especially in terms of appearance and preparation. Despite regional disparity, Senri Yama's residents believe that compared with other nations, Japan's national diet exhibits a more marked homogeneity. In recognizing this, people choose to ignore the fact that much of what makes up Japanese cuisine has been adopted from or influenced by cultures abroad. While people choose to maintain ties to Senri Yama by growing,

trading, buying and using locally grown food, affiliation with Japan as a nation is also of crucial importance. I have proposed that this is because of the ongoing modernisation and urbanisation of Japan's agricultural and semi-rural zones. Today, previously distinct regions and local areas can no longer easily support a distinct diet. Because it is increasingly difficult to source locally grown food, especially for the growing number of people who live in the ever-increasing number of apartment buildings, identities affiliated with foodways have become easier to maintain through the consumption of foods affiliated with the nation rather than the locale. Japanese cuisine is highly suffused with national imagery which my informants consume every day. Fish and rice are two of the most emblematic and central foods of Japan's cuisine. As there are no rivers or large lakes, local fish is impossible. Local rice is notoriously difficult to come by unless one's family grows it oneself. These two globally widespread comestibles are suffused with an unequivocal national character within Japan. In chapter 4 I discussed how Japanese foods are edible national symbols that can be integrated into one's personal identity through their ingestion. This is because national cuisines foster belongingness because they are perceived to be consumed similarly by everyone, summarily endorsing a sense of commensality and national cohesiveness. As local and regional distinctiveness is lost, national uniqueness is emphasised in its place.

In this thesis I have contended that food is a social and cultural object that people use to represent themselves and their histories. Food, among other articles of material culture, is assigned traditional status to give meaning, authenticate and confer historical continuity. I have shown how among my informants, traditional

foods are powerful vehicles of Japanese cultural identity that represent a collective history of cultural uniqueness.

I have proposed that many people consider the mythical, historically 'pure' Japanese culture to be a mainstay of modern Japanese identity. In present-day Japan, with the increasing internationalisation of foodways and dining choices, many Japanese people seek from the past what they feel are stable and authentic markers of Japanese identity. The kinds of foods that people consider traditional are frequently compared with other foods that are more apparently products of internationalization or industrialisation. Historical foods are typically ascribed authentic or traditional status. These are understood to precede international or modern influence and as such are characteristically Japanese. The paradox is that many foods that are widely believed to be authentically traditional are themselves the result of either relatively recent or more ancient international origin or influence and have not originated from a purely Japanese history. Many foods are understood as distinctly Japanese despite any number of elements that indicate otherwise. Ascriptions of historical authenticity often gloss over imported ingredients and cooking techniques, modern preparation methods and technology. Many informants selectively ignore indications of globalisation, intercultural influence and cosmopolitanism in order to support their understandings of Japanese culture as being concrete and distinct. It is not a new idea that globalisation and internationalisation is far older than first was presumed. What it does indicate is that peoples' supposition of authenticity and tradition is an ascription based on the desire to affiliate themselves with what they feel represents Japan as a unique and culturally and indeed historically distinct nation. Premodern Japan, for many people, represents Japanese uniqueness, as opposed to

other nations and cultures. Traditional places, objects and food are all important within Japan as symbols and artifacts that affirm and reproduce a now mythologised past. I have contended too, that modern Japan has become unacceptable to many who believe that the past was a kind of authentic idyll; a time when Japan was at its most culturally distinct. The past that people seek to experience is often not a realistic history but an imaginatively constructed illusion that creatively uses more recent inventions and products to fabricate a historical Japan for contemporary people to enjoy and indeed consume. In chapter 4 I discussed how diners at traditional restaurants experience and consume a simulated past that represents how many people imagine Japan as it might have been before the modern period and indeed extended contact with the West.

Tradition and authenticity stand against progress and change as concrete representations of a historically contiguous Japanese identity. Traditional foods in Japan are not just things believed to be relics of an idyllic past, they are also significant in that they stand relative to an uncertain future in the same way that local foods oppose the ever-growing reliance upon international food sources.

Chapter 6 explored the intersection of Japanese foodways and the international world by investigating how international foods and foodways are adopted and transformed by the people of Senri Yama. Today international ingredients are commonly incorporated into Japanese foods on a daily basis and the consumption of foreign food products and cuisines contributes to modern cosmopolitan identities. The contemporary profusion of gastronomic variety is appreciated by both those who enjoy the adventures of culinary cosmopolitanism and by people who rely on imported ingredients to cook even basic native dishes. The ways that international foods are consumed and understood in Senri Yama

reveals much about how the Japanese understand the contemporary world. Traditional foods are juxtaposed with international foods to reinforce Japanese distinctiveness. Despite the importance of local foods, peoples' everyday lives are filled with objects, foods, images and ideas from abroad which I contend represent a dialogue where some international foods are incorporated and domesticated while others are maintained as examples of 'foreignness'. By keeping foods 'foreign', the distinction between Japanese identities and the international is maintained. While the difference between Japanese and foreign is often clear, home cooks in Senri Yama are necessarily dependent upon international imports for many of even the most basic food items for daily Japanese cooking, and consequently the distinction between Japanese and foreign food is traversed and blurred. Many people selectively ignore China and Korea's vast influence upon Japanese culinary culture. While many prominent features of Japan's culture, including its food, have been influenced by, if not adopted from other nearby societies such as China and Korea, in everyday life this fact tends to go unacknowledged by most people. I have contended that while the origins of some foods remain highly visible, such as foods from Europe and America, the paths of other foods are disguised or unclear based upon the kinds of relationship that Japan has with their country of origin. To admit to a strong similarity in food is also to admit to a resemblance of identities. Because the Japanese diet does share a number of similarities with the diets of neighboring nations, many features that would identify a likeness between cuisines are selectively overlooked. While Japanese food shares many ingredients with cuisines from the Asian mainland, over many centuries, through cooking and presentation methods, the addition of indigenous ingredients and flavourings as well as the attribution of native meanings and names, the Japanese have adapted many Asian

influences and ingredients to create a distinctive domestic cuisine. This still occurs today, as an unprecedented amount of international food and culinary knowledge is involved in peoples' everyday lives. New international dishes and ingredients are incorporated into Japanese cooking every year.

The global dissemination of food renders the boundaries between places problematical and is also implicated in the practice of identity among local people. Categories of foreign, domestic and local are obfuscated when transnational foods are re-placed within local food systems. I have used glocalisation to account for the capacity of local communities like Senri Yama to negotiate specific, localised forms of globalization and have argued that through adoption and incorporation, foreign foods become domesticated and localised through their incorporation into everyday foodways. People have come to understand and use the stuff of global flow and interconnection for their own inherently local and domestic purposes. They alter the very nature of imported foods and dramatically change their meanings within a local context. *Yō-shoku* combines Western and Japanese influences and ingredients and represents both inventiveness and the desire to keep non-traditional cuisines separate from Japanese *wa-shoku* cuisine. Western foods can also be consumed as either elite, specialty foods or as cosmopolitan novelties reflecting peoples' desire to become knowledgeable and fashionable connoisseurs of trendy cuisines.

International cuisines are also used as markers of distinction and as ways of imagining the international world. People use imported cuisines to cultivate and represent themselves as cosmopolitan and fashionable. Most Senri Yama people draw upon things from all over the world in their everyday lives. The separation of global and local spheres of existence falls through when one considers the sheer

degree of interface between local places throughout the world and its necessity in the everyday lives of the local people. Globalisation, even when investigated through only the foodways of a small group of local informants is not straightforward - it occurs in multiple ways and is differently understood.

The globalisation of food is not solely about the pleasures of gustatory and cultural experimentation. The incorporation of new foods into daily culinary repertoires and the assimilation of foreign ingredients into native meals also spurs ambivalence and concern. Imported foods, as opposed to local and domestic foods, are desirable, but are potentially dangerous specifically because their origins are distant and unfamiliar. While informants are confident that foreign cuisine does not have the capacity to undermine Japanese cuisine, those who reflect upon Japan's level of food self sufficiency do worry that foreign ingredients represent a threat to not only health but also Japan's standing as an independent nation. Peoples' knowledge about foreign cuisines and ingredients rarely extends to the knowledge of whether a food is safe, how it has been produced or what it contains. Foreign foods, while generally only perceived as an inconsequential threat to a distinct Japanese identity, are also foci of concern in a much more tangible way. The unfamiliarity of international producers, their production methods and the possibility of chemical contamination or genetic modification drives sentiments of uncertainty and mistrust among many people. Perceptions of safety and issues of trust and familiarity are important factors in my informants' food choices. People are also concerned with the safety of domestically produced foods, but because these are grown in Japan by Japanese people, people are more confident in their safety. The perceived safety and risks associated with foods is used by people to demarcate boundaries between Japan and the international world.

I have argued that origins are important markers that people search for when deciding between products. Domestic produce is widely reified as both healthy and safe. This indicates that sentiments of national solidarity circulate around food. Global food systems necessitate dependence upon many international food products and have instigated a situation where normal people feel they must develop their own knowledge about the new competing options and choices they face every day. Senri Yama residents have become increasingly interested in procuring food from reliable local and domestic sources to avoid the perceived dangers.

Senri Yama people are particularly concerned by producers from either nations considered to possess inadequate food safety policing and standards or nations that have been linked with food safety scandals or instances of infection. Japanese produce is generally considered to be safer and more trustworthy than foreign imported foods, but even so, people are concerned that even domestic producers and the government cannot be relied upon to consistently protect them from poisoning outbreaks or illegal industrial practices and dealings.

Within Senri Yama, food and food habits are fundamental to local peoples' identities both as locals and as cosmopolitan world citizens. Food and foodways in Japan signify to my informants who and where they are as Japanese in the contemporary world.

The examination of how Senri Yama residents understand and represent where and who they are in the world with the foods they eat, demonstrates how Japanese identities are evolving products of peoples' experiences of the global and the local world. "Traditional" cultural identity and contemporary cosmopolitanism do not necessarily counteract one-another, and as I have argued, contemporary

internationalised food and eating practices as well as more traditional practices coexist and support the concurrent presence of both cosmopolitan and traditional identities. This is dependent upon contexts as well as peoples' intentions; peoples' food choices and the ways that meals are prepared and consumed reflect significant features of peoples' identities, lives and relationships.

Senri Yama residents express the importance of locality, nation, cosmopolitanism and tradition in their everyday lives. As I have shown, people appreciate, but may also be wary of the diversity of transnational influences and ingredients while at the same time valuing presumably timeless and authentic representations of 'true Japan'. These practices of identity construction can appear contradictory.

Peoples' practices and identities, like the places and communities in which they live, are suffused by the stuff of the international world. They are also changing, as I my informants expect Senri Yama to become increasingly urbanised over the next several years. This means that peoples' identities must be selectively and strategically constructed and employed to cope with these changes.

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