

Consuming Identities: Contemporary Japanese Foodways in a Global Locale

Micah David James Peters

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Discipline of Anthropology

School of Social Sciences

University of Adelaide



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

Cover Image: Micah Peters 2008

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.

Micah Peters

Acknowledgements and Dedications

Acknowledgements are due to the many individuals and families in Osaka who generously offered their time and knowledge to assist me during my fieldwork. These families allowed me into their homes and lives and tolerated my relentless inquisitiveness with friendliness and good humour.

My biggest debts of gratitude go to the Aki family, the Sasagawas, the Kubos and the Onoes, whom introduced me to the majority of my informant networks and whom also aided me in many aspects of my work.

Great thanks go to Ayaka, Reiko and Atsushi who assisted with translation.

Sincere gratitude goes to Timothy Paull for proof-reading assistance.

Gavin, Mariko, Gideon, Katsushi and Victoria also dedicated a great deal of time and advice throughout my work. Thanks to them also.

From Osaka University, I would like to extend my gratitude to Associate Professor Beverly Yamamoto and Professor Satoshi Nakagawa from the Graduate School of Human Sciences for their time, help and guidance.

At The University of Adelaide, my sincere appreciation is due to my supervisory team Associate Professor Adrian Peace, Dr Alison Dundon and formerly Dr Megan Warin. Thank you for abiding my continual disappearances. Your advice and encouragement were always invaluable.

Thanks also go to the Anthropology Department at The University of Adelaide, which are especially heartfelt toward Ms Sharon Lewis; now you are finally rid of me and I will never know how to get the photocopier working.

I am very grateful to Dr Rodney Lucas and Professor John Gray, from the Anthropology Department of Adelaide University for having me teach in their courses throughout me writing-up my thesis.

To my parents, Christina and Dr Mark Peters and the rest of my family; Madeline, Marion, Helen and Alex, your love, support and encouragement was greatly appreciated.

This thesis is dedicated to my mother. This is the Ph.D. you began.