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The Taste of Japan

Connections between local dishes and travel

in the contemporary food culture of Japan.

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Introduction

Food is inextricably linked to culture. This is the case for everywhere in the world. As such, the food culture of Japan has also been a popular topic for numerous scholars to understand Japanese society. This thesis seeks to understand why local dishes and foodstuffs are popular in Japan, and why travel is closely connected to the food culture of Japan. To that aim, I will review the historical process and transformation of the food culture of Japan The first part of my thesis consist of building a historical and theoretical framework; the second part is devote to case studies.

I will explain in the first chapter why the modern cuisine of Japan has been characterized as a "national cuisine". I will show that contemporary studies have been focusing mainly on the creation of a single, more or less standardized Japanese cuisine, rather than on variations in local cuisine. In the second chapter I will review a distinct connection with modernity and the predominance of the local cuisine in early modern Japan and how the commoditization of Japanese local heritage has developed the concept of national nostalgia. In the third chapter I will discuss the current situation of the Japanese food culture and rise in the popularity of affordable versus expensive food and how this popularity is used in the domestic tourism sector of Japan.

In the first case study I will highlight the commonality and ubiquity of food in television programs. Three television programs will be discussed in order to formulate the theory that recurrence of food promotion, especially in travel programs, entices people to travel for the act of eating instead of sightseeing. In demonstrating this commonality I will accentuate several particularities connecting the promotion of food with travel. After the first case study, I will conduct a briefer second case study of travel guide books and agencies. The vital point of interest in this case study is to what extent food promotion is used to recommend travel destinations to the audience. In the conclusion I will comment on the local food promotion culture of Japan and its close relation with tourism in Japan.

Chapter 1: Modern Cuisine of Japan

In this chapter I will first highlight the contemporary discourse on the modern cuisine of Japan. Afterwards I will clarify with a number of cases that the modern cuisine of Japan is evolving into a dualistic system of both national and local cuisines. The concept of national cuisine has irrevocably triggered new forms of consumerism in Japan which are nonetheless nationally but also regionally and locally based. In Katarzyna Cwiertka's book *Modern Cuisine: Food, Power and Nationality* (2006), the concept of a national cuisine is explained as a result of westernization and modernization. This result can be correlated with the only recently introduced rhetoric of Japan as a nation state. Cwiertka posits that while previous centuries in Japan were centered around localized consumption, upcoming modernity in Japan replaced this with a set of food which would later be characterizing Japan itself (Cwiertka, p. 175). Furthermore, when discussing cuisine, Cwiertka applies the interpretation of Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois (2002), which states that cuisine is a cultural experience, but also holds a representative property (p. 106). In other words, eating food means consuming something culturally specific.

The theory that certain types of food hold cultural meaning has been further elaborated by Cwiertka, who argues that it eventually led to kinds of food defining the national identity of Japan. Ironically, many foods that now define Japan can hardly be called ´truly´ Japanese. In *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan* by Eric Rath (2010), he shows that early modern Japanese cuisine is far from the cuisine known now. In early modern Japan, certain dishes had ceremonial value and metaphorical significance (Noguchi 1994; Rath 2008), but also religious connotations (Becker 2014, p. 98). These aspects defined what sorts of foods were prepared and served in Japan in the early modern period. A transition occurred when the influx of western influence takes shape in the daily lives of the Japanese populace and when we can speak of modernization. The rhetoric of a nation-state simultaneously created a national identity, which is reflected in the image of what kind of food the people of the nation eat. The notion of a national cuisine became important for the national identity as it could be used as an international image. Together with this international image, food became imminently connected to the "permanence and authenticity" of the nation's identity (Cwiertka 2006, p. 178). Or as Rath says: "[…] modern cuisine is a way of associating preparing and consuming food with the idea of homogenous national identity" (Rath, p. 4).

National cuisine

Despite the fact that modern cuisine is strongly connected to the national cuisine, it does not mean that local cuisine has disappeared. Like Cwiertka, other scholars on Japan's gastronomy seem to advocate the fact that regional and local cuisines have started to converge into one single cuisine during the process of modernization and the building of a nation-state (Riethmuller and Stroppiana 1996). I would counterargue that, even though the basic components of the Japanese cuisine have become quite standardized (rice and soy primarily), distinct regional differences in Japan opened up opportunities for local differentiation of standardized dishes. I will address this point further in the next chapter.

Another important factor of modernism is the rise of consumerism. At the pinnacle of modern Japanese society in 1980's Japan had also become a full-fletched consumer society. Materially everything could be bought at the (department) stores and Japan had fully taken the image of a modern and westernized society. At this point, as a result of rapid urbanization and modernization an appeal for attention of the "cultural loss" is made (Creighton 1998, p. 128). This notion of cultural loss by modernization is still a relevant issue. The idea that Japanese food is not necessarily inherently Japanese anymore has brought about a new-found nationalist awareness which is intrinsically connected to the search to authenticity and historical tradition of Japan. Modernization has led to several assumptions that the modern cuisine is leaning towards a localized and traditionally oriented rhetoric in Japan.

The 'retro boom' of Japan

The first notable new situation in the 1980's daily lives of the Japanese was the pervasiveness of the consumer society. Millie Creighton (1998) argues that in the 1980's Japan's department stores became the mediators for the population's conflicting ideas of modernization and tradition, where they would redefine foreign practices and associate them with Japanese heritage (p. 127). Creighton posits that as the modern society matured in Japan, a new trend gradually became popular where department stores would start to promote Japanese heritage and sell traditional products, and this would eventually trigger a "retro boom" (idem, p. 129-130). It must be noted however that this retro boom covers consumption of traditional things generally, and not in particular traditional food. So instead of an intangible retro boom, Creighton talks about a tangible boom, such as the preservation of traditional artifacts and for example architectural heritage (Ehrentraut 1993, p. 263). But there are also examples of 'retro

gourmet' such as the labeling of food that was popular in the Showa period (1926-1989) as "Showa Gourmet."

The second important change is globalization. Japanese critics questioned the nature of a Japanese modern culture and cuisine because it is highly reliant on globalized foods and therefore relies too heavily on the import market (Rosenberger 2009, p. 239-241). Naturally, a nationalistic solution against the risks of being too reliant on imported products was simply to eat Japanese-made local dishes. But as noted earlier, Japan has also become greatly defined by western cuisine. Ironically, a majority of the Japanese find the "most representative" foods to be of foreign origin, such as curry, ramen and the hamburger (Brown & Traphagan 2002, p. 131). But dishes with foreign origins have been "improved" (according to Brown & Traphagan), or adapted to fit the taste of the Japanese. This "Japanization" of foreign products is another form of nationalization and it perfectly conveys the urge to not conform completely to the prevailing global discourses. Cwiertka exemplifies this innovative competitive attitude in the case of *Mos Burger*, a fast-food chain that competes with McDonald's by offering burgers more befitting the traditional Japanese cuisine (mainly rice and also fried fish), and also specifically emphasized the safety of its food, which was locally produced (pp. 171-2).

Similar to the Japanization of new foreign products, "reinventing" traditions is another common trend in Japan. Rather than commoditization of heritage, it is cleverly reinvented to refer to traditional Japan, while it is also highly representative of modern Japan. This primarily Japanese written canon is called *nihonjinron* and pleads Japanese uniqueness in its customs and cultural practices (Assman 2008, p. 370). This style of reinventing traditions can be seen on all levels of culture: fashion (Assman), martial arts (Shun in Linhart & Frühstuck 1998), and even whole towns (George in Gerteis & George 2013). I will discuss the reinventing of food culture later on in conjunction with the reinventing of the "home town" (*furusato*). Another good example of a completely integrated Japanese foodstuff which was not originally Japanese is *rāmen*. It was introduced as colonial import and a fast-food, but thanks to chefs experimenting with the food to adopt it to suit local tastes and use of locally sourced ingredients, regionally specialized *rāmen* came to being (Fukutomi pp. 67-8). The great variety of regionally specific *rāmen* can still be bought in common supermarkets.

Conclusion Chapter 1

In this chapter I have discussed the primary theoretical framework on the food studies of Japan, which is dominated by Cwiertka's "national cuisine" theory. This theory states that as

result of modernization and westernization a standardized set of foods came to define the national identity of Japan. But, in the aftermath of westernization a feeling of reversal to traditional Japan gradually surfaced. The so-called loss of culture as result of westernization reinvigorated a sense of national traditionalism and shifted the focus slowly but surely back to the local instead of the foreign. In this process, the unchanging adoptive attitude of Japan successfully imports foreign foodstuffs (and ideas) and turns it into something Japanese. This Japanization of food further complements the theory of nationalization of food and proves that innovation and so-called reinventing of tradition has come to identify the Japanese cuisine gradually in the last few decades. In the next chapter I will address the link of national nostalgia and the vital changes in the experience of travel from pre-modern to modern Japan.

Chapter 2: Nostalgia and Travel in Japan

In chapter 1 I discussed several classic food ethnographies (see also: Mintz & Du Bois 2002) of Japan: food and social change, the identity-shaping property of food and the sense of food insecurity following the globalization. But I want to further elaborate on the identity-shaping of food and its inseparable connection with travel and tourism in Japan. As Cwiertka (2006) noted, the nation-shaping 'imagined community' of Japan has created a close connection to food which reflects a national image (Idem, p. 12). But also another representation of Japan is the changing concept of traveling and the metamorphosis it underwent in the industrialization and urbanization during the 1900's. Jilly Traganou (2004) states that we should not experience travel in a direct manner, but perceive it as a "conceptual and imaginary notion" (p. 2). I argue that the experience of cuisine is also a conceptual and imaginary experience. I will show in this chapter that travel and food in Japan are very closely related to each other and have been substantially influenced by the earlier mentioned national nostalgia and reversal to the local and 'traditional' Japan.

National Nostalgia and Edo

A relatively recent trend, as mentioned in the first chapter, is the idea of commoditization of heritage. This marketing strategy (commonly known as *revival products* or in Japanese *ribaibaru shōhin* , Thompson (2011)) is utilized for formerly popular commodities which can originate from the 1990's but can also refer back to the Showa era, or even further back. But I would argue that, when Japanese refer to "traditional food", it is commonly tantamount to things originating from the Edo period (1603 – 1868), or in other words "early modern Japan". In some cases, this is done consciously (Rath 2010), but in many cases it is expected that traditional Japan equals Edo Japan. We could for example look at the concept of travel and tourism in Japan: According to Suzanne Formanek (in Linhart & Frühstuck 1998) pilgrimage in the Edo period has "in substance" been the forerunner of present-day Japanese tourism (p. 165). So it is possible that the recent attention Edo has gotten, on its first appearance of what we would call tourism now, is what has defined the Japanese concept of "tradition", since tradition, religion and history are commonly interconnected cultural aspects.

Stephen Vlastos (in Vlastos 1998) even calls tradition a necessity of modernity to "prevent society from flying apart" as it is a vital element in the (re)production of cultural practices (p. 3). But foremost, Vlastos urges, it shouldn't be taken for granted that tradition is

an unchanging element, it rather consists of things observed as discontinuous and flexible (idem, p. 6). The process of "inventing" tradition is idealistically formed as a result of repetition while simultaneously becoming a common cultural practice (idem, pp. 14-5). This subsequently means that reinvented traditions are constantly being introduced in the present-day society. Reinvention of tradition is an unending reproduction of culture and connects the people of the present with the culture of their ancestors (idem). But what makes the Edo period a common focus of reinvention? Earlier mentioned *revival products* (Thompson) can be from any era in the past, so why choose Edo? Jennifer Robertson (1991) encourages us to observe this point in a Japanese perspective. *Mukashi* means "the past", but even further connotes "the Good Old Days" (p. 15). These "Days" commonly relate to the agrarian era of Japan, or in other words Edo and before. Therefore, Edo forms the core of nostalgia for the Japanese.

The Tokyo government has also been promoting the "greatness of Edo" in the midst of internationalization (Scheiner in Vlastos 1998). We also see here the attention on so-called "rural experience", which signifies what is considered the "greatness" of Japan's past. Certainly, the urbanization has made sure that the vast majority of Japan now lives in the city landscape. Which also means that common domestic travel poses the possibility to enjoy the remainders of Japan's astonishing nature, which is often also traditionally oriented. If the rural experience is one of the aspects of Japanese tourism, so is nature a vital part of the tourist experience. Wolfgang Arlt (2006) argues that we should be wary of the complexness of "appreciation of nature" in Japan. This appreciation has manifested itself in many forms of culture, like poems and arts which portray or describe nature's marvels such as cherry blossoms (p. 203). So if we discuss the nature of Japan, he argues, it is basically the cultural values it has created, not the direct experience of being surrounded by nature. In essence, the travel through Japan is not necessarily to experience the environment but to witness, and maybe relive, the underlying cultural heritage it has. What this means is the impetus for tourists to visit places isn't by definition defined by what the direct environment has to offer, but the cultural meaning of visiting the place.

Travel and Edo

To elaborate on the meaning of travel in Japan, we should link the Edo period with travel. Jilly Traganou exemplifies the importance of travel in the Japanese history in her book *The*

Tōkaidō Road (2004). The *Tōkaidō*, the historical road connecting Tokyo and Kyoto, poses a fitting example explaining the historical importance of travel for experiencing local topography (idem). This experience not only implicated local sightseeing but also obviously eating local food. Traganou remarks that "geographical desires, at least in Edo and Meiji Japan, are based not only on what is visually or physically available, but even more on anticipations shaped prior to traveling" (p. 209). Regardless of the industrialization during the Meiji period and beyond, the phenomenon of enjoying local topography while traveling has never disappeared. On the contrary, with the expansion of the railroad system domestic travel has increased tremendously. This reliance on train travel is greatly exploited as seen in the omnipresence of the *ekiben*, or train lunchbox. This lunchbox usually contains locally produced ingredients and often contains locally famous foodstuffs. Such lunchboxes can be bought at almost all train stations in Japan and perfectly illustrates the popularity of local food in Japan and the common practice of eating when travelling (Noguchi 1994, pp. 318-9).

Travel in Japan can be summarized as a form of cultural common practice in Japan. As Alisa Freedman argues in *Tokyo in Transit: Japanese Culture on the Rails and Road* (2011): "[The literary and historical] views of and interactions on Tokyo transportation had their beginnings more than one hundred years ago and have, then as well as now, constructed Japan's national image and appeared in and determined the forms of literature, visual culture and the mass media" (p. 16). She links these influences back to the Edo period, where the first massive expansion of the commuter system (i.e. railroads and highways) took place. Freedman conclusively states that literary and cultural works clearly show that the Edo period is tantamount to the birth of modern travel in Japan (idem, p. 5). Furthermore, many habits and present-day cultural practices that date from the Edo period can still be seen nowadays. We can see for example that the history of Japanese travel has always been to promote short stays at an inn. This implies that people traditionally stayed at the *ryōkan* or *minshuku* (travelers inns) for only one night, after which they would continue their journey. This habit would explain the nowadays common one-day travel (*hikaeri*) or one-night travel's popularity (Yasuda 2012, p. 106). More to the point, such short stays enables the traveler to specifically focus on eating as many different dishes throughout the whole journey. This made possible the idea of food tourism: to travel to different places with an explicit aim to eat something.

Conclusion Chapter 2

I have mentioned in the first chapter that local differentiation is still impeding the "converging" of local and regional cuisines into one cuisine, contrarily to Riethmuller and Stroppiana (1996). As I have posited in this chapter however, industrialization has in fact not impeded localism, it has increased traveler mobility and made possible the opportunity to taste the local cuisines much easier than before. The common traveler is enabled to enjoy a part of the local culture especially through the availability of local foodstuffs (i.e. *ekiben*) at train stations. I will show in the case studies in this thesis how the people are aware of local specialties of different places through the media and travel with the (sometimes sole) purpose to try and taste as much local dishes quickly and cheaply. Here we can see the strategic prevalence of the train station and (train) travel in Japan and the inseparable importance it holds to the propagation of the local heritage.

Further, I have established that modernity has reached a change in the mindset of the Japanese; that nostalgia is being used successfully to promote traditional and local heritage. But even if this is true, it does not seem to fully explain why local specialties are so popular in Japan. Is it because they offer not so much "traditional" food, but rather reinvented traditional food? Or is ´historical tourism' not the prevalent 'type' of tourism anymore? The next chapter will propose the rise of a new type of commercial tourism and the marginal decline in historical tourism. Afterwards I will address my own research on the media's influence in the promotion on local dishes and specialties in two case studies.

Chapter 3: Local Heritage Branding

In the previous chapters I have discussed the predominance of historical tourism in Japan, where the Edo period has been established as a representative image of national nostalgia. This propensity to idealize the "Good Old Days" has manifested itself in an inherent metaphor of culture loss as result of modernization, industrialization, urbanization and westernization. With this premise, local communities had suffered a decrease in population from the citizen's migration to the bigger cities and started to monopolize on the growing feelings of national nostalgia. Stimulated by consumerism through the marketing strategy of "revival" and "reinvention", traditional products such as kimonos or objects with religious connotations became the focus of commercial local promotion. In other words, there is a link between local identity (constructed or not) and consumerism. What I want to make clear in this chapter is that this consumerism is highly perceivable in the food culture of Japan. In this chapter I will link the sense of national nostalgia with travel and food in the search for popularity of the local dish in Japan during the years of 1970 till 2000. The *furusato*, or literally translated "old village", will pose as the doorway to understanding the cultural significance of historical tourism and the inevitable result of local food popularity. Furthermore, I will highlight new culinary phenomena that have been popularized in last decade a an additional way of promoting local identities, but still are only scarcely mentioned in contemporary scholarly writing.

Furusato-zukuri or *burando-zukuri*?

A popular rhetoric in Japan since the 1970s has been to reinvigorate the nostalgia of traditional Japan in the form of *furusato-zukuri*, literally meaning "old village making". In this discourse, local communities individually promote the image of the "old village". They do this, according to Jennifer Robertson, through exploiting "affective dimensions of materialistically well-being" by legitimizing it with the emotionally appealing term "tradition" (Robertson 1991, p. 27). But even though the nostalgia and affinity for traditionalism have always been regarded the most popular way of "branding" things in local communities, recent writings by Japanese scholars have noted a change in food tourism that heavily relies on "local product branding". Yasushi Sekigawa (et al, 2010) shows in the case study of Inasawa City (Aichi prefecture) that rather than *furusato-zukuri* we are seeing a new form of food tourism and local marketing, which does not refer to the identity of the old village but rather

the present-day village. Sekigawa uses the term *burando-zukuri*, or the making of a brand in the context of *chiiki-burando*, which is the local brand. But in a similar manner, *machi-zukuri* (town-making) is also used within this multitude of terms regarding this marketing theme. Clearly there is a great overlap nowadays in terminology of the grand scheme of local marketing.

Before heading on, a clear distinction must be made between some of the key terms I have mentioned. I will summarize the following terms which I will use: Firstly I will verify the distinction between **product branding** and **local product branding**. Afterwards I will clarify the link between **traditional product branding** and **reinvented tradition**. First is "product branding": general product brands such as *Asahi*, *Kirin* and others, are producer brands. These brands primarily distinguish cheap and expensive products in accordance to product quality, and furthermore their popularity has established a national (and sometimes international) brand awareness. This brand awareness also made sure that the brand has an added-value. If a product has such a brand label on it, it provides the consumer the safety and reliability of the producer with this brand name. But locally branded products are different because the producer is in most cases not a big-scale corporation but a small shop. I will further show the difference between local producers and corporate producers in the research to come. For this chapter I will explicitly conform to the following explanation: if local brands have established a sustained brand awareness expanded further than its own local area, it has become an identity for the area. A locally branded ramen for example denotes a ramen which ingredients or original recipe is from a specific place. So in short, there is a division in "local product branding" and "product branding": a local product brand is made in a small-scale shop of a kind, has a local recipe and uses locally produced ingredients. While a general brand refers to a big, often national, corporation which conducts mass-production. But it is possible that a well-known producer brand such as *Nissin* (cup ramen producer) brands a cup ramen as "Sapporo Ramen" because it tastes like the actual local version. At this point a local brand becomes nationally (or even internationally) known, and we can say that it has successfully established a "local product brand", representative for a specific place.

And lastly for the clarification, the link between "reinvention of tradition" and "traditional product branding": There are objects related to traditional culture that are reinvented or reestablished in the modern society, these are products of "reinvented tradition". This has nothing to do with a brand, but with a symbol. There are for example television programs (such as *Harapeko! Nadeshiko Gurume Tabi*, *TV Tokyo*) which can advertise certain

foods as “Showa gourmet” (the Showa period is from 1926 till 1989). These foods are therefore part of “traditional product branding”. In a nut shell: Traditional product branding is a result of tradition, reinvented or not. If the local people are aware of a (reinvented) local tradition, they can become aware of a local brand.

To give a better idea of the causal relationship of tradition and local branding, a good example to give is Miyajima, a small island in the Seto Inland sea, off the shore of Hiroshima. It has a long tradition of more than 400 years in which it has monopolized the manufacturing a rice scoop, named *shamoji* (Daniels 2001). While the common rice scoop is nowadays cheaper than the traditional wooden scoop, (because it is made of plastic and is mass-produced) the traditional wooden scoop from Miyajima has successfully managed to claim the wooden rice scoop as a local product, or at least as a product that has emphatic ties with this island. This local branding of the rice scoop exists for such a long time that it is now part of the touristic and historical identity of Miyajima island. Even though this example does not refer to a dish or food, it does show how a tradition, whether invented or not, can establish a local brand on a national scale.

In contrast to Miyajima island, which is the perfect case study of a longstanding local branding, other localities are having great difficulties in establishing a popular brand by means of a “tradition”. In other words, local communities that, unlike Miyajima, do not already have an established tradition, are bound to cleverly create one. Because in practice, the easiest way to “create” or “reinvent” a local tradition is to link back to historical Japan. People have an inherent affinity with historical Japan and therefore indisputably embrace something quicker that is recognized as “familiar”, or even famous if the branding marketing finally worked (Sekigawa, p. 116). But it is not that easy. Sekigawa argues that *chiiki-burando* (local area branding) requires a great deal of community cooperation, budget, marketing and promotion to establish brand awareness (pp. 124-5). In the end, the incentive for localities to brand local foodstuffs is to boost the local economy and counter the depression (p. 115). As soon as a brand gains popularity, consumers will be willing to pay more for the brand products or perhaps visit the city itself to eat the dish at the place of origin.

A fitting example is the currently airing (from 3-7-14 on *TBS*) anime *Futsū no joshi kōsei ga rokodoru yatte mita* (“I tried to be a normal middle school local idol,” see *Locodol* website). The story is about a girl that promotes the (fictional) town called Nagarekawa by becoming a local idol, or *rokodoru* (*rokaru aidoru*). One of the characters is a civil servant and explains in the first episode that all famous towns have ‘something’ that gives an identity

to the town: "specialty goods, tourist spots and famous people." He also shows how he failed to sell orange pudding with a label stating *nagarekawa mikan* (Nagarekawa orange), on which he is criticized that it "has nothing to do with Nagarekawa." This portrays the common way of promoting a locality by branding food, but also shows that it can easily fail. The anime also features the influence of television for the local identity such as a segment where the local cable television films a "food report" (*shoku reppō*) of a sweets shop and a national television program in which local mascots challenge each other. This anime justifies the strength of contemporary advertising through television promotion because it is cost-efficient and reaches the most audience. But it also shows that local communities in the current economically difficult times search for different ways to promote their communities, not just through local heritage or gourmet. This will be further discussed in the case studies to come.

Three generations till brand awareness

Thus far I have concluded that this new trend of branding might be applied to anything historically relevant. But in the end, the marketing and branding of something local is difficult and, if one beholds Miyajima's long history, it might be concluded that if a locality did not already have a famous tradition, it will never have one. However, this line of reasoning is wrong, Takeshi Morita (2010) argues. He evaluates the foodstuffs which are famous in Hokkaido (most northern island of Japan) and he finds crab (*kani*) and Sapporo *rāmen* (Sapporo is the prefecture's capital city) to be obvious popular dishes that are particular to Hokkaido, but he is baffled by the popularity of the dish "curry soup" (*sūpu karē*). Curry soup was firstly introduced in 1993, but through longstanding brand awareness marketing it is now the second most popular dish in Hokkaido (p. 56). People became aware of the dish curry soup after it had gained popularity as an Indonesian food specialty in Sapporo. As popularity grew, so did the amount of shops selling it and shops started to specialize in the dish. Popularity was further derived over time from media influence such as the newspaper, television programs and magazines. The most important thing is that the prefecture's populace has to recognize the product as something affiliated with Hokkaido, after which the product name can become representative for Hokkaido. By the time the "first generation" (*dai ichi sedai*) of the 1970s had popularized curry soup, the second generation (roughly 1990-2000) already conceived curry soup as normal (*ippanteki*) in Hokkaido (Morita, p. 51).

At the beginning of the 21st century, a "curry soup boom" occurred in Hokkaido (Morita). This boom led to the creation of a fan base of people of the third generation (*dai san sedai*, 2000 afterwards) who would become critics of curry soup on the internet and so on. In 2005 a television variety program (*baraetī bangumi*) starred the curry soup dish and it became nationally known. The dish would repeatedly return every year or two in travel guides as a special recommendation for Hokkaido or Sapporo. This boom and popularity of a cheap and non-Japanese dish has led to creation of a new identity for both Hokkaido and Sapporo. Not only Morita, but also Nobuhiro Yasuda (2012) both appeal to the explanation that this peculiar situation can be summarized as follows: The culinary identity of the prefecture is a combination of both low-class food, like curry and *rāmen*, and high class food such as crab (Morita p. 16; Yasuda p. 103). Finally we have two kinds of branding occurring in Japan: one of low-class gourmet, which is mostly linked to modern, cheap types of foodstuffs or food practices (i.e. fast food), and of high-class gourmet which commonly denotes gourmet of traditional value (i.e. slow food such as ceremonial *kaiseki ryōri*) and is predominantly more expensive.

Marketing Familiarity vs. Commonality

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, I have established two kinds of branding in the local marketing of food. I will juxtapose these two marketing projects as follows: the first is selling something people can familiarize with, or what I would call 'historical gourmet.' Second is a Japanese phenomenon that is hardly researched in English articles, which is B-grade (or low-grade) gourmet, which covers common dishes such as curry, sushi and *rāmen* etcetera. Satomi Fukutomi (2014) posits that in fact B-grade gourmet tourism is going to be more profitable for the domestic tourism than historical tourism. B-grade gourmet basically accounts for all kinds of impersonal dishes that are in most cases aching to the definition of fast food. He also posits that B-grade gourmet is a clever way to reach all the tourists, including those that cannot afford the more expensive traditional and often ceremonial food of the 'historical gourmet' category. Kazuhiko Maruyama (2008) for example also wrote an academic article urging the prefecture of Toyama to "immediately commence talks on promoting a local brand" (p. 46). Maruyama frantically lists famous *omiyage* and local foodstuffs of other regions that have succeeded (to a certain extent) a brand awareness as local identity through B-grade gourmet promotion. Fukutomi furthermore remarks that B-grade gourmet poses the possibility to enable everyone to become an 'aficionado' (or connoisseur) of B-grade gourmet. This in

some cases subsequently has led to people becoming obsessed with food (Fukutomi, p. 70). A good example is above-mentioned curry soup and its fan base of self-proclaimed "curry soup critics" (see Morita).

Fukutomi argues that the "B-grade gourmet" movement can already be seen from the 1960s onwards. He explains briefly that it is because people born during the flourishing bubble economy eventually became anti-modern, or in other words antagonistic, towards anything European or American, and started appreciating things that "seemed antique or traditional, including reproductions of 1930s or 1950s products" (Fukutomi, p. 70). Fukutomi mentions *karē-raisu* (curry rice) and *omu-raisu* (omelet rice). These are not epitomes of "antique" nor traditional products, but as Fukutomi mentions himself, they are products characterized by its affordability and therefore subjects to so-called national connoisseurship (idem). The spread of B-grade gourmet popularity is conceivable in the abundance of these so-called regional brand labels. There are for example dozens of regionally branded cup *rāmen* for sale at Narita International Airport (Fukutomi, p. 69) and there is also a *rāmen* museum in Yokohama with a complete map of Japan showing where one can eat specific regional *rāmen* (p. 68). Furthermore, there are also events promoting local B-grade gourmets. The most well-known is the B-1 Grand Prix (*bī wan guranpuri*), which is held every year in a different prefecture (or town).

Here a new term is popularized: *gotōchi gurume*, or "gourmet where you are from", and commonly refers to B-grade gourmet. I will address this point further in the case studies to come. Next to B-grade gourmet, which has become immensely popular, *kōkyū gurume* (high-grade gourmet) is still very popular and has historically been a defining aspect of food culture in Japan. To give an example of *kōkyū gurume*, expensive food products like fish are most common. The Ise *ebi* (Japanese spiny lobster) is for example a local product, which has been known since the Edo period, and can still be bought at its original place at the Ise Grand Shire (*Ise jingū*) (Yasuda 2012, p. 106). The Ise *ebi* is an expensive dish because it holds an extraordinary long tradition and above all is still being sold at the place where it is said to have been sold centuries ago.

Contrasting to Fukutomi, who thinks B-grade gourmet is more profitable than expensive gourmet, Yasushi Sekigawa (et al, 2010) would argue that familiarity is in fact the key to marketing a brand, regardless if it is expensive or cheap. Sekigawa therefore advices communities to choose a product which has a high degree of "familiarity". Sekigawa relates this sense of familiarity with *dentōteki*, or traditional things which have a historical

background (*rekishiteki haikei*) and defines these with the phrase *ninchido ga takai* (high level of familiarity) or with the word *najimi* (familiarity) (Sekigawa et al, p. 117). If the local area does not have a particular specific traditional or historical (i.e. ceremonial and/or expensive) dish or food, they will eventually promote B-grade gourmet (idem, p. 125). So in addition to what Fukutomi claimed, it can be said that *kōkyū gurume* is in fact preferred as marketing subject over B-grade gourmet. But since it is clearly more difficult to reinvent a tradition, which can then become a local brand, local communities seem eager to choose a B-grade dish to promote as locally branded dish.

Final Remarks on Chapters 1 - 3

In understanding contemporary culinary discourse, I have shown that B-grade gourmet has become popularized in Japan. It has furthermore proven to be more profitable and easier achievable in primarily the domestic tourist sector. This is because it enables everyone to become a connoisseur (or aficionado) of food which is comparatively cheaper and has a high degree of familiarity to the general public. Even though familiarity would sell more than commonality, the price tag of familiarity is in many cases much higher and mostly regarded as high-class. For this reason, as Fukutomi elucidates, B-grade gourmet's popularity skyrocketed in 2000 and afterwards. It is also important to note here that B-grade gourmet also poses a new modern way of approaching food culture. As many B-grade dishes ache to the definition of fast-food, it also implies a change in the fundaments of Japanese food culture. In other words, B-grade gourmet has become part of the modern-day cuisine of Japan.

This new approach to modern cuisine in Japan leads us to the idea that traditional food culture and historical tourism in Japan has gradually lost importance in the rise of conventional B-grade cuisine and foreign influence. Robertson (in Vlastos 1998) counters this idea that in the urban Japanese society "[n]ostalgia, after all, is not just a sentiment provoked by the perception of fragmentation and loss; it is also a rhetorical practice by which to recuperate wholeness, spontaneity, energy and community" (p. 125). To contest the suggestion that traditionalism, globalism and internationalism have "compromised the historical integrity of Japanese culture (and Japaneseness)," like Vlastos (and also Bestor 2000), Robertson attests that both are in fact complementary in the progress of modernization and structure the formation of cultural practices (Robertson 1998, pp. 128-9). It is presumptuous to say that the influence of foreign cultural import (i.e. globalism) has led to the deconstruction of culture but rather has assured an ever-changing label on certain foods, such as sushi.

Paige Edwards (2012) for example argues that just like other civilizations Japan finds itself importing and exporting practices whilst suiting them to local tastes not because of globalism but only in accordance to the circumstances of the society and economy. During this adaption, the consumers (re)interpret, in a very selective manner, all the new things which enter their society (Edwards 2012, pp. 223-4). For that same reason it is now even possible to eat American-style sushi in Japan (Allen & Sakamoto 2011), or that an Indonesian dish like curry soup has partly become a symbol for Sapporo cuisine (Morita). The conclusion is that local communities slowly but surely are accentuating local identity-making in the midst of

globalization and that local dishes play a key role in this development. As Edwards has proven for the US, the possibility to differentiate between local communities by looking at their local food movements has proven the measurable cultural significance food holds in the counter narrative of globalization for the local community.

At the same time we should be cautious by not jumping to conclusions that these interpretations are also representative for Japan. As mentioned earlier, we find discrepancies nowadays as to the identity shaping of communities against the commercial marketing of the local community to appeal tourists to travel. Rather than calling the above theory as "global" it can indeed function as a basis for further investigation. We see in Japan that local communities have difficulties to succeed in the marketing of specific dishes in order to boost local tourism. It is possible for the local community to devise a marketing strategy of reinvented tradition to create brand awareness of a dish, but it is still hard to conclude that a local brand has successfully become famous nationally and is attracting tourists. We can also argue that Morita might be jumping to conclusions when he says that everyone in Japan now identifies Sapporo or Hokkaido with curry soup because it has repeatedly been covered in travel guides and had a coverage on a television program.

In the following case study I will investigate the advertisement of local food products and dishes on Japanese television programs. I will explore three different television programs that cover local food dishes or products. I will address another case study on the advertisement of local food dishes in travel guides, travel agency websites and websites of local food and dishes of several local communities. Finally a conclusion will be posed with final comments on the research.

Case Study 1: Local Brand in Japanese Gourmet Television Programs

In this case study I will investigate the advertisement of locally branded food in television programs. The television programs I will research are better known as *baraeti-bangumi* (variety television programs) or *gurume bangumi* (gourmet television programs). The programs I will research are the following three: *Hiru nan desu* ("It's noon"), *Sō da dokka ni ikō* ("Yes, let's go on a trip") and *Shin dotchi no Ryōri shō* ("New Show: Which Cuisine?" or "New Dotch Show"). Among these three shows, *Hiru nan desu* is not specifically about food but in many cases has cover stories that concerns travel recommendations with the promotion of food. *Sōda dokka ni ikō* is also not about food in particular, but about travel. The research on this program will immediately show that travel indisputably implies food and eating, as I have concluded in the chapters before. The third program will provide the most information on local food specialties and its advertisement: *Shin dotchi no ryōri shō*. Even though *Shin dotchi no ryōri shō* was broadcasted from 1997 to 2006, it is the perfect example of a game show that promotes locally produced food and B-grade gourmet.

I have chosen episodes[1] from these programs that in particular address food travel or local dishes. The main point of interest is to what extent the dishes or food products are advertised as local. To what degree is information provided on the dishes mentioned in the programs? Are the dishes shown in the program locally known or famous, and is this perceivable from just the information provided by the program or is this not clearly communicated to the audience? A program may present a dish as locally popular but is this true or not?

Shin dotchi no ryōri shō

Also nicknamed "Dotch Cooking Show", *Dotchi no ryōri shō* aired from 1997 to 2005, after which it was "renewed" (*rinyūaru*) as *Shin* (or New) *dotchi no ryōri shō* until 2006 on the commercial broadcasting channel *YTV* (*Yomiuri Telecasting Corporation*, Osaka), after which the show was cancelled. The reason of discontinuation was mainly due to bad critiques[2] of the renewed version of the program from the celebrities (*geinōjin*, literally 'performers') who

[1] Discussed number of episodes per show: 2 episodes for both *Shin Dotchi* and *Hiru nan desu* and 1 for *Sō da dokka ni Ikō.*

2. According to several news and blog websites (*narinari* etc.), the show's discontinuation was only partially because of bad reviews. Another reason for the discontinuation is most likely because an announcer of the show, at the time, was arrested on the account of sexual harassment.

participated in the show (*narinari* website, 20-8-2006). The literal English translation is: "New Show: Which Cuisine?" The show's template is a group of nine people that is presented with either two competing dishes or two competing *gurume* or 'cuisines' (consisting of three dishes from each region), from which they must choose at the end of the episode. First they will be shown the history and details of both dishes and make acquaintance with the particular local customs and recipes. After everyone has been informed about the dishes and witnessed the preparations, they must choose which of the two they would like to taste on the set. The one that is requested by majority of the voters will be served for those who voted for it, while those who voted for the other gourmet will not get anything to eat at all.

Before its renewal, the game show aired episodes of so-called "dish battles" that challenged two separate, but sometimes similar, dishes as for example "hot cake versus pizza toast." But the two episodes I will discuss are battles between regional cuisines. The first episode I will discuss is a 15 minute longer special episode of Hakata versus Nagoya (airing date: 16-3-2006). This episode deals with the capital cities of Fukuoka prefecture (Hakata) and Aichi prefecture (Nagoya). The opening starts with heavy metal music, while the narrator talks: "The taste you can only enjoy elsewhere… *Gotōchi gurume*. By advancing into Tokyo, it is aiming to take over the whole country (*zenkoku seiha*). The things (foodstuffs) that control Tokyo, will control Japan." This episode was the first of the program that juxtaposed regions instead of ordinary dishes. Several of the guests, who are *geinōjin* (celebrities), are from Fukuoka and Nagoya themselves. Also, majority of the attendees have had experience with both towns' dishes.

After a brief introduction the guests may indicate which dish they would like to taste. The program then proceeds to detailed information on the dishes. While preparing the dishes, the on-set chefs will explain several things about the ingredients. This while on the bottom of the screen, each ingredient's origins are shown. It shows that all ingredients presented are locally cultivated from their respective places (i.e. Hakata (Fukuoka) cultivated food is used for the Hakata dishes), and in some cases also shows in what shop the ingredients can be bought. It shows for example the origin of the cabbage and *nira* (garlic chives) used in this specific episode. The chicken used for the Hakata *nabe* (saucepan stew) in particular is called Hakata chicken (*hakata jidori*). Similarly on the Nagoya side, there is Nagoya *kōchin* (cochin, a breed of chicken). The host then turns to the audience: "As you all know, Nagoya cochin is one of the top three chickens in Japan." When looking it up on the internet, indeed the Nagoya cochin, together with two other breeds of chicken from two other towns (found in Akita and

Kagoshima prefecture) are the so-called "top 3" chickens (*nihon sandai jidori*, *Hatena* website). Because of this Nagoya cochin is mentioned multiples times during the show, while the Hakata chicken is not mentioned again.

Returning back to the Hakata dishes, a short documentary on *mentaiko* (spiced Walleye Pollock (cod fish) roe) is shown. Remarkably, the Hakata fisher travels to Hokkaido to seek out the best Walleye Pollock and take it back to his shop in Hakata where he salts and spices the roe. The *mentaiko* in particular is an interesting local Hakata food specialty, because the origin of the cod fish roe is not from the waters near Fukuoka, but from Hokkaido. As opposed to the *mentaiko*, the documentary about Nagoya is about a miso (bean paste) exclusively made in Nagoya, according to a recipe from the Edo period and still done by hand. The documentary shows how arbitrary and traditionally oriented the production of this local miso is. A comparison between the dishes of Nagoya and Hakata here is that of taste and quality in Hakata versus tradition and familiarity of Nagoya. The coverage on Nagoya shows the of devotion of the small local shop to tradition and human commitment to the preparation of the miso, while the Hakata dishes are prepared in a more casual style.

Before the final presentation, the *oishī ōendan* (delicious cheering party) covers shops where one can eat Hakata's iron pan *gyōza* (dumpling) and Nagoya cochin fried chicken wings. Important to note is that the shops promoted are shops in Tokyo, not the cities of the dishes' origins. After this short coverage story the chefs start to prepare the dishes quickly. In the end, two of three Nagoya-style dishes have Nagoya cochin in it, the third dish is a rather simple fried shrimp sushi (which on the other hand did not get a cover story). Hakata's dishes show greater variety as it has *gyōza* (dumplings), *mentaiko* rice and a saucepan stew (*nabe*). Despite the great emphasis during the episode on Nagoya cochin, the Hakata-style gourmet wins seven against two. This unexpected result is arguably because majority of the guests were somehow affiliated with Hakata. One of the guests of the winning side also remarks: "The Nagoya dishes look good, but in the end I am a Hakata woman."

The second episode challenges Okinawa against Hokkaido dishes (airing date: 8-6-2006). Just like the above-discussed episode, the first section of the program consists of two short documentaries. The first documentary is about local fishers of Hokkaido who fish for mackerel (*hokke*). In particular the fishers look for an infamous "legendary mackerel" (*maboroshi no bokke*), the red mackerel. On the set, the normal mackerel (*shima-bokke*) and the red mackerel are compared for its difference in size and amount of natural fat. The two hosts of the program are allowed to try them and they applaud for the red mackerels good

taste. The next short documentary is about Nakijin village in Okinawa. The camera crew visits a pig farmer who keeps Nakijin Agū pigs. This particular pig is, according to the farmer, an important legacy of the Okinawan culture where two regular breeds of pig have successfully been combined as a breed of pigs only found in the area of Nakijin village. While the farmer was born and raised in Tokyo, he says that Nakijin is now like his home town (*furusato*), and he wants to help promote the village's image by naming the meat he produces 'Nakijin pork.'

Before the final section of the program there is the very short section again of the *oishī ōendan* promoting a store in Hokkaido where one can eat some of the show's dishes like mackerel (ironically not the red mackerel, but the normal mackerel). Lastly is the "final presentation" section. In a swift last spurt, the chefs finalize the three dishes they were appointed to prepare. The dishes on the Okinawa side are *rafutē* (pork belly stew), *gōya champuru* (stir fried bitter melon) and 'Okinawa soba.' On the Hokkaido side are *ika sōmen* (squid white noodles), *jaga battā* (butter potato) and the earlier mentioned fried red mackerel. Finally the audience gets the last vote to choose which dishes they want to eat. Okinawa *gurume* wins overwhelmingly with eight against one.

Conclusion Shin dotchi no ryōri shō

There are several ways to promote one's local food. As seen in the discussed episodes, the first is to brand them as either "legendary" (*maboroshi*) or designate a specific location to it such as *Nakijin pork*, *Hakata chicken* or *Nagoya cochin*. The popularity on the other side highly differs between these products. The only foodstuff that was known nationally, or so the host let us believe, was the Nagoya cochin, for being one of the Japanese top 3. The brand awareness of the Nagoya cochin is present in the numerous sites that promote the cochin (*Nagoya-Cochin* website etc.). Regardless of the apparent brand awareness of the Nagoya cochin, it still lost against Hakata's dishes in the program, arguably because of a bias of the guests attending that particular episode. Contrarily, there was the *maboroshi no bokke* (mackerel) against the local Nakijin pig. The "legendary" red mackerel lost the battle. But in retrospect, when looking up the mackerel, it is apparent that it is not campaigned or promoted over the internet. On this point it is arguable that the red mackerel is in fact not as representative for Hokkaido as the program led one to believe. When searching the internet for the Nakijin *Agū* pig, one of the first promotional websites to appear mentions the

following: “the *furusato* of the legendary (*maboroshi*) Nakijin *Agū* black pig” (*Nakijin* website). This, on the other hand, is a perfect example of local branding of food: the marketing of the local identity through the mention of the *furusato* and the glorification of the *Agū* pig by labeling it as *maboroshi*.

In the end, the program arguably misses several fundamental notions of actual local *gurume* branding. As mentioned above, the red mackerel is clearly not something Hokkaido identifies itself with, nor with something as the buttered potato (*jaga battā*). On a survey by Takeshi Morita (2010), *hokke* is only marked by a single person (of roughly 300 participants) as identifiable with Sapporo (Morita, p. 59). The mackerel is also not recorded in the top 50 of recognizable food items representative of Hokkaido (idem). Potato does show a relatively high degree of local identity brand awareness, but the *jaga battā* is not exceptionally popular (idem). Next to the dishes presented on the program, the section of the *oishī ōendan* (delicious cheering party) accounts to only nearly two minutes of airing time, which is relatively short for a 1-hour television program. Also the shop promoted for Hokkaido by the cheering party did not serve the dishes covered in the episode, and the shops promoting Hakata and Nagoya were in fact situated in Tokyo.

Arguably the idea that *gotōchi gurume* was centralizing in Tokyo, as the narrator mentioned in the first episode I discussed, may have been an incorrect presumption on the program’s behalf. The contents of the format have notably improved in the second episode, where they show longer documentaries on the local farmers and promote local shops, it has proven to be insufficient to prevent the show from being cancelled. The so-called “B-grade gourmet boom” (mentioned in the third chapter of this thesis) happened in 2006, is coincidentally the year that *Shin dotchi no ryōri shō* was discontinued. The format of regional food battles seemed to follow the trend that was rising in 2006. Like the narrator spoke off during the heavy metal opening of the first episode: “The [*gurume*] that controls Tokyo, will control Japan”, clearly hyped the rise of *gotōchi gurume* and this has failed in the end.

Hirunandesu!

The second program *Hirunandesu* is a daily *baraeti-bangumi* (variety television program) that has been airing since march 2011 on the *NTV* broadcasting channel (*Nihon Terebi (Hōsō)*, Nippon TV). The episodes I have observed are about “delicious food convention” (*umai mono no kai*) centered around Hokkaido food, a trip to Hakone Yūmoto (a spa resort) and two

"*gurume* bus tours" where the guests are driven around in a tour bus while being introduced to various places famous for its (local) *gurume*. One of the bus tours also visits a so-called *michi-no-eki*, or "roadside station" called *Kawaba den'en puraza* ("Kawaba Rural Plaza") where they are introduced to two "legendary foodstuffs" (*maboroshi no shokuzai*).

In a similar manner as with *Shin dotchi no ryōri shō*, the great amount of valorization and glorification of local foodstuffs clearly forms the basis to pique the interest of the television audience. Furthermore, as mentioned in the description of the program itself (see *hirunan* website), the goal of the program is to excite people with recommendations for travel. The "delicious food convention" for example entices people to visit the convention, and if they missed it, they are highly recommended to travel to Hokkaido. Also the two bus tours are promoted in detail. The guests explain the tour expenses and the exact contents, like the timetable, clearly to the audience and swiftly go through all the things you can do during the bus tour. And because the tour is a *gurume* bus tour, the emphasis naturally lies on *gurume*. This emphasis comes together with the ubiquity of local food promotion. A clear divide in promotion for affordable and expensive high-quality food or dishes is also present. The "legendary foodstuffs" of Kawaba, the white rice (*yuki hotaka*) and the rare trout (*ginhikari*), are clearly high-grade foodstuffs that are explicitly mentioned in the program for being relatively, or even three times, more expensive then the "normal" product. For the audience's consideration, during the trip to Hakone Yūmoto, the guests visit stores in front of the station that are in relatively cheap.

Among the travel recommendations posed by the program, two aspects were exceptional: the overall appearance of dishes that are combinations of other dishes, and the promotion of locality through government promotion. The first is a shop recommendation of "Hakone Gourmet" that sells *tofu katsuni don*, a *katsudon* where the pork is replaced with locally made tofu (*ginkatsutei* website). The second 'Hakone gourmet' is *castella manjū*, a combination of *castella* cake, mainly known because of Nagasaki *Castella* (this will be discussed in the next research) and a steamed bun with vegetable or meat inside it called *manjū*. This sweet type of *manjū* is also called Hakone *Manjū* to emphasize its affinity with Hakone. The other point of interest is the local promotion which is specifically led by the local government. After research the "roadside station" (*michi-no-eki*) of Kawaba, it is in fact one of more than a thousand projects in Japan by local governments to boost tourism (*MLIT*, 2014). Another common promotion is the utilization of a mascot, during one of the bus tours Fukka-*chan*, an animal-like figure with antlers of leeks (*Fukuya-negi*, Fukuya leek), was

introduced. When researching Fukaya, promotion of the Fukaya-*negi* goes as far as an annual *negimatsuri* ("Leek Festival") where people have games and contests that are all about leeks (*negimatsuri* website).

Sō da dokka ni ikō

The final television program I will discuss in this case study is *Sō da dokka ni ikō*, which can be literally translated as "Yes, let's go somewhere." However, the word *dokka* is indicated with the kanji of *tabi*, or trip, and with added furigana it reads "dokka." This means it rather translates as "Yes, let's go on a trip" (*Sōda Tabi Ni Ikō*). This program is broadcasted weekly on *TV Tokyo* (see website). The premise of the program is "what happens if *geinōjin* are suddenly granted a vacation?" A randomly chosen group of four *geinōjin* is asked to go on a one-night trip to a destination of their choice. They are handed a dozen of travel guides to orientate on the travel location and devise a travel schedule. The episode I will discuss is a special 2-hour episode where the first group goes to Sapporo (Hokkaido prefecture) and the second goes to the Fujinomiya (Shizuoka prefecture).

The first group consists of two comic duos (*manzai*). While discussing where to go, one of the group excitingly tells the story of how he had eaten the most delicious sushi with sea urchin (*uni*) in Sapporo. The others browse through some guide books and after seeing the advertisements for hot water spas it is decided to go to Sapporo. The first thing when they arrive in Hokkaido is head towards a *rāmen* shop to eat 'Sapporo *rāmen*.' Only 30 minutes later they visit a sushi restaurant to eat the earlier-mentioned sea urchin, and also crab (*kani*). After arriving at their hotel they swiftly make a list of things to do. Next to things like karaoke and visiting the hot spa, remarkably the first item is to eat another dish: *jingisukan*[3]. The restaurant they visit serves only *jingisukan*-style dishes and is called Ramu, referring to the meat used for the dish (lamb). The dish '*Jingisukan*' is prepared on a special convex grill used solely for this type of dish. Naturally the first thing they eat is lamb, accentuated by the narrator to be a rare kind of lamb only bred in Hokkaido (*kishō na ramu*). One of the camera crew then says: "next up, karaoke or *sūpu karē*?" Curry soup was not mentioned once before but seemingly the idea to eat another Hokkaido-style dish had already been made behind the

[3] Coincidentally, the name of this dish refers to the 'legend' that Minamoto no Yoshitsune allegedly crossed the sea from Hokkaido to the mainland in 1189 to become Genghis Khan, or in Japanese: *jingisukan*

scenes. But after having gone to the karaoke and the spa, the four men were too exhausted and went to bed. The next morning they went back to the studio.

The second group, consisting of two mother and son combinations, is asked if they want to be guided by "Miss Fuji" (referring to the beauty contest winner) at the place of her choice. The place they visit is Fujinomiya, situated in Shizuoka prefecture just north of Fuji City. They first meet up with Miss Fuji who awaited them at the Sengen Taisha, a renowned Shinto shrine that has also been designated to the World Heritage List. But before going to some recommended tourist spots, the two mothers remark: "We are hungry and would like to eat *Fujinomiya Yakisoba.*" Regardless if the choice to eat the *yakisoba* was decided by the program or not, it is clearly a dish that constitutes a part of the Fujinomiya identity, next to the above-mentioned shrine. After visiting a waterfall, they eat *unagidon* (rice bowl with eel on top). The trip ends here and once again the program returns back to the studio for a quick summary of the trip. Two more stories are covered in the program, but I have decided to not discuss these because they promote popular attractions (i.e. exhibitions) rather than food. However the Nagoya cochin is mentioned very quickly in one of the cover stories.

Overall Conclusion Case Study 1

The first point I want to criticize here is the notion of promotion through familiarity or originality. Fukutomi on the one hand posited that familiarity was the easiest way of branding, while on the other, Sekigawa (et al) insisted that originality was the more successful way of branding. The episodes I discussed were chosen without prior knowledge of the episodes, but remarkably certain regional dishes reappeared in different programs. In the five episodes I observed, two different programs mentioned the Hokkaido sea urchin and Nagoya cochin. Just by checking the contents of other television programs on the internet, it is without exception that these dishes appear on other local and national television programs too. But this does not rule out that all *gurume* programs present the same known dishes over and over again. Online reviews show that the Okinawan dishes presented on *Shin dotchi no ryōri shō* were in fact not very known among viewers. The dishes definitely appealed to the greater audience for the diversity and uniqueness of the dishes and encouraged some reviewers to find places where they can eat the dishes (see for example: *excite burogu* website). In other words, the originality of the Okinawan dishes piqued the interest of the reviewers. Also, the Agū pig is portrayed as a *kōkyū gurume* product it is difficult to obtain anywhere outside of

Okinawa, meaning that people are persuaded to travel to Okinawa in order to eat it. Rather than familiarity, it is uniqueness and originality in this case which seem to appeal more to the audience then the Nagoya cochin for example. It is difficult to say though if *Shin dotchi no ryōri shō* successfully promoted dishes that are popular among Okinawan residents themselves and if the Agū pig has earned a nation-wide fame. On the *Lonely Planet* website on the other hand, instead of Nakijin, Okinawa's capital city Nara is posed as the "culinary location" famous for its pork (Richmond 2013, *Lonely Planet* website).

Opposed to "original"-oriented *gurume* such as the Agū pig, is *Sō da dokka ni ikō*'s emphasis on "familiar"-oriented B-grade dishes for its affordability and popularity. This is naturally because the television program wants to promote travel destinations through presenting things the audience knows. To expand the viewer's spectrum of possible travel destinations, the program also covers slightly less popular places. Instead of going to Fuji City, the guests go to Fujinomiya. Fujinomiya is preeminently known for its World Heritage Shinto shrine, but recently also for its *Fujinomiya Yakisoba*, which is extensively discussed by Sekigawa (et al, 2010). Sekigawa says that, while the soba of the dish is fundamentally "rigid" (*rijiddo*), the sauce justifies its originality (pp. 115-6). Sekigawa also remarks that *Fujinomiya Yakisoba* is arguably the most remarkable example of local branding in Japan (idem), possibly suggesting that Fujinomiya was losing popularity before introducing the dish. In this case, promoting things that are original, rather than local, form the basis of local food promotion. Arguably both Sekigawa and Fukutomi were right, but in order to attach a sense of familiarity to a certain product, it must first catch one's attention to become common and familiar.

Another important factor of travel recommendation is through valorization and glorification (see also Fukutomi, 2014). The most prominently utilized valorizing keyword is *maboroshi*. "*Maboroshi no*" is commonly translatable as "dreamlike" or "illusionary", but has attained meaning close to unusual and rare. However, it transcends such clear-cut translation and is primarily used to pique interest. A dictionary site (*Fleapedia*) rather explains the phrase "*maboroshi no* something" as a phrase that motivates the audience with the thought: "What could it be? (*nan da ka nā*)". This is also why I decided to translate it as "legendary", rather than unusual or illusionary. Arguably the translation of "illusion" comes close to its actual meaning, but for its glorifying properties "legendary" contains the concept of 'excitement' proper for the translation. When the television programs' announcers did not use *maboroshi* to indicate specialness, *kishō na hotate* was used for the "unusual red scallops" and *yume no*

uni for “dreamlike sea urchin.” Arguably the phrase *maboroshi no* refers to the local property of the food, while *kishō na* and *yume no* refer to scarcity of the food type in general.

Of the programs researched above, *Sō da dokka ni ikō* exemplifies the commonality that food constitutes the basis for travel. Because the *geinōjin* only had one day to experience a place of their choice based on what they knew themselves and what they could find in the guide books. In the end the travel is greatly dominated by scenes of the guests eating different things at their destinations. In the next case study I will discuss the predominance of *gurume* in guide books in the case of Nagasaki and I will further discuss dishes mentioned in this case study and how they are promoted on travel websites.

Case Study 2: Local Food Advertisement in Travel Guides and Websites.

In this final case study I discuss the importance of travel guides and the rising popularity of the online promotional travel websites. The point of interest in researching these promotional materials is to what degree *gurume* is used to entice people to travel to certain locations. To elaborate on this I will discuss a volume of *JTB*'s *Rurubu* travel magazine. *JTB* is the Japanese Travel Bureau and *Rurubu* is its most popular travel magazine. I will discuss an issue on Nagasaki prefecture (*jōhōhan kyūshū*, Kyushu informative edition, first publish date: 15-06-2014). With regard to the internet's role in the promotion of travel, I will also discuss two Japanese travel websites: the website of *Rurubu* and an online travel search engine website called *Nihon no tabi*. I will discuss online food advertisement on the most popular dishes from the previous case study. I will finally conclude with some remarks on the development of the digitalization of travel advertisement and if this has brought difference in the promotion of travel through food advertisement.

In the first case study I discussed the television program *Sō da dokka ni ikō*. The decision of the first group was to go to Hokkaido. The foremost reason for going to Hokkaido was because one of the members convinced the group to go there to eat sea urchin. This demonstrated that, at least for a two-day trip, the choice was highly dependent on what food the destination had to offer. But also an important last decision-making element was the local spa (*onsen*) of Sapporo. The group had seen in the travel guides, the spas that Sapporo had to offer and this persuaded the group to go to Sapporo. But what is not made apparent is that the common travel guidebook uses a remarkable amount of food advertisement to attract tourists and this can clearly be seen in the *Rurubu* volume on Nagasaki prefecture.

Travel guide book 'Rurubu'

Rurubu is a franchise travel guidebook of the Japanese Travel Bureau (*JTB*) and has been published since 1984. The travel guide is astonishingly popular as it holds the Guinness Book of Records record for longest book series, which is 3791 editions (see *Guinness Book* website). The edition of *Rurubu* I discuss immediately attempts to attract one's attention with a colorful front page packed with photos of Nagasaki's most characterizing tourist spots: Dutch-themed theme park *Huis ten Bosch* (*Hausu ten Bosu*), Inasayama as one of the "top 3" most beautiful night views in Japan, Nagasaki's European-style churches and the Chinese shopping street. A tiny space on the front page lists five dishes or foodstuffs with four small pictures randomly

placed around the list. It reads the following five (description is given by the thesis author): *champon*, a Chinese influenced soup dish with noodles, vegetables and sea food; *sara udon*, a baked noodle dish with various toppings similar to *champon*; *kasutera*, a sponge cake influenced by Portuguese recipe; *toruko raisu*, refers to "Turkish rice" and is pilaf rice usually served with spaghetti and a deep-fried foodstuff such as meat or fish, and finally *shibboku ryōri*, a Japanese-Chinese table cuisine, consisting of multiple small dishes served on a traditional round table. When browsing through the travel book, it becomes clear that roughly two-third of the book consists of important travel information such as addresses of hotels or promotion of popular attractions etcetera. But the other one-third of the book is dedicated to the above-mentioned dishes with explanations and additional information on the dishes. There is also a considerable amount of advertisements for various shops and restaurants that also sell other kinds of foodstuffs (such as roasted chestnuts).

One of the pages highlights the following: "The famous Nagasaki gourmet. If you visit Nagasaki, we would like you to taste this – 'pick up' some of the famous dishes. Become familiarized (*shitashimu*) with the old hometown. Let's eat *wakaran*-style gourmet, the gourmet *jigemon* (those born in Nagasaki) cannot stop loving." *Wakaran gurume* is the composition of *wa* (Japan), *ka* (China) and *ran* (Netherlands) styles of food. But *ran* more commonly refers to anything which is connected to the history of Western trade Nagasaki City had because all the shops advertised for *wakaran* food are situated in Nagasaki City. But also because *toruku raisu* is categorized as *ran*, while it is a Turkish dish rather than Dutch.

Other dishes mentioned are the American-influenced dishes of Sasebo (located in the north of the prefecture) like Sasebo Burger (*Sasebo bāgā*). But also the city of Hirado (located on the island Hirado in the north) is promoted with "*jigemon gurume*." *Jigemon* is the Nagasaki accent for *jimoto*, or hometown, but also commonly refers to people who live in Nagasaki (much like the *Edo-ko*, or Tokyoites). In this case it can be translated as "local gourmet." This style of gourmet promotes fresh seafood, but is clearly not as popular as *wakaran* since it only covers one page (against twelve pages for *wakaran*) before heading on to a page of Hirado sweets.

On a final note is the attention on locally cultivated food. The foremost attention is given to seafood. On two pages diverse fish are listed with the seasons in which they are caught. For example, it says that the spear squid (*yari'ika*) can be eaten from July to September, but it also says that whale (*kujira*) can be eaten all year through. Next to the 12-page coverage on *wakaran*, the term most closely related to excite the reader is "*jigemon*," as

for example: “The taste loved most by the people of Nagasaki” (*jigemon ni aisareru aji*). Lastly it is important to note that two pages are specially designated to a list of food *omiyage* (souvenirs) that can be bought at Nagasaki station and/or Nagasaki airport. Indicating that the act of buying of (food) souvenirs does not have to be from Nagasaki City but can also be done on the airport. The airport is situated roughly 50 minutes away (by bus) from Nagasaki City.

Online Promotional Travel Websites

To compare the actual magazine of *Rurubu* with the online available information on travel locations, I will shortly discuss the *Rurubu* travel (*rurubu toraberu*) website. The main page consists of a map of prefectures from which one can choose. Beneath it is a table of multiple cells containing quick links to travel recommendations recommending things as: “family trips,” “hotels that allow pets” or “hotels that have a pool.” Further down the website page is a header “*gotōchi jiman puran*,” meaning recommendations (or plans: *puran*) for traveling to localities (*gotōchi*) where people take pride (*jiman*) in. By clicking on *motto miru* (see more) the page with “area features” opens. A map of Japan shows different kinds of food that one can eat at different places.

On the travel search engine *Nihon no tabi*, there is even a section where one can search for destinations famous for different dishes (*shokuzai de sagasu*: “food search”). Four dishes can be searched on: crab (*kani*), blowfish (*fugu*), spiny lobster (*ise ebi*) and a specific brand of Hida cow (*hidagyū*). Hida is an area in the Gifu prefecture where this particular cow is bred. *Hidagyū* is a good example of successful ‘branded meat’ (*burando niku*) because first of all it has retained a class A, B and occasional C meat quality (‘A’ being superior) over the last 30 years (according to *JMGA*, see website), but the pig is also gradually becoming extinct as the number of newborn is drastically reducing. According to the prefecture’s newspaper in 2009 (*Gifu shinbun*), to counter this, the Gifu government went as far as to clone the pig (with success), but this provoked local critique as the prefecture’s inhabitants “did not want to eat *hidagyū* of a cloned cow” (see *Gifu shinbun* website). Researchers still claim that the meat quality (*nikushitsu*) of *hidagyū* is a mystery (*nazo*) and further DNA research might discover ways to increase meat quality. Nonetheless, the case of *hidagyū* attests the importance of branded food and especially branded meat (*burando niku*).

Conclusion Case Study 2

Considering that the front page of *Rurubu* only has a very small space highlighting food, which is only a list of five names, it arguably means these names of the dishes are famous enough that they do not need special attention on the front page. Despite the lack of attention of food on the front page, a considerable amount of content is spend on famous and less famous food Nagasaki prefecture has to offer. The list of five mentioned on the front page are especially popular in Nagasaki City, but the whole book promotes the whole prefecture, not just Nagasaki City. Next to a 12-page section on "*wakaran"* cuisine, there are in total 50 pages (of the 119 pages) devoted solely, or partly, to food. Among these are also advertisements of different kinds of seasonal fish to appeal tourists to go out to less popular places like one of Nagasaki's islands, Gotōshima.

The guidebook deals with a relatively large amount of food advertisement, but the greater proponent is on sightseeing and hotel descriptions. This does not attest the idea that travel guides promote travel through promotion of (locally cultivated) food. However, online travel agencies such as *Nihon no tabi* prove different as those provide a very broad spectrum of possibilities, such as looking for hotels that are close to theme parks, or allow pets. It can be said that travel guidebooks are only limited to what travel agencies expect what travelers look for. And if one looks at the guidebook, there is indisputably a tendency to promote travel in combination with food. But online, visitors can freely look for any kind of travel that they want and are exposed less to food promotion unless specifically searched for. The overemphasis on food advertising in guidebooks can therefore only be explained through the purpose of travel guide books for travel agencies like *JTB* and their pre-established knowledge on what excites a traveler. This knowledge is that food is a guarantee for a safe and ordinary kind of travel. Therefore, the purpose of guidebooks is to recommend travelers things that are not out of the ordinary, such as food and popular hotspots, and for extraordinary travel there are online travel guides that pose an almost overly extensive amount of travel possibilities.

Conclusion

As Nobuhiro Yasuda (2012) also argues, Japan's food tourism can be summarized in three time periods. The first being in the economic upheaval after WWII. During this period the concept of leisure (*rejā*) became standardized and from the 1970's food tourism took shape as primary indicator of luxury. This made high-grade cuisine (*ise ebi*, branded meat; *burando gyūniku*, etc.) the most popular basis for food tourism during the 1970s up to the 1990s.

The second period is in the aftermath of the economic bubble in the 1990s. A social collision between the old or *mukashi*, and the new and modern became the common rhetoric. This modern cuisine was mainly the group of foodstuffs and dishes which characterized and standardized Japan's 'national cuisine.' For this reason a sense of nostalgia towards the pre-urban period of Japan came to being; the emphasis was on Edo as image of Japan's rural heritage. This movement took shape in the form of localism and the making of a native place, also known as *furusato-zukuri* (hometown-making). This movement, led by the local governments, appealed people to return back to the rural areas of Japan, instead of staying in the city. But since moving back to rural Japan meant distancing themselves from the workplace in the city, this idea was interpreted as an appeal to travel to the rural areas of Japan. During this 'nostalgic boom,' the number of ways for promoting rural villages became bigger: Not just heritage tourism (architecture and/or landscapes), but also history and food tourism had become local identity-making ways that started to become the focus of a rural promotional movement.

We can see the third and last transformation of food tourism in the years after 2000, which was according to Yasuda mainly due to the economic difficulties after the Lehman Crisis and the Tohoku Great Earthquake (2012, p107). The already popular food promotion became nationally commercialized in a way that it would appeal to all the public: this was the occurrence of a 'B-grade gourmet boom'. B-grade gourmet simply account for all the foodstuffs and dishes that are affordable and in many cases similar to fast-food, as for example curry or yakisoba. In other words, during the economic difficulties, affordable food promotion became the commonality. With the great amount of B-grade gourmet, everyone was able to become connoisseur of any kind of B-grade food. This trend was cleverly exploited with the creation of local brands and reinvented traditions and hitherto used to appeal travelers to travel to place to taste local food.

I have shown how in Japan, at least, the travel experience is informed by traditional beliefs and customs. With the branding of local identity-making food, we can perceive a means of attracting tourists to places which had seen a decline in population and tourism in the aftermath of the urbanization of Japan. Simple dishes like *Fujinomiya yakisoba* or *karē sūpū* draw considerable numbers of tourists to more or less touristic places, partly for the sightseeing hotspots, but arguably moreover for the food itself. This can be seen in the great amount of travel recommendations advertised with food. Travel agency websites provide ways to search for specific food with "food search" (*shokuzai de sagasu*) possibilities and television programs show numerous cover stories of countless known and unknown places in Japan and what kind of dishes one can eat there.

It can be concluded that the **anticipatory values** of television programs and guide books are culturally defined, or as Jilly Traganou (2004) remarked: "geographical desires, at least in Edo and Meiji Japan, are based not only on what is visually or physically available, but even more on anticipations shaped prior to traveling" (p. 209). I have shown in the case studies above that, apart from simple entertainment, the way of advertising travel is moreover done through exhibiting food and therefore shows the value of food tourism for travel in Japan. Furthermore, it can be said that *kōkyū gurume* (high-class gourmet) is preferred as marketing subject over B-grade gourmet. But B-grade gourmet appeals to a bigger audience and is much easier to create. Also, because of economic depravity caused by the recent events (Lehman Crisis and Tohoku Great Earthquake), local communities are eager to choose an affordable campaign to promote a B-grade dish as locally branded dish, rather than high-class gourmet. But other ways to promote localities, such as local idols etcetera, have started to emerge as a result of difficulties to attain brand awareness for local products. This is done in order to appease the tourist who is approached more as a consumer instead of a traveler. The focus lays on experiencing the local culture through its uniqueness and most importantly, through eating, or 'consuming,' the local culture.

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