

**Ikeya, Kazunobu** (ed.): *The Spread of Food Cultures in Asia*. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2019. 238 pp. ISBN 978-4-906962-75-4. (Senri Ethnological Studies, 100)

The study of the diffusion, exchange, and indigenisation of foodstuffs and culinary practices has long been central to the history and anthropology of food. As the eminent food scholar, Naomichi Ishige, discusses in this volume in his chapter on Japan's food culture over the *longue durée*, the "food processing" and "food behaviour" systems that, for Ishige, comprise individual food cultures are formed not just during periods of relative isolation, but also through inter-cultural interactions. This collection of essays is organised on the theme of culinary diffusion and interaction, largely with reference to East and Southeast Asia. Compiled from papers presented at the history session of the Sixth Asian Food Study Conference held in Shiga, Japan, in 2016, the volume comprises an introduction by the editor and fourteen substantive chapters.

Despite the thematic focus, which is neatly laid out in Ikeya's introduction, the authors address a wide range of topics, not all of which fit comfortably within the theme. Topics include turtle-eating in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean (Hitoshi Takagi), French cuisine restaurants in Tianjin, China (Zhengyu Liu), gastronomic nation-branding in Malaysia (Hanafi Hussin), the gathering of fiddle head ferns in Japan (Kazunobu Ikeya), and Jesuit representations of Chinese food in seventeenth-century Europe (Hongcheng Zhou and Jian Zheng). The substantive chapters are divided into four parts: "Historical Approaches of [*sic*] Food Cultures," "Chinese Food Culture in Transition," "Influence of European Food Culture in East Asia and the World," and "Food Culture, Identity, and Landscapes in Asia." The division feels somewhat arbitrary and does little to bring the papers into conversation with each other. Instead, we are offered a series of stand-alone studies, which resonate to varying degrees with other chapters in their section or elsewhere in the collection. There is little sense of discussion between the authors.

This is not to say that there are not some convergent themes that stand out in the collection. For example,

several pieces explore gastronomic representations of self and other. The prominent food historian Françoise Sabban provides a thought-provoking, comparative account of Chinese diplomats' accounts of European cuisines and European diplomats' descriptions of Chinese cuisines in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sabban's piece is usefully read alongside the study on Jesuits by Zhou and Zheng mentioned above. It could also be brought into conversation with Ikeya's chapter on the exhibition on food cultures of the world at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, and with Hussin's discussion of the role of food in the "Malaysia Truly Asia" campaign, a campaign which, according to Hussin, is both externally oriented in the pursuit of attracting international tourists, and internally oriented to enhance nation-building and interethnic harmony.

Hussin's chapter provides a link to a second prominent theme in the volume: heritage-making and branding. This is explored, for example, in Raymond Aquino Macapagal's policy-oriented chapter advocating, on the basis of evidence from the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, for "food-oriented cultural landscapes" to be given a special category within UNESCO's World Heritage Programme, and in Stefano Magagnoli's engaging (albeit not particularly Asia-oriented) discussion of "typicality" and counterfeiting, with reference to the growing international market for Italian and "Italian-sounding" products.

A third theme deserving mention is that of environmental destruction, biodiversity, and sustainability. This is explored in Nan Zheng's chapter on American crops, population expansion, and environmental degradation in late-imperial China, an excellent study which adds new findings and perspectives to a well-trodden area of scholarship, and in the aforementioned chapters by Takagi (on turtle consumption), Macapagal (on food-oriented cultural landscapes), and Ikeya (on foraging).

Fourthly, the role of imperialism, colonialism, and military conquest and occupation in shaping transcultural culinary change is raised explicitly in Fumiki Hayashi's chapter on Western-style foods in South Korea from the Japanese colonial period to the present and in Naoto Minami's study of German foods in twentieth-century Japan. It is also implicit in other chapters, such as Qian Zhang's account of the early (c. 400 B. C. E. to c. 400 C. E. ) spread of what Zhang unambiguously refers to as "Chinese" food culture along the ancient Southern Silk Road, from what is now the Chinese province of Sichuan, through what is now Yunnan Province, into what are now Myanmar and Vietnam.

The volume would have benefitted from a concluding chapter with reflections on some of the shared themes, such as the ones highlighted above, and on the convergences and divergences in the approaches to these themes. Such a concluding chapter might also have

brought the volume more in conversation with recent debates in the (Anglophone) anthropology and history of food on issues such as culinary nationalism, migration, heritage politics, and sustainability. That said, it must be recognised that the authors are situated within various national and regional institutions and discourses of food scholarship, including Japanese, Mainland Chinese, European, and Malaysian. Even as they write on similar topics and cite some of the same publications, their work may have emerged from quite disparate concerns, constraints, and discussions. The editor – and the conference organisers – should be commended for bringing these scholars together and for making their work available to English-reading audiences.

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