

## Banquets Against Boredom: Towards Understanding (Samurai) Cuisine in Early Modern Japan

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“The pleasures of the table belong to all times and all ages, to every country and every day; they go hand in hand with all our other pleasures, outlast them, and remain to console us for their loss.”

—Jean-Antheleme Brillat-Savarin,  
*The Physiology of Taste*<sup>2</sup>

Recent definitions of “Japanese cuisine” designate it as a modern category and imply that there was nothing similar in the early modern period (1600–1868), but is that necessarily the case? Certainly the words for Japanese cuisine (*washoku*, *Nihon ryōri*) are no older than the Meiji period (1868–1912), appearing during a time of rapid modernization as a response to new notions of national identity, political cohesion, and as a way to differentiate native cooking practices from newly introduced foreign ones.<sup>3</sup> According to culinary historian Katarzyna Cwiertka, what became “Japanese cuisine” grew out of a fusion of native and imported

ingredients and methods of cooking that signified “an imagined national identity and cultural homogeneity” lacking in the early modern period.<sup>4</sup> From this standpoint, “cuisine” in early modern Japan can only be defined in negative terms by what was absent. Cwiertka, while recognizing a “differentiated gastronomy” in urban areas, nevertheless describes diet in the early modern period as “austere” and monotonous—in other words boring—in contrast to the variety of foods available in Japan today, a view echoed by other culinary historians.<sup>5</sup>

But before we dismiss cuisine in early modern Japan entirely it might be useful to think more about other meanings of the term besides inextricably linking it with modernity. Another approach to cuisine is to put aside references to traits that would have been anachronistic for the early modern period and look for other ways that cooking and eating generated meanings. Even by Cwiertka’s definition it is not just cooking techniques and ingredients that designate a cuisine, it is also about the ability of foods to evoke cultural meanings like national identity. Examining the foodways of early modern Japan to fully explore this definition of cuisine is beyond the scope of this article, but sampling even one meal exemplifying the banqueting customs of elite samurai suggests evidence of a sophisticated system of culinary rules used to transform foods into “message bearing objects.”<sup>6</sup> Ordinary diet for samurai of all ranks from shogun to footmen (*ashigaru*) was indeed boring in contrast to the modern Japanese diet as the second part of this article recounts, but banquets allowed elite warriors such as daimyo and shoguns to partake in a highly refined culinary experience in which the symbolic meanings of the dishes provided a rich subtext for the dining

<sup>1</sup> The author appreciates the comments provided by Morgan Pitelka, Phil Brown and the anonymous readers on an earlier draft of this manuscript called “The Sole of the Samurai: Warrior Diet and Cuisine in Premodern Japan.”

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Antheleme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste*, trans. by Anne Drayton (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Words referencing regional cuisines, such as *Kyō ryōri*, the famous local cuisine of Kyoto, are also modern, coined to establish a contrast with the category of national cuisine in the same period. Murai Yasuhiko, ed., *Kyō ryōri no rekishi*, vol. 4 of *Shirizuru shokubunka no hakken* (Shibata shoten, 1979), p. v.

<sup>4</sup> Katarzyna, J. Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Cwiertka, p. 95; see, for example, see Naomi-chi Ishige, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food* (London, New York: Kegan Paul, 2001), p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985), p. 89.

experience. These dishes may not have referenced an imagined national identity but they did evoke other culinary meanings important to their consumers.

This was the case on the eighteenth day of the fourth month in 1630 when Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651) visited the mansion of the Shimazu daimyo house in Edo. The style of eating, the foods served, and the manner of the visit itself resonated in wider cultural traditions known for centuries among elite warriors that gradually disseminated to other social groups in the Edo period through published culinary books (*ryōribon*). The Shimazu offered a menu that not only contained many rare delicacies and bespoke of great luxury and high status, it also referenced Buddhism, five agent theory (*gogyō*), and Chinese legends; it evoked connections to the Ashikaga shoguns of the Muromachi period (1336–1573), and even demonstrated a degree of playfulness. This menu illustrates how cuisine can be defined without reference to nationalism as sociologist Priscilla Clark stated in the context of her research on early modern France: “cuisine is food transcended, nature transformed in a social product, an aesthetic artifact, and linguistic creation, a cultural tradition.”<sup>7</sup> Cuisine, in other words, carries special artistic and cultural meanings that differentiate it from mundane acts of food creation and consumption. We can best understand how cuisine in early modern Japan functioned in this way by interpreting the 1630 banquet in reference to culinary manuscripts (*ryōrishi*), created by and for the class of chefs called *hōchōnin* responsible for creating these types of banquets for samurai, along with published culinary writings (*ryōribon*) written by *hōchōnin* and other authors. Doing so will allow us to define cuisine in the early modern period provisionally as a repertoire of techniques to enable food to take on special meanings distinguished from ordinary acts of consumption and significant to participants in important

events.<sup>8</sup>

### Iemitsu’s Visitation to the Shimazu

Following centuries-old customs, on the eighteenth day of the fourth month of 1630, the daimyo of Satsuma domain, Shimazu Iehisa (1576–1638), hosted a visit by Shogun Iemitsu in the Satsuma mansion in Edo, entertaining him with a tea ceremony, a banquet, noh theater, and music from the Ryūkyū Islands. The chef (*hōchōnin*) responsible for creating this banquet, Ishihara Sadomori (d. 1648), recorded the event and a subsequent visit three days later by the retired shogun Tokugawa Hidetada (1579–1632) in *Record of the Shogunal Tea Ceremony and Visitation (Osuki onari no ki)*.<sup>9</sup> The menu for both of these visits was almost identical and both followed the custom of shogunal visitations (*onari*) that began in the Kamakura period and crystallized in the Muromachi era when the shogun formally visited his chief retainers and prominent Buddhist temples by invitation or annually. Visitations in the Muromachi period lasted from the early afternoon around 2:30 PM and ended in the mid-morning the next day around 10:00 AM. They began with a meeting between the host and guest in a private room decorated in the *shinden* style of the mansions of Heian-period aristocrats. The host greeted the guest with a special drinking ceremony called the “three formal rounds of drinks” (*shikisankon*) described below. After that the host and the shogun exchanged gifts such as swords and saddles.<sup>10</sup> Then the group retired to a larger “public” room (*kaisho*) for a banquet. Typically alcohol was served before the banquet for the *shikisankon* but not during it. However, further rounds of drinking followed the meal along with the exchange of more presents such as swords,

<sup>7</sup> Priscilla P. Clark, “Thoughts for Food I: French Cuisine and French Culture,” *The French Review* 49.1 (1975): 32–41, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> For a more extensive discussion of cuisine in early modern Japan, see Eric C. Rath, *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan* (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> The culinary customs of the Shimazu house are well documented by Ego Michiko, *Daimyō no kurashi to shoku* (Dōseisha, 2002); her description of Iemitsu’s 1630 visitation appears on pp. 10–15, with the menu itself on pp. 11–13.

<sup>10</sup> Kumakura Isao, *Nihon ryōri bunkashi: kaiseki o chūshin ni* (Kyoto: Jinbun shoin, 2002), p. 156.

imported artifacts, and robes. After a rest and perhaps a bowl of tea, the shogun returned to the main room to enjoy noh plays and other entertainments accompanied with even more eating and drinking.<sup>11</sup> Thus visitations were highly structured events providing the shogun a chance to demonstrate his authority and giving the daimyo the task of showing their fealty through their lavish entertainments. The personal bond between hosts and guests would presumably be strengthened by the visit. The retainer may have gained some cultural and political capital but at the expense of hosting a costly event.

Tea ceremonies became more prominent aspects of shogunal visitations in the Edo period and Iemitsu's visit to the Shimazu began in the morning with one featuring its own elaborate meal.<sup>12</sup> The meal accompanying the tea ceremony consisted of two trays of food with additional snacks to be passed around:

Tea ceremony Menu (*osukiya gokaiseki*)

[First Tray]

Sea bream and bonito (*yorigatsuo*) flavored in sake (*sakabite*) [served with] kumquat  
 Soup of crane, burdock root, and preserved *matsutake* mushrooms (*tsukematsutake*)  
 Skylark (*hibari*) [cooked] in dark soy sauce  
 [Rice]

Second Tray

Grey-headed lapwing (*keri*) grilled with salt, Japanese pepper (*sanshō*), and "small greens" (*kona*)  
 Fish-paste loaf (*kamaboko*)  
 Pickles

Additional Tray [*ohikimono*]

Grilled sweet-fish  
 Soup (*oatsumono*) of sea bream roe, squid, mashed tofu flavored with yam and fish

Shōgan no hibo seaweed (*nori*)<sup>13</sup>  
 Snacks (*osakana*)  
 Tilefish (*okitsudai*)  
 Grilled mollusks  
 Salted dried mullet roe (*karasumi*)  
 Sweets (*okashi*)  
 Rice cake in a twisted shape (*yorimizu*)  
 Persimmons served on a branch  
 Colored potato (*irozuke imo*)  
 [Served with a] toothpick (*yōji*)<sup>14</sup>

The overall message of this tea menu was luxury indicative of the elaborate style of "daimyo tea" not the restrained *wabi* style of the adherents of Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591). Rikyū's tea meals can be characterized by their structure of a single soup and three side dishes (*ichijū sansai*), but in this case there were two trays with four side dishes (*nijū yonsai*) not including the pickles and another tray with grilled sweetfish on it.<sup>15</sup> Rather than a single meal, Iemitsu's tea menu can be thought of as a program of meals in three stages: the first three trays were served simultaneously as stage one while the additional soup (*atsumono*) and snacks (*sakana*) were served later as an accompaniment to sake in the second stage, later followed by the sweets served before the tea as a final stage. Another distinction of this menu was the predominance of meat dishes, which ran counter to trends in Rikyū's *wabi* style that tended toward vegetarian meals.<sup>16</sup> The dishes served here were also grand and included freshwater fish, seafood, and game fowl as well as mullet roe (*karasumi*) considered one of the three "superlative delicacies" in the Edo period.<sup>17</sup>

By modern standards the sweets (*okashi*) served to Iemitsu would not be particularly sweet compared to those available today since they did not use much if any sugar, but they did hold

<sup>13</sup> *Shōgan no hibo*, written as *shōkan no hiho* here, is a type of seaweed, probably served grilled as a snack.

<sup>14</sup> Ego, pp. 11–12.

<sup>15</sup> Kumakura 2002, pp. 27, 29.

<sup>16</sup> Harada 1989, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Hosking, *A Dictionary of Japanese Food: Ingredients and Culture* (Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1996), p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> Satō Toyozō, "Shōgun no onari to cha no yu," in *Buke chadō no keifu*, ed. Bukeshi dankai (Perikansha, 1983, pp. 156–77), p. 159.

<sup>12</sup> Harada Nobuo, *Edo no ryōrishi: ryōribon to ryōri bunka* (Chūō kōronsha, 1989), p. 6

other significance for the banquet participants. Despite the Satsuma domain's dominance of the sugar trade with the Ryūkyū Islands since their invasion of those islands in 1609, here the sweets served remained true to the original definition of the Japanese word (*kashi*), meaning fruit. Sugary sweets, both hard and soft, became popular by the end of the seventeenth century with the greater availability of domestic and imported sugar and the diffusion of confectionery techniques. It is tempting to hypothesize that the colored potato was another dish that spoke of Satsuma's trade with the Ryūkyūs. Sweet potatoes called "Satsuma potatoes" (*Satsuma imo*), originated in Central America or southern Mexico and arrived in Kyushu either from China via the Ryūkyū Islands or from the Philippines by the mid- to early seventeenth century. The culinary book *One Hundred Tricks with Sweet Potatoes* (*Imo hyakuchin*, 1789) contains a recipe for "dyed potatoes" using sweet potato dyed in five different colors reflecting an alternate name for this sweet, "five colors" (*goshiki*).<sup>18</sup> Here the potato is probably not a *Satsuma imo* or even if it was, it was probably not referred to by that name. The sweet potato's close association with Satsuma domain dates to a century later when Dutch-learning scholar Aoki Kon'yō (1698–1769) undertook trials of the sweet potato in 1735 at the bakufu's orders and helped to popularize it in the Kantō area.<sup>19</sup> "Imo" can refer to a number of different tubers including taro (*sato imo*) and yam (*yamanoimo*). Since this is a dessert, the *imo* here is probably a yam. *Tales of Cookery* (*Ryōri monogatari*, 1643) the first published cookbook and a work closer historically to Iemitsu's banquet than *Hundred Tricks with Sweet Potatoes* indicates that yams are good for sweets, while taro should be used only for savory recipes like soups, simmered dishes (*nimono*), pickles, and fish and vegetable salads (*namasu* and *aemono*). *Tales of Cookery*

<sup>18</sup> *Imo hyakuchin*, in vol. 9 of *Nihon ryōri hiden shūsei*, ed. Issunsha (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), pp. 138–39.

<sup>19</sup> Nishiyama Matsunosuke, et al., eds., *Tabemono no nihonshi sōkan* (Shinjinbutsu ōraisha, 1994), p. 154.

does not mention any dishes for sweet potato.<sup>20</sup> Whatever its principle ingredient, the dyed sweet prefigures similar five-colored dishes important to the *shikisankon* later in the day. The rice cake served evoked shogunal largesse since it was one of the sweets presented by the shogun to daimyo, bannermen (*hatamoto*), and other bakufu employees annually on the sixteenth day of the sixth month in the *kajō* ceremony. *Kajō* was a tremendous demonstration of shogunal largesse for in a typical year the shogun distributed almost 21,000 sweets. In Hidetada's lifetime the shogun himself personally supervised this task over the course of several days.<sup>21</sup> By serving the distinct rice cake, if the Shimazu were not subtly repaying or reminding the shogun for past generosity, they were at least evoking a special culinary connection between the shogun and daimyo.

Of all the dishes served, pride of place at the tea meal went to the crane soup, a particular luxury especially prized by elite samurai. Said to live a thousand years—except when killed for a soup—crane became by the late sixteenth century a dish indispensable for the most formal warrior banquets. In 1582 warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) served crane soup to Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) at a banquet, and in 1587 Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) introduced crane to the imperial court. Soup appears to have been a typical way to serve crane, although the blood was also mixed with sake as a cocktail on some occasions.<sup>22</sup> Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583–1687) stated that drinking the blood of a white crane was "said to increase

<sup>20</sup> *Ryōri monogatari*, vol. 1 of *Nihon ryōri hiden shūsei*, ed. Issunsha (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of this ceremony, see Aoki Naomi, *Zusetsu wagashi no konjaku* (Tankōsha, 2000), pp. 143–47. By decision of the All Japan Confectionery Association (*Zenkoku wagashi kyōkai*) in 1979, June 16 is now celebrated as "sweet day" (*kashi no hi*), Nakayama Keiko, *Wagashi monogatari* (Asahi shinbunsha, 1993), p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> Ego, p. 38.

vitality.”<sup>23</sup> In the same period as Razan, tea master Endō Genkan (n.d.) published *Guide to Meals for the Tea Ceremony* (*Cha no yu kondate shinan*, 1676), the first book on meals (*kaiseki*) for tea. This text contained a recipe for crane soup that approximates the dish mentioned in Iemitsu’s menu above except that it is even more lavish. Endō’s recipe called for “crane in a clear soup [using the] sinews from the leg, burdock root, salted *matsutake* mushrooms, eggplant, *shimeji* mushrooms, and greens.” He noted that it was important to include some leg meat from the crane so that guests will know immediately that they were eating crane soup and not some other bird.<sup>24</sup> So important was crane to samurai banqueting customs that the bakufu enacted sumptuary legislation that prohibited commoners from serving crane and other game fowl at banquets.<sup>25</sup>

#### “The Three Formal Rounds of Drinks” (Shikisankon)

Shogunal visitations in the Muromachi period began with the “three formal rounds of drinks,” but this event came after the tea ceremony in Iemitsu’s visit, following the pattern set in the Tokugawa period.<sup>26</sup> The three formal rounds of drinks was a toasting ceremony involving the host and the guest drinking sake from the same shallow cup (*sakazuki*). Both participants drained a cup of sake three times for each of the three rounds of drinking for a total of nine cups of sake—or more if the participants decided to continue drinking. This formal exchange of drinks between lord and vassal signified their personal bond, and the same ceremony was used for weddings. The

<sup>23</sup> Hayashi Razan, “*Hōchō shoroku*,” in *Nihon zuihitsu taisei*, vol. 23, first series, ed. Nihon zuihitsu taisei henshūbu (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1976), p. 347.

<sup>24</sup> Endō Genkan, “*Cha no yu kondate shinan*,” in vol. 11 of *Nihon ryōri hiden shūsei*, ed. Issunsha (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), pp. 29, 95.

<sup>25</sup> Donald Shively, “Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964–65), p. 135.

<sup>26</sup> The word *shikisankon* originated in the Muromachi period as did the rules for it, Kumakura 2002, p. 142.

*shikisankon* usually occurred in a private room appropriately decorated for the occasion with armor and Chinese art objects. Accompanying the sake were snacks (*sakana*), traditionally konbu seaweed, dried chestnuts, and dried abalone.<sup>27</sup> These foods could not be eaten in the form they were served, and they were instead surreptitiously dropped into a kimono sleeve or wrapped in paper if they were touched at all. The *shikisankon* menu for Iemitsu offered a more formal variation of these symbolic snacks in the form of the “five varieties of offerings” and it also included a few edible delicacies.

#### First Round

Pheasant [served on a] tortoise shaped dish  
Rice cake soup (*ozōni*)  
Chopsticks  
“Five varieties of offerings” (*goshu*)  
Salt (*oteshio*)

#### Second Round

Grilled salt-cured fish (*shibobiki*)  
Grilled “hawk’s wing” [sea bream] (*taka no ha sen*)  
Dried Cod

#### Third Round

Dried salted mullet roe (*karasumi*)  
Whole grilled young “winged” sea bass (*Shin hane sen*)  
Dried rolled squid (*makizurume*)

The menu here demonstrates playfulness in its clever use of flight imagery on each of the three trays. In addition to the pheasant on the first tray, two of the fish served on the second and third trays reference birds. One was a variety of sea bream said to resemble the wings of a hawk and the other used the nickname “winged” for young sea bass because of the misconception that they could jump through the surface of the water.<sup>28</sup> Traveling over water may have been a

<sup>27</sup> Ogura Kumeo, Komatsuzaki Takeshi, Hatae Keiko, eds., *Nihon ryōri gyōji, shikitari daijiten*, vol. 2 (Purosatā, 2003), p. 161.

<sup>28</sup> Editors’ notation to *Complete Manual of Cuisine for Our School* (*Tōryū setsuyō ryōri taizen*, 1714), Shijō Takashima, *Tōryū setsuyō*

reference to Satsuma's trade with the Ryūkyūs a connection reinforced by the Ryukyuan musicians who entertained the guests later in the day. And the rolled squid may have continued the flight imagery as it was sometimes shaped into the form of butterflies, albeit that was a motif usually reserved for weddings: two butterflies representing the couple's future happiness together.<sup>29</sup>

The pheasant, rice cake soup (*zōni*), and "five varieties of offerings" (*goshu*) were a set for the first round of a *shikisankon* according to *Secret Text on Carving and Cuisine* (*Ryōri kirikata hidensho*, 1659), the first published treatise on warrior banquet cuisine. That text indicates that crane was once served cut into pieces and served on decorative paper, but that the dish later changed to pheasant served with one of its feet protruding from a pile of its sliced meat. The sliced fowl accompanies "the five offerings," which were also called "shaved foods" (*kezurimono*), indicating five piles of finely sliced meats each of a different color. Although the contents of the five piles of shaved foods are not delineated in the menu for Iemitsu, *Secret Writing on Carving and Cuisine* indicates that they represent "tortoises from the island of the immortals" (*hōrai no kame*), signifying ten thousand years of happiness. The same text further describes how these five varieties of things should be arranged on a plate into five piles according to their different colors:

yellow		black
	white	
red		green

*Secret Writing on Carving and Cuisine* indicates, "These [piles] are placed inside tortoise-shaped dishes. The pheasant is also placed inside a tortoise dish. The five [piles of] things go to the left of the rice cake soup and the diced fowl [i.e., the pheasant] is to their right."<sup>30</sup> Here too the ingredients for the *kezurimono* are left unstated but these appear in an older text on warrior custom and banqueting ritual Ise Sadayori's *Sōgō ōzoshi* (ca. 1529). Sadayori, a specialist in warrior traditions from a long family line of experts in that topic, states:

Use conger eel (*hamu*, [*hamo*]) for the color white. Bonito is for the color red.

Black is made from dried sea cucumber. Green is shark. Yellow is dried squid.

It is best to slice these finely. One ought to alternate male and female forms.

The reference to "male" piles of meats as opposed to "female" ones is evocative but cryptic. Sadayori is clearer in this assertion that the *kezurimono*, which he also called the "islands of the immortals" (*tekake*), "represent Mount Sumeru."<sup>31</sup> Sumeru, the center point of the Buddhist cosmos, was a mountain said to be wider at the top than at its base. Here Mt. Sumeru is offered in five different forms, in male and female manifestations. This recalls customs of religious offerings such as the large piles of dyed rice called *shishiki* and *some wake* served annually for the *wakamiya* festival at Kasuga Shrine in Nara.<sup>32</sup> Both the *shishiki* and the *some wake* are

*ryōri taizen*, in vol. 3 of *Nihon ryōri hiden shūsei*, ed. Issunsha (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), p. 148.

<sup>29</sup> Nakamura Kōhei, *Shinban nihon ryōri gogenshū* (Asahiya shuppan, 2004), p. 640. Paper butterflies were also affixed to bottles of sake used at weddings for the same reason that these signified felicity, William Lindsey, *Fertility and Pleasure: Ritual and Sexual Values in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), p. 83. *Complete Manual of Cuisine for Our School* contains a recipe for *makizurume* that calls for washing the squid, tossing it in kudzu starch, rolling it up in a rice mat, boiling it, and then cutting it into pieces, Shijō Takashima, *Tōryū setsuyō ryōri taizen*, p. 204.

<sup>30</sup> *Ryōri kirikata hidensho*, vol. 1 of *Honkoku Edo jidai ryōribon shūsei*, ed. Edo Jidai Ryōribon Kenkyūkai (Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 1978), pp. 54–55.

<sup>31</sup> Ise Sadayori, *Sōgō ōzoshi*, ed. Hanawa Hokinouchi, in *Gunsho ruijū*, vol. 22 (Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1959–60), p. 566.

<sup>32</sup> For a description of the food offerings at the *wakamiya* festival see Iwai Hiromi and Niwa

approximately fifteen centimeters in height and served as a set in green, yellow, red, and white colors. The “four colors” (*shishiki*) are four piles of rice in solid colors whereas the *some wake* are piles of rice divided into four different colors. The *kezurimono* were miniature versions of these religious offerings, measuring 1.5–1.8 cm (5–6 *bu*) according to the culinary treatise *Culinary Text of the Yamanouchi House* (*Yamanouchi ryōrishi*) compiled in 1497.<sup>33</sup> Though tiny, the above descriptions indicate that the dishes were rich in symbolism evoking Shinto offerings, Buddhist cosmology, and Chinese folklore.

The Shinto offerings at Kasuga shrine traditionally had four colors, but the addition of a black dish for the *kezurimono* indicates a five-color combination (*goshiki*) an artistic motif found in the curtains on *noh* stages and one important to five agent theory, a connection that expanded the meanings of the *kezurimono* and the dishes served with it even further. Each of the five colors represents one of the five agents. White stands for metal, black for water, green for wood, red for fire, and yellow for earth. Besides these agents, each of the colors also represents a direction, a season, a taste, and an internal organ.<sup>34</sup> One plate of food thus signifies the external and internal universe and everything within it.

The five-color combination also connected the *kezurimono* with the other dishes on the tray. There were five colors on the wings of a pheasant according to Hayashi Razan, giving the bird a decorative function.<sup>35</sup> The dyed potato sweet served in the earlier tea ceremony and the rice cake soup also probably contained five colors.<sup>36</sup> The recipe for rice cake soup in *Ryōri monogatari* calls for a stock made from miso or clear stock (dried bonito flakes, konbu and salt) and

[white / yellow] rice cake, taro, and daikon, [black] dried sea cucumber intestine (*iriko*), abalone on skewers, large flakes of dried [red] bonito (*hiragatsuo*), and green shoots (*kukitachi*)—enough varied ingredients to suggest a five-color combination.<sup>37</sup> About a century later, another member of the Ise family of experts on warrior protocol Sadatake (also called Teijō, 1717–1784), writing in *Teijō zakki*, provides a different list of ingredients for *ozōni* but confirms that these reflect the five primary colors (*goshiki*).<sup>38</sup> *Zōni* is a dish usually reserved for New Year’s in modern Japan, but it was a typical snack (*sakana*) for *shikisankon* since the Muromachi period.<sup>39</sup> The Shimazu reserved *zōni* for the most formal occasions such as weddings and trips to the ancestral temple (*bōdaiji*), so its presence here with the five varieties of offerings and the pheasant dish marked the solemnity of the event.<sup>40</sup>

Not all the snacks carried such heavy symbolism. The dried mullet roe, also seen in the earlier tea menu, and the dried cod were ideal accompaniments for drinking alcohol like modern finger foods (*otsumami*).

### Iemitsu’s Banquet Menu

The banquet that followed the *shikisankon* used a style of service that originated among the warrior elite in the fourteenth century called “main tray cuisine” (*honzen ryōri*).<sup>41</sup> Served simultaneously with a main tray with its own dishes of food were an additional number of trays with more dishes. Each tray, including the main one, had at least one soup (*shiru*, *jū*) and a number of side dishes (*sai*), but rice and pickles were usually only found on the main tray along with the chopsticks. A typical formula for describing the organization of trays and dishes at *honzen* banquets was “seven, five, three” (*shichi*

Yūju, *Shinsen: kami to hito no kyōen* (Hōsei daigaku shuppankyoku, 2007), pp. 337–45.

<sup>33</sup> *Yamanouchi ryōrishi* in vol. 18 of *Nihon ryōri hiden shūsei*, ed. Issunsha (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), p. 76.

<sup>34</sup> Ogura et al, 2003, vol. 2, p. 290.

<sup>35</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hōchō shoroku*, p. 348.

<sup>36</sup> Modern recipes for *zōni*, though varied, usually preserve this five color symbolism in their ingredients, Matsushita Sachiko, *Iwai no shokubunka* (Tokyo bijutsu sensho, 1994), p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> *Ryōri monogatari*, p. 81.

<sup>38</sup> Ise Sadatake, *Teijō zakki* in vol. 18 of *Nihon ryōri hiden shūsei*, ed. Issunsha (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), p. 300.

<sup>39</sup> Kumakura 2002, p. 157.

<sup>40</sup> Ego 2002, p. 141.

<sup>41</sup> Kumakura Isao, “Honzen ryōri,” in *Kyō ryōri no rekishi*, vol. 4 of *Shiriizu shokubunka no hakken*, ed. Murai Yasuhiko (Shibata shoten, 1979), p. 45.

go san). This indicated three trays each with a soup, and seven, five, and three side dishes on them respectively. This was the format of the banquet for Iemitsu in 1630, and one that was typical service for the shogun in the Edo period.<sup>42</sup>

Three trays was a typical formulation for shoguns, but the number of trays and the number of dishes on them varied for guests of other rank. Large banquets in the Muromachi period might have up to thirty-two side dishes, although some of these dishes, like a few described below, were decorative and not meant to be consumed.<sup>43</sup> In the Edo period, most samurai including daimyo were, like commoners, limited by sumptuary legislation to just two trays of food at banquets, albeit daimyo that held their own provinces (*kunimochi*) were allowed seven side dishes, but commoners and *hatamoto* could only have five side dishes.<sup>44</sup> Samurai and commoners who could afford extravagance were able to get around this rule by serving a third tray separately from the first two trays. Thereby they maintained the appearance of a simple two-tray banquet, even if only temporarily.<sup>45</sup>

A notation in the menu for Iemitsu states that the three trays would bear seven, five, and three items respectively, but other guests at the ban-

quet received fewer dishes befitting their rank. In this instance, the Shimazu's own high-ranking retainers (*karō*) in attendance received only five dishes on the main tray.<sup>46</sup> On the main tray for the shogun's meal there were seven items not counting the chopsticks, salt, and *yuzuke*, standing for the obligatory rice.

Main tray  
 Grilled salt-cured fish (*shiohiki*)  
 Octopus  
 Fish-paste cake (*kamaboko*)  
 Chopsticks  
 Fish salad (*aemaze*)  
 Hot water over rice (*yuzuke*)  
 Pickles  
 Fish flavored in sake (*sakabite*)  
 Fermented intestines of sea cucumber  
 (*konowata*)  
 Salt for flavoring (*teshio*)

Looking at the contents of the tray, several of the dishes recall warrior traditions dating to the Muromachi period if not earlier, perhaps as a reminder of the fact that the Shimazu house was one of the oldest warrior lineages, tracing its legacy in Kyushu back to the time of the first shogun, Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199). According to one Edo-period author the rice dish here, *yuzuke* (hot water over rice), began with the third Muromachi shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408). The powerful Muromachi shogun became drunk at a party, poured hot water on his rice, and ate it, inspiring others to follow suit.<sup>47</sup> The fish salad (*aemaze*) was another throwback to the Muromachi period, a dish similar to a “raw salad” (*namasu*), and was typically served on the main tray at Muromachi banquets.<sup>48</sup> One of the earliest cooking treatises, *Shijō School Text on Food Preparation (Shijōryū hōchōsho)*, dating to 1489, indicated: “By custom, fish salad was

<sup>42</sup> Maruyama Yasunari, “Kinsei ni okeru daimyo, shōmin no shoku seikatsu: Sono ryōri kondate o chūshin to shite,” in *Shoku seikatsu to shokumotsushi*, vol. 2 of *Zenshū Nihon no shokubunka*, eds. Haga Noboru and Ishikawa Hiroko (Yūzankaku, 1999), p. 175.

<sup>43</sup> Ogura et al., vol. 2, p. 161.

<sup>44</sup> Maruyama 1999, p. 186; Harada 1989, p. 7; Shively 1964–65, p. 148.

<sup>45</sup> In that case, the third was called an “additional tray” (*hikite*). The cookbook *Threading Together the Sages of Verse (Kasen no kumi ito)* published in 1748 includes menus of two tray meals followed by a *hikite* bearing an additional soup and more side dishes than the first two trays combined. Since these trays have soups, the *hikite* was meant to be eaten at the banquet and was not a *hikidemono*, a tray of foods meant for the guests to take home and eat later: *Kasen no kumi ito* in vol. 7 of *Nihon ryōri hiden shūsei*, ed. Issunsha (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1985), pp. 57–119.

<sup>46</sup> Ego, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Ise, *Teijō zakki*, p. 260.

<sup>48</sup> Sashimi gradually replaced *namasu* in Edo period banquets, and the latter was renamed *su no mono*, Ebara Kei, *Edo ryōrishiki ko: Nihon ryōri (sōsōski)* (Kawade shobō, 1986), p. 63, 115.



always used in the middle of the main tray....”<sup>49</sup> *Namasu* is a predecessor to sashimi: it combines slices of raw fish with vegetables and fruits like citron served with a vinegar-based dressing. *Aemaze* is a similar but less complicated marinade of fish or seafood that used a sake-based dressing.<sup>50</sup> The directions for the cooked salad here are not specified and neither are the contents of the fish paste cake made from mashed fish and starch. One Edo-period commentator wrote that catfish was the only authentic fish for a fishcake, but he also conceded that any fish would do.<sup>51</sup> Shijō Takashima (n. d.) who compiled *Revised Culinary Encyclopedia of Our School*, a book about creating ceremonial banquets for the samurai elite published in 1714, listed twenty different fish and seafood combinations that could be used for making *kamaboko*.<sup>52</sup>

The second tray, consisting of two soups and five side dishes, contained another Muromachi-period dish, “gathered soup” (*oshiru atsume*).

#### Second Tray

Dried salted mullet roe (*karasumi*)  
 Jellyfish  
 “Gathered soup” (*oshiru atsume*)  
 Servings of mollusks (*kaimori*)  
 Rolled squid  
 Dried codfish  
 Swan soup

*Oshiru atsume*, more commonly known as *atsumejiru* appeared on the menus of formal banquets for warriors in the early sixteenth century when it was often used for the *shikisankon*, but the recipe itself might be older. Typical ingredients included dried sea cucumber intestines (*iriko*) used frequently in this meal for Iemitsu, skewered abalone, wheat gluten,

<sup>49</sup> Eric C. Rath, trans., *Shijōryū hōchōsho*, in *Traditional Japanese Arts and Culture: An Illustrated Sourcebook*, eds. Stephen Addis, Gerald Groemer, and J. Thomas Rimer (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), p. 188.

<sup>50</sup> Matsushita, p. 98.

<sup>51</sup> Ise, *Teijō zakki*, p. 264.

<sup>52</sup> Shijō, *Tōryū setsuyō ryōri taizen*, p. 194.

soybeans, and “sweet seaweed” (*ama nori*).<sup>53</sup> This soup complements a second soup made from swan. Besides the *iriko*, the rolled squid and codfish harkened back to the *shikisankon* earlier in the day. The description “servings” of mollusks indicates that it was probably a decorative dish not meant to be consumed like the *hamori* and *funamori* dishes on the third tray.

The third tray continued the Muromachi-period style of the banquet:

#### Third Tray

Fowl served with its wings (*hamori*)  
 Carp soup  
 Turbo (*sazae*)  
 [Spiny lobster] served in a boat shape  
 (*funamori*)  
 “Cloud hermit” (*unzen*) soup

*Unzen* (or *unzenkan*) was a Chinese dish adopted in the Muromachi period, a gelatin made from grated yam, sugar, and scrambled egg, which was steamed to form a cloud shape when floating in soup.<sup>54</sup> The carp in the second soup was the favorite fish of the Muromachi period before sea bream surpassed it in popularity in the Edo period, when it still had its fans. Carp, wrote Hayashi Razan, was both a delicacy (*bibutsu*) and an auspicious delicacy nicknamed a “gift to Confucius” since the Chinese scholar received one when his son was born.<sup>55</sup>

However, two other dishes, which also date to Muromachi-period culinary customs, were especially objects of attention. Fowl served with its wings *hamori* style featured a duck or quail cooked with its feathered wings reattached and positioned so that the bird looked like it might fly away. Spiny lobster in the shape of a boat featured a large crustacean whose legs, feelers, and body had been contorted to give the appearance of a sailing ship. Both dishes were served with additional decorations made from paper and flowers. Neither of these dishes was meant to be eaten; instead they were spectacle pieces meant to show off the cook’s skills and added dignity to the occasion. The equivalent of food sculptures,

<sup>53</sup> Nakamura, p. 33.

<sup>54</sup> Nakamura, p. 96.

<sup>55</sup> Hayashi, pp. 343–44.

these dishes provided an important artistic dimension to the meal, crucial to the designation of a cuisine as distinct from ordinary foods and mundane ways of cooking and eating.<sup>56</sup>

Iemitsu's banquet ended with a desert course of sweets: "Ice rice-cakes" (*kōri mochi*), tangerines, and persimmons on a branch.<sup>57</sup> Ice rice-cakes are made in mid-winter by pounding non-glutinous rice in a mortar and then using a sieve to make a paste, which is then molded into cakes that are frozen before being cut and sun-dried for a month. The cakes need to be softened with hot water to be eaten.<sup>58</sup> The tangerines and persimmons would have been sweeter. All three are traditional sweets like the ones in the previous tea ceremony albeit other members at the banquet were served the Iberian-inspired sponge cake *kasutera*.<sup>59</sup> *Kasutera*, the hard candy *konpeitō*, and the softer sugar candy *aruheitō* were becoming popular with some members of elite society in this period.<sup>60</sup> Four years earlier, when Iemitsu and his father entertained Emperor Go'Mizuno'o (d. 1680) at a lavish series of meals at Nijō Castle in Kyoto they served *kasutera* and *aruheitō* in a collection of seven sweets presented as part of a banquet meal on the morning of the eighth day of the ninth month.<sup>61</sup>

### Banquet Foods in Contrast to a Boring Diet

Banqueting aside, the meals that samurai in-

cluding the shogun ate on a daily basis were not far from what many commoners ate or from the description of modern culinary historians who call these meals dull and monotonous. A typical meal for commoners living in Edo consisted of miso soup and pickles with one side dish of tofu, simmered vegetables, or perhaps a fish; and this was comparable to the meals for most samurai.<sup>62</sup> The monotony of these daily meals made the dishes served at banquets all the more remarkable and memorable.

On the whole, the daily meals for samurai of high and low rank were rather plain. The shogun had his daily meals served on two trays, but in terms of their basic structure, the shogun's meals of rice, soup, boiled vegetables, and fish dishes was otherwise comparable to what people in other classes ate.<sup>63</sup> Some shoguns such as Ienari (1773–1841) were noted for their extravagant meals.<sup>64</sup> According to one story, the first shogun Ieyasu died after gorging himself on sea bream tempura, even though he passed away several months after consuming this dish.<sup>65</sup> Other shogun like the last one, Yoshinobu (1837–1913), dined rather frugally as described in *Record of Inquiries into Bygone Days (Kyūji shimonroku)*, a transcript of interviews with former bakufu officials.<sup>66</sup> Yoshinobu disliked eating animals

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of these dishes, see Eric C. Rath, *Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan* (forthcoming).

<sup>57</sup> Ego, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> Sanmi Sasaki, *Chado, the Way of Tea: A Japanese Tea Master's Almanac*, trans. Shaun McCabe and Iwasaki Satoko (Boston: Tuttle, 2002), pp. 612–13.

<sup>59</sup> Ego, p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> In 1635, the confectioner Toraya began supplying the imperial court with Iberian sweets including *kasutera*, *karumera*, and *aruheitō*; and in the same period these were becoming local specialties in Kyoto. Nakayama Keiko, *Jiten: wagashi no sekai* (Iwanami shoten, 2006), p. 114.

<sup>61</sup> *GoMizunooinsama nijōjō gyōkō onkondate*, in vol. 2 of *Ryōri taikan*, ed. Hasegawa Seihō (Ryōri koten kenkyūkai, 1958), p. 18.

<sup>62</sup> Ishige, p. 113. For further information about the diet of commoners in the Edo period, see Susan Hanley, "Tokugawa Society: Material Culture, Standard of Living, and Life-Styles," *Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 4, *Early Modern Japan*, ed. John W. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 660–705, especially pp. 680–89.

<sup>63</sup> Harada 1989, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> Harada Nobuo, *Edo no shoku seikatsu* (Iwanami shoten, 2003), p. 127.

<sup>65</sup> This dish was not the modern, batter-fried version of tempura but another dish by the same name consisting of fish cooked in oil, garnished with leeks, and served in a broth. Hirano Masaki, *Hirano Masaki chō, Nihon ryōri tankyū zensho*, vol. 11 *Shōyu, tempura monogatari* (Tōkyō shobōsha, 1979), pp. 182–87.

<sup>66</sup> See Anna Berens, "Interview with a Bakumatsu Official: A Translation from Kyūji

that had been hunted, so rabbit, pheasant, crane, and duck were off of his menu as were tempura and soymilk skin (*yuba*), two dishes popular with townspeople. He avoided pungent foods such as onion, leek, and fermented soybeans (*nattō*), and he disliked oysters, sardines, cockles (*akagai*) and Pacific saury (*sanma*). What then did he actually eat? For breakfast one spring (menus changed according to the season), the shogun was served two trays of food. The tray first had rice, miso soup with an egg in it, chilled tofu (*sawasawa tōfu*) flavored with flower petals (perhaps pickled cherry blossoms), and a gelatin made from agar agar (*kanten*), *kamaboko* mixed with walnuts, finely cut strips of egg omelet (*kinshi tamago*), konbu seaweed, and slices of sea bream. The second tray presented a grilled bluefin gurnard (*hōbō*), a small omelet of dry seasoned tofu wrapped in nori, gourd pickled in sake lees, and daikon pickled in miso.<sup>67</sup> These are fancier versions of the foods commoners ate, and nothing comparable to the extravagant dishes found in Iemitsu's banquet described earlier.

Daimyo ate more simply than the shogun, but their meals followed the same basic structure of rice, soup, pickles, and side dishes. For breakfast in the 1780s, the daimyo of Kumamoto domain ate rice with tea poured over it (*chazuke*), pickles, pickled apricot, and a dish cooked in miso (*yakimiso*). Lunch consisted of a soup and a side dish. Dinner saw the return of the *yakimiso* dish and pickles to accompany rice.<sup>68</sup> The research of Miyakoshi Matsuko on the Date house, daimyo of Sendai domain (modern Miyagi prefecture), indicates the daimyo usually had two side dishes to accompany rice and soup for breakfast but little more than that for lunch and dinner. Vegetable dishes usually made from daikon, burdock root, Chinese yam (*nagaimo*), taro, sweet potato, and devil's tongue root (*kon'yaku*) were served for breakfast, and meat dishes particularly fish, gamecock, duck, and chicken appeared more often for lunch and dinner. The daimyo ate eggs frequently and year round. In winter, he ate more

fish particularly prawns, tuna, flatfish, false halibut, and sea bream as well as river fish that included eel, sweet-fish, striped mullet, and carp. In autumn, he ate more vegetable dishes. The daimyo consumed shellfish such as fan shells (*tairagai*) and Venus clams (*hamaguri*), but he avoided foods beloved by commoners such as tempura, sushi, and grilled fish or vegetables topped with sweet miso (*dengaku*)—dishes that are synonymous with modern Japanese cuisine but may have been too plebian for the daimyo's taste. The daimyo of Sendai domain did not eat a large number of dishes, but his daily consumption of eggs and fish indicates a rather luxurious diet.<sup>69</sup>

Estimates of the daily caloric intake for the daimyo of Sendai domain reveal a diet of approximately 3,000 calories a day. This is comparable to the diets of modern Japanese, although the daimyo may have had a lower intake of vitamin C and other essential nutrients. One lower level samurai, Ozaki Junnosuke Sadamiki who lived in the 1860s and kept a scrupulous record of his meals, consumed an estimated 1,868 calories at home but when he dined out he averaged 1,934 calories.<sup>70</sup> This was only slightly higher than the diet of commoners living in the same period. Estimates of the caloric intake for commoners living in the Hida area of Gifu in 1874 reveal 1,850 calories with similar deficiencies in vitamin C, while commoners in the domain of Chōshū in 1840s had an estimated daily intake of 1,664 calories.<sup>71</sup> Such estimates provide a limited but telling view of the commonalities between the diet of lower-level samurai and commoners despite sumptuary legislation meant to distinguish the two groups.

A few diaries provide concrete information about the diet of lower-level samurai in the Edo period, and one of these is *Record from a Parrot's Cage* (*Ōmurō chūki*) by Asahi Monzaemon (1674–1718).<sup>72</sup> A samurai of the Tokugawa do-

shimonroku," *Monumenta Nipponica* 55.3 (2000), pp. 369–98, especially pp. 369–73.

<sup>67</sup> Harada 2003, pp. 126–27.

<sup>68</sup> Maruyama, p. 182.

<sup>69</sup> Sakurai Jun'ya, "Kinsei daimyo yashiki ni okeru shoku seikatsu," *Shigaku* 56.4 (1987), pp. 89–90.

<sup>70</sup> Sakurai, pp. 91, 94.

<sup>71</sup> Hanley, p. 687.

<sup>72</sup> For an overview of this text and its author, see Luke Roberts, "A Transgressive Life: The Diary

main in Owari province (modern Aichi prefecture), Asahi was supposed to enjoy a hereditary stipend of 150 *koku*, but his actual income had been reduced to thirty-five *koku* as part of financial retrenchment in his domain. After paying seven *koku* for living expenses, Asahi had only twenty-eight *koku* left. He augmented his income by tutoring and hand-copying texts. His diary, which covers the years 1686–1717, describes his passion for eating, which one modern commentator has described as his reason for living.<sup>73</sup>

On the twenty-seventh day of the tenth month of 1697, Asahi invited nine guests to dinner, serving them “codfish soup with water-drop wart (*seri*), simmered winter melon with grated yam (*tororo*), grilled Spanish mackerel (*sawara*), and pickles.” For snacks to accompany drinks after the meal, he provided “simmered duck meat, sea cucumber marinated in vinegar, salt-cured fish entrails (*shiokara*), thick slices of simmered burdock root, miso soup with duck gizzard simmered in sake with blue-green freshwater nori (*Suizenji nori*), clams (*hamaguri*), pears, and other things.”<sup>74</sup> It would have been superfluous for Asahi to mention rice in his record, as it would have been the indispensable accompaniment for any meal. Salt-cured fish intestines, especially those made from sea cucumber, would also have been recognized as a delicacy in the seventeenth century as they remain today.

*Sekijō's diary* (*Sekijō nikki*), the diary of Ozaki Junnosuke Sadamiki, an artist who went by the name Sekijō, presents information about the life of a samurai who lived two centuries after Asahi and had an even lower income. Sekijō hailed from Musashi province (in modern Saitama prefecture). He had some talent as a painter and his diary, which spanned a period from the sixth month of 1861 to the fourth month of 1862, includes a few illustrations. Adopted into the Ozaki family, Sekijō saw his salary of 100 *koku* reduced to the equivalent of 18 *koku* after writing a complaint to the leadership of his domain in 1857. Sekijō continued in his official duties, but these did not occupy much of his time. Instead,

his diary indicates that he devoted most of his time to drinking, eating, and reading about food in culinary books. On the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month of 1861, he wrote that he ate “breakfast of soup, lunch of tofu, and dinner of the same.”<sup>75</sup> Sekijō's soup was a broth made from fish paste and egg. All three meals would have been accompanied by rice. Tofu was apparently one of Sekijō's favorite dishes, but he also ate a lot of dried sardines, pickles, and rice doused with tea (*chazuke*). He broke the monotony of his meals at home by dining out or at a friend's house. On these occasions he recorded eating sashimi, simmered dishes, and stews; he augmented his usual diet of sardines, tuna, and freshwater clams (*shijimi*), with sea bream, salmon, and cockles. While Sekijō rarely missed the chance to have a drink with his meals, he only ate one egg a week. Whether he was dining in or out, the vegetables he consumed were usually daikon, eggplant, green onion, and taro.<sup>76</sup> Sekijō occasionally prepared his own meals, as on the seventeenth day of the fourth month of 1861 when he made “scattered sushi” (*chirashizushi*) by sprinkling chopped ginger shoots, egg, dried squid, shiitake mushrooms, red seaweed nori (*tosaka nori*), Japanese butterbur (*fuki*), lotus root, [green] nori, dried gourd, *udo*, bamboo shoot, and salmon over rice flavored with vinegar.<sup>77</sup> However, he never described the taste of his cooking or of the other meals he ate.<sup>78</sup> This speaks both to the monotony of his diet and to the fact that he meant his diary as a personal record not as a gourmet column.

The diet of lower-level samurai as seen from these two diaries differed from that of elite samurai in terms of ingredients, but the cooking techniques employed for their meals were very similar. Grilled and simmered dishes appear to be the most typical. Meticulous slicing was also important in the preparation of sashimi and scattered sushi. Desserts such as fruits and sweets were not usually mentioned as part of the meal even for elite samurai, although they may have

of a Genroku Samurai,” *Early Modern Japan* 5.2 (1995): 25–30.

<sup>73</sup> Ebara, pp. 146, 165.

<sup>74</sup> Ebara, p. 161.

<sup>75</sup> Harada 2003, pp. 97–109.

<sup>76</sup> Sakurai, p. 91.

<sup>77</sup> *Udo* looks like celery, but it is much longer; both the leaves and stalk are edible.

<sup>78</sup> Harada 2003, p. 112.

been consumed outside of regular mealtimes. The most profound distinctions between samurai and other social groups as well as between the diet of elite and lower-level samurai were apparent in the extravagant banquets described above.

### Conclusion

The chance to experience cuisine in its most exalted form in the early modern period was not an everyday experience, and it was limited to a handful of members of society; yet this elite cuisine was influential in several ways on other sectors in society and on the development of Japanese cuisine in the modern period. Main tray cuisine (*honzen ryōri*), which began in traditions of shogunal visitations in the Muromachi period, came to be adapted by commoners in the Edo period who found a use for a version using two trays of dishes for meals at festival banquets, weddings, and in restaurants. The basic components of *honzen* dining—rice, soup, side dishes, and pickles—comprised the typical elements of most meals in Japan until after World War II.<sup>79</sup> Commoners adopted the samurai custom of *shikisankon*, performing the drinking ceremony at weddings, and adapting it to other occasions such as when a client met a courtesan for the first time.<sup>80</sup> Rice cake soup (*ozōni*) remains a staple of traditional New Year's meals in Japan to this day, while the festival of *kajō* gave an excuse to commoners to eat sweets on the sixteenth day of the sixth month in the belief that doing so prevented disease.<sup>81</sup>

Finally, to return to the topic of cuisine raised at the beginning of this article, the evidence from the banquet for Tokugawa Iemitsu examined here helps us to recognize the complexity of dining in early modern Japan and how it could be as much a mental and artistic exercise as a sensory one. In that light, future research should examine how modern Japanese cuisine not only built upon earlier cooking techniques, but how it also drew upon older practices of signification found in early modern cuisine. Yet in the effort to isolate the elements that contributed to the national and regional cuisines in modern Japan, scholars

should not lose sight of the diversity and complexity of early modern cuisine. In contrast to modern cuisine, the early modern version was heterogeneous, but it had to be in order to resonate on so many different levels for its practitioners and consumers.

<sup>79</sup> Kumakura 2002, pp. 168–70.

<sup>80</sup> Lindsey, p. 94.

<sup>81</sup> Nakayama 1993, p. 46.