Think 53: Food Talks

Dan Jurafsky & Yoshiko Matsumoto

Eating High and Low:

Sushi and Ramen

Thursday, May 4, 2017



DATE AND TIME
Fri, May 19, 2017
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM PDT

LOCATION
Meyer Green
Escondido Mall

REGISTER HERE: www.inclusivitea.eventbrite.com

Rāmen and Sushi

Rāmen and Sushi

In the U.S.

They may be --

- Trendy or possibly “high class” food
- Still “exotic”





Rāmen and Sushi

In Japan

- Originally street food
- Consumers crossed class boundaries
- Fostered connoisseurship
  - Aestheticization, craftsmanship, ritualization
- Gendered (traditionally)
  - Cooks
  - Consumers

Rāmen

An anthropological study

Class and connoisseurship



History of Rāmen in Japan

- The exact origin is unclear, but it was brought to Japan probably between 17th C – 20th C.
- Ramen shops opened in early 20th C.
- After the WWII, low-cost wheat flour imported from the U.S made possible mass production of ramen
- In 1958, instant ramen was invented (by Momofuku Ando)

History of Rāmen in Japan

- Inexpensive, for sale at street stalls for male consumers (blue-collar workers and students)
- 1970s – aimed at middle-class women and children in supermarkets
- 1980s – rāmen became popular as “B-grade gourmet” food.
- 1996 – three former white collar workers open three fashionable rāmen shops.

Rāmen Connoisseurs

Fukutomi, S., "Rāmen Connoisseurs: Class, Gender , and the Internet," in Rath, E.C. and Assmann, S. (2010)

- "The expanding usage of the Internet in the 1990s and 2000s led to an explosion of blogs and online communities dedicated to ramen the establishment of fellowship among aficionados." (p. 271)

Rāmen and cup noodles blog rankings





Prices of Rāmen

(as of 2017)

- Instant rāmen (¥110 ≅$1.03)
- Franchised shop rāmen (¥450 ≅$4.22)
- Traditional, older shops (¥750 ≅$7.03)
- New-wave shops (¥850 ≅ $8.00)

Rāmen Connoisseurs

Fukutomi, S., "Rāmen Connoisseurs: Class, Gender , and the Internet," in Rath, E.C. and Assmann, S. (2010)

- "Practices of ramen consumption challenge the normative association of elite status with connoisseurship." (p. 255)

Rāmen Connoisseurs

Fukutomi, S., "Rāmen Connoisseurs: Class, Gender , and the Internet," in Rath, E.C. and Assmann, S. (2010)

- "Contrary to Bourdieu's (1984) argument for taste as an indication of class, rāmen represents a more diffuse subject of taste and connoisseurship through its appeal across class divides." (p. 270)
    - "Connoisseurship" – a taste for and an expert knowledge of a subject

Instant rāmen




THE MOMOFUKU ANDO
INSTANT RAMEN MUSEUM
発明記念館について
展示 / アトラクション
ご利用案内
ニュース

Menu of an older rāmen shop



Traditional rāmen shops











FEATURE

A Guide to the Regional Ramen of Japan



The characteristics of Japan's twenty established regional styles.

BY NATE SHOCKEY JANUARY 15, 2015



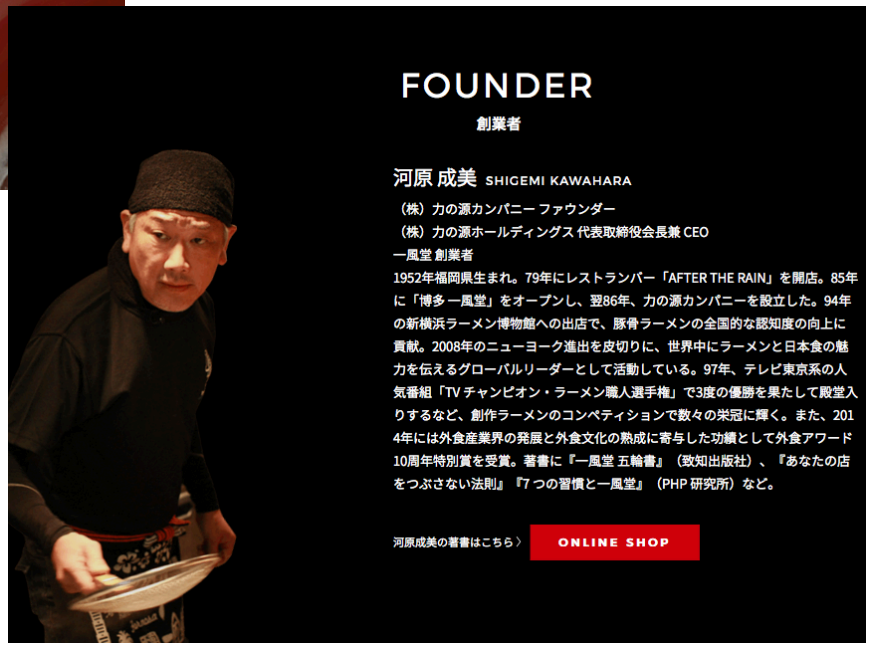
Photographs courtesy of Nate Shockey, Mark Roberts, and the Shin-Yokohama Ramen Museum

Trendy chain restaurant in Japan



Trendy chain restaurant in Japan





The same chain restaurant in New York



一風堂

IPPUDO NY

Lunch Menu

Lunch Set, additional $4. Your choice of Ramen, a Small Salad & your choice of Rice Bowl:
明太子ごはん Mentaiko (Spicy Cod Roe)* そぼろごはん Pork Soboro 鶏唐揚ごはん Chicken Karaage*
**includes mayonnaise*

RAMEN

白丸元味
SHIROMARU HAKATA CLASSIC 14
The original silky "Tonkotsu" (pork) soup noodles topped with pork loin chashu, sesame kikurage mushrooms, menma, red pickled ginger, and scallions. Topping suggestions: Nitamago 2, Shigureni 4

白丸肉入り
SHIROMARU CHASHU 17
Shiromaru Hakata Classic with extra pork chashu. Topping suggestions: Nitamago 2, Takana 3

赤丸新味
AKAMARU MODERN 14
The original silky "Tonkotsu" (pork) soup noodles topped with Ippudo's secret "Umami Dama" miso paste, pork chashu, cabbage, sesame kikurage mushrooms, scallions, and fragrant garlic oil. Topping suggestions: Nitamago 2, Takana 3

赤丸肉入り
AKAMARU CHASHU 17
Akamaru Modern with extra pork chashu. Topping suggestions: Nitamago 2, Menma 4

からか麺
KARAKA-MEN 14
The original silky "Tonkotsu" (pork) soup noodles with Ippudo's special blend of hot spices, topped with pork chashu, cabbage, sesame kikurage mushrooms, minced pork, scallions, and fragrant garlic oil. Topping suggestions: Poached egg 2, Menma 4

鶏潮ラーメン
TORISHIO 15
Ippudo's clear "Chintan" chicken and pork soup noodles topped with pork loin chashu, memma, minced shiso onion and arako chili flakes. Topping suggestions: Poached egg 2

山葵醤油ラーメン
WASABI SHOYU RAMEN 14 *Vegetarian*
Soy sauce and vegetable based noodle soup, topped with bean curd, wasabi, menma, tempura flakes, nori, scallions, and wasabi infused oil. Topping suggestions: Nitamago 2

RAMEN TOPPINGS

煮玉子	**NITAMAGO** Soft-boiled Seasoned Egg*	2
ポーチドエッグ	**POACHED EGG***	2
辛子高	**TAKANA** Pickled Mustard Leaves	3
メンマ	**MENMA** Seasoned Bamboo Shoots	4
チャーシュー	**CHASHU PORK** Extra Slices of Pork Meat	3
しぐれ煮	**SHIGURENI** Pulled Pork Chashu	4
爆弾	**BAKUDAN** Ippudo Original Spicy Paste	2

替え玉 KAE-DAMA 2

Kae-dama is a system that offers you an extra serving of noodles. When you have almost finished your first serving of noodles, order by saying "Kae-dama, please." Your server or Ramen Chef will quickly bring you another 'ball of noodles' and put it in the soup. At that time, you must have enough soup in the bowl to accommodate the new noodles; that is, you shouldn't drink too much of the soup if you are going to order the Kae-dama !

The same chain in New York

ABOUT IPPUDO

Ramen is a Microcosmos in a Bowl



Ramen is a cosmos created in a bowl. The basic broth is derived from the essence of pork, chicken, beef, or seafood, and seasoned with soy sauce, salt, miso, and other important ingredients. It's totally up to each individual chef to decide which ingredients and how much to use. Flour, eggs, kansui (an alkaline water) and other ingredients are used to make noodles. The chefs do not simply mix these ingredients together. Their own particular originality is infused into the thickness, length, form, and texture of noodles. Toppings such as yakibuta (roast pork) and ni-tamago (soy sauce flavored boild egg) are also selectively used according to the tastes, preference and individuality of the chef. Soup, noodles, and topping ? the trinity brings forth the cosmos. Ramen is quite a creative dish with infinite potential for expansion and diversity.

Ramen is Japan's Soul Food

Japanese ramen has a roughly 400-year history. At the beginning of the 20th century, expatriate Japanese from mainland China sold ramen at food stalls in Yokohama's Chinatown. This is how ramen spread to the rest of Japan. In those days, Chinese lamian (pulled noodles) was adapted to suit Japanese preferences and called Chuka Soba (Chinese noodles). A simple bowl of Chuka Soba, egg noodles in a broth made from chicken stock seasoned with soy sauce, became popular for its taste, reasonable price, and fast service. In the 1950s, Chuka Soba gradually proliferated to become the common people's taste readily enjoyed by one and all. In the meantime, ramen made its emergence through the cooking techniques used for Chuka Soba. Then it was only a matter of time until the ramen varieties flourished locally and regionally using available traditional ingredients. In the 1980s, many chefs and cooks became enchanted by the freedom and depth that ramen offered, and ramen shops started popping up one after another. These chefs stimulated, motivated and encouraged one another, to advance the rise in the Japanese ramen market. Now, one bowl of ramen has that special something that transcends all culinary ethnicities and nationalities such as Japanese, Chinese, French, Italian, and Indian. Although there are thousands of different flavors and varieties, they are all known by the collective name "ramen." Thus this Japanese soul food, ramen, was born out of each chef's individual and free, unconstrained idea and concept.

Menu of Tsuta
“Traditional” ramen shop in Tokyo





Purchase a meal ticket from a vending machine.



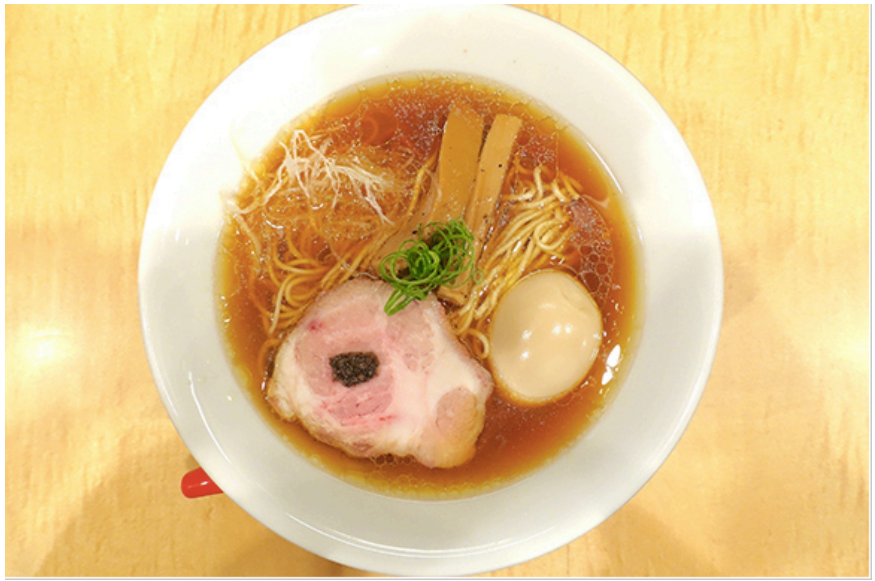
醤油そば
（黒トリュフの香り）
Shōyu soba
(Kuro toryufu no kaori)
Noodles with a soy sauce base
(The fragrance of **black truffle**)

大量の食材から抽出したダシを合わせた醤油ダレ、黒トリュフオイルを黒トリュフソースを添加し麺料理に仕上げました。

Tairyō no shokuzai kara chūshutsu shita dashi wo awaseta shōyu dare, kuro toryufu oiru to kuro toryufu sōsu wo tenka shi, menryōri ni shiagemashita.

We have made this noodle dish by combining the stock extracted from numerous ingredients with soy sauce gravy, black truffle oil and black truffle sauce.

Tsuta – Michelin One Star







Rāmen shops targeting women



ZUND-BAR (本厚木/ラーメン)

http://tabelog.com

★★★☆☆3.64 ■丹沢山系おいしい天然水を使用したスープ。あっさりした中にも言葉にできない奥深さ ■予算(夜):￥1,000～￥1,99



出典： http://ikemen.blog.so-net.ne.jp

Connoisseurship of Ramen
Tampopo (1985)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9m6FoSw4jE





Think about these questions after you read Fukutomi on Ramen Connoisseurs

- Does Johnston and Baumann's omnivorous paradigm of gourmet food apply to ramen in U.S?

- How about ramen in Japan as described by Fukutomi?

Omnivorous Frames

Johnston and Baumann (2007)

Authenticity

- Geographic specificity
- Simplicity: Homemade, small sale and the simple life
- Personal connection: Food with a face (famous chefs)
- Historicism: Food grounded in tradition

Exoticism

- Unusualness and foreignness
- Exciting food: Food that breaks norms

- Ramen in Japan
  - Authentic (craftsmanship, tradition); no longer exotic
  - Ordinary food for all
  - Inexpensive
  - B-grade “gourmet” (not served at an upscale restaurant)
  - Can be aesthetically well presented but still affordable
  - Connoisseurs are not necessarily the elite
  - … … …
- How about in other societies and cultures?
- Anything similar in the U.S?


Bar & Grill
Westport Flea Market

Sushi

Short Story– class and taste



History of Sushi– Edo/Tokyo style



- In the early 1800s, Hanaya Yohei began to serve sashimi on sushi rice (rice with vinegar) at his stall in Edo (present-day Tokyo). This was the beginning of *nigiri-zushi*.
- Sushi-stalls continued to exist until the 1950s.
- (Indoor) sushi restaurants have existed since the Meiji era (1868 – 1912) but they offered mainly delivery services.
- It is only in the Taishō (1912- 1926) period that people started to have sushi at restaurants.
- The first conveyor belt sushi restaurant appeared in the 1950s, but such establishments became ubiquitous only in the late 1970s.

Edo 1603- 1868▪**Meiji** 1868-1912▪**Taisho** 1912-1926▪**Showa** 1926-1986

Sushi Stall (Edo period)



Sushi Stall (early 20th century)



Sushi restaurant　(present)



Traditional menu



A Modern Menu



Conveyor belt sushi





The pricing at a conveyor belt sushi restaurant



The bill depends on the number and type of plates you took off the conveyor belt.

❀ ❀ ❀ Sukiyabashi Jiro



http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/jiro-dreams-of-sushi/

THE SHOPBOY'S GOD
小僧の神様

a story of class, taste and sushi

The Shopboy's God

Background

- The author : Shiga Naoya 志賀直哉 (1883 -1971)
- The story was published in 1920, i.e. Taisho era (1912-1926) right after the WWI (1914-1918)
- "Taisho modernism" – a new type of aesthetics resulting from the combination of new Western and traditional Japanese elements



The Shopboy's God

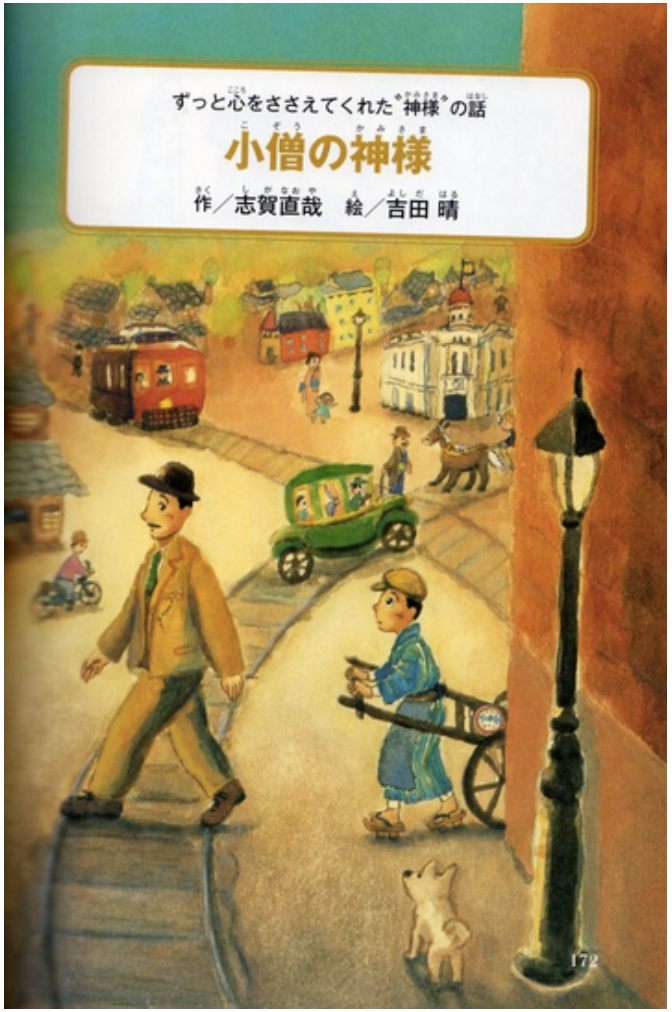
Background

- WWI led to an economic boom →
  - Emergence of the educated middle-class with disposable income to buy books, go to movies and eat out.
  - Street food sold at stalls began to be served at restaurants
- It was fashionable amongst "snobs" to eat "dangerous, lower-class food."

[Tomoko Aoyama (2000), "The Divided Appetite, Eating in the Literature of the 1920s"]

Who are in the story?

- Senkichi – Shopboy at the scale shop
- A(wano) – Member of the House of Peers
- Two clerks at the scale shop
- B(anda) – A's fellow member
- A's wife
- Proprietor of sushi stall
- Proprietor of sushi shop



- **Senkichi** overhears about new sushi shop and stall from his seniors (clerks) at the shop he works, and wants to eat sushi sometime.
- **Senkichi** comes to the sushi stall, hoping to have one piece of sushi, only to realize he cannot afford it.
- **Awano,** trying to be brave and eat sushi at the stall he heard from his friend Banda, encounter Senkichi.
- **Awano** is touched by the scene, and when he later encounters the boy, he decides to treat him to sushi.
- **Awano** takes Senkichi exactly to the sushi restaurant that the clerks talked about earlier. Senkichi eats sushi to his heart's content.
- **Awano** feels guilty about his behavior.
- **Senkichi** thinks that Awano was God, who knew his wish.

The Taste of Sushi

The taste of sushi described in the narrative:

Clerks

"The reason I mention it is, you can't eat the stuff around here."

"That's for sure."

Senkichi

"How he longed to become a clerk soon! Then, making that kind of knowledgeable remark, he could step right into such a shop any time he liked."

(p.1)

The Taste of Sushi

Clerks:

By the way, Yohei's son has opened a shop near the Matsuya. Did you know that, Ko-san?" (…)

"Oh? Is the sushi good there?"

"So they say." (…)

Senkichi, listening, thought:

So there are shops as famous as that. Then, he thought: But when they say "good," just how do they mean "good"? …he swallowed the saliva that had gathered in his mouth.

Price of sushi and who can eat sushi

- The proprietor of the sushi stall says:

"Nowadays, even sushi has gone up. It's not something for shopboys." (p. 3)

The prosperity brought by WWI triggered inflation and increased economic inequality.

Authenticity of sushi *eating*

- Banda, Awano's friend who told A about the sushi stall, commented:

"the pleasure of sushi could not be understood unless you ate it with your fingers straight from the hands that shaped it." (p.2)

→ The "authentic" sushi could only be experienced as street food.

Who are connoisseurs of sushi?

- Banda? Awano? Or neither?

A: “I noticed that everybody held it this way, the fish-side down. Is that the way to do it? (…) Why do they hold it fish-side down?”

B: “So when the fish is bad you’ll know it right away by the hot taste on your tongue.”

A: “You sound like a pretty fishy connoisseur.”

(p.3)

Substance or Form?

- "Instantly gobbling them down like a skinny, starved dog that has come upon unexpected food, **Senkichi** had three adult-sized pieces of sushi." [ym: three adult-servings of sushi]
- "Without worrying about how he looked, **Senkichi** was able to gorge himself to his heart's content." (p. 5)
- "But **he** could not remember ever having filled himself with such delicious food." (p.7)

Substance or Form?

- **Awano** is concerned with form of eating sushi
- **Senkichi** eats quickly a large quantity of sushi

Bourdieu (1984) :

"Working-class meal is characterized by plenty (…) and above all by freedom." (p. 194)

"In opposition to the free-and-easy working-class meal, the bourgeoisie is concerned to eat with all due form." (p.196)

Gender and Sushi (then)

- Awano's wife is curious about sushi from the restaurant or the stall
- Women did not go out to eat.

Sushi and Class

- Both Senkichi, the shopboy, and Awano, the member of the House of Peers, want to transcend their respective class boundaries
- Senkichi aspires to eat higher
- Awano wants to eat lower

- Awano's exploration of street food, and Senkichi's expensive meal were only momentary escapes from their every-day life-styles. These two experiences only served to reinforce their belonging to their respective class.

Sushi Today

- Times have changed.
- Sushi stalls can no longer be found in Japan, having disappeared around 1950.
- Starting in the 1970s, the new invention of the conveyor belt sushi made sushi affordable.
- Japanese now can either enjoy sushi as a delicacy in relatively expensive restaurants where a sushi master prepares high-quality sushi, or in an affordable conveyor belt sushi (*kaiten zushi*), where a plate with two pieces of sushi sells for about one dollar.

Eating High and Low Around You?

- Bunny Chow

"Hunger Games in South Africa" by ZP Dala.

-- Raising eyebrows in Durban, South Africa, with the mention of a traditional dish. *The New York Times Magazine* (April 29, 2016)

- Hamburgers
- BBQ
- Food trucks
- Ramen

Ivan Orkin

Ramen

- Chef’s table