

HISTORICAL RECEPTION OF HONG KONG-STYLE YUMCHA IN YOKOHAMA AND KOBE CHINATOWNS

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Introduction

In transnational culinary exchanges, globalization and localization often go hand in hand. (Breidenbach & Zukrigl 1999) The globalization of regional foodways often implies the application of glocalization or localization strategies. (Pieterse 2004) The American hamburger and fastfood restaurant chain McDonald's is one such example. The global homogenization theory associated with McDonaldization (Ritzer 1993) and globalization (Ritzer 2004) has been challenged by cultural anthropologists. McDonald's restaurants in major Asian cities are different in menu items, services, interior design, opening hours and management. (Watson 1997) In Japan, Japanese manners and etiquette have been used in serving and eating burgers in McDonald's. (Ohnuki-Tierney 1997) Rice, shrimp and teriyaki burger are added in the menu of McDonald's in Japan. (Ceccarini 2010: 6) Likewise, McDonald's restaurants serve Greek salad in Greek and Italian coffee in Italy (Pieterse 2004: 63) and have introduced McRice burger and Hong Kong-style milk tea in Hong Kong. (OECD 2012:21)

Chinese cuisine has been popularized and localized globally. (Roberts 2002; Jung 2015) It has been an integral part of Japanese foodways since the Meiji era (1868-1912). (Chen 2005) Yokohama Chinatown and Kobe Chinatown have been the two most important centers of Chinese cuisine in Japan. Following the influx of Cantonese migrants, Cantonese cuisine including Cantonese-style *dimsum* was introduced into these two Chinatowns in the late twentieth century. However, *yumcha* (*yamucha* in Japanese), a representative Cantonese cuisine very popular in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, only came to Japan in the 1970s. Like *yumcha* in Taiwan (Wu 2002: 86-99) and Australia (Tam 2002: 131-151), *yumcha* has been popularized and localized in Japan in the last few decades. From historical and ethnographic perspectives, this study outlines the historical reception and indigenization of Cantonese *dimsum* and Hong Kong-style *yumcha* in modern Japan, using Yokohama Chinatown and Kobe Chinatown as the main references.¹ This case study aims to deepen our understanding of the relationship between globalization and localization in transnational culinary exchanges, showing that localization is the key to culinary globalization. (Robertson 1992)

1 This study is heavily based on the fieldwork I conducted in Japan between December 2014 and December 2016. During this period, I visited Yokohama Chinatown and Kobe Chinatown five times to gather information and interview the owners and chefs of *yumcha* restaurants. I also interviewed some *dimsum* chefs in Hong Kong who previously worked in Japan.

History of *Yumcha* in Japan

Yumcha is a culinary culture originated in prewar Guangzhou and further developed in postwar Hong Kong. Hong Kong, in place of Guangzhou, became the center of *yumcha* in the postwar era, having revolutionized *yumcha* in terms of menu, service, eating habit, and etiquette.² *Yumcha* in Japan was influenced by both Guangzhou and Hong Kong. In prewar and early postwar eras, Japan only had Cantonese *dimsum*. As early as the Meiji period, Cantonese chefs (including those from Hong Kong) made *shaomai* (*shūmai* in Japanese, a steamed pork dumpling), spring roll (*harumaki* in Japanese, a crispy fried roll with meats) and steamed bun with pork (*buta manjū* in Japanese) in Chinese restaurants as appetizers or snacks. In the Taishō (1912-1926) and early Shōwa (1926-1945) periods, *dimsum* was also served at the family dining table, either from home cooking or takeaway. In the 1920s, many cookbooks on Cantonese *dimsum* were published.³ Cookbooks played a role in defining Cantonese cuisine in pre-war Japan, like what they did for contemporary India to define its national cuisine. (Appadurai 1988: 3-34) In the 1950s and 1960s, Cantonese cuisine became more popular and *dimsum* was commonly served in Chinese restaurants. However, neither *yumcha* restaurants nor menus appeared in Japan until the 1970s.

Japan experienced a Hong Kong boom in the 1970s and 1980s. (Hara 1996) The movies of Bruce Lee, the Hui brothers, and Jackie Chan created a big commotion at the box office, stimulating people's interest in and imagination about Hong Kong. Japanese tourists going to Hong Kong increased dramatically and they brought back the memories of *yumcha* to Japan. The time was right for introducing Hong Kong-style *yumcha* to Japan. The Jade Garden, the first Cantonese restaurant of the Maxim's Group in Hong Kong, sent Annie Wu Suk-ching, the daughter of the boss of the Group, to attend the Osaka World Expo 1970. She and her staff served *dimsum* in the Hong Kong Pavilion and received overwhelming responses. The Maxim's Group thus became interested in launching its food business in Japan. The Jade Garden opened a Cantonese cuisine restaurant in Shimbashi in Central Tokyo in 1977, marking the beginning of *yumcha* in Japan. At first, the Maxim's Group attempted to make everything "authentic" by sending eight *dimsum* chefs from Hong Kong and copying the menu and interior design

2 *Yumcha* in prewar Guangzhou was relatively simple. High-class teahouses served exquisite *dimsum* with good quality Chinese tea in an elegant and comfortable environment, whereas street-side food stalls sold cheap *dimsum* for the manual workers. In postwar Hong Kong, eating *dimsum* in the morning and afternoon has become a culinary culture and lifestyle. Chinese restaurants, instead of teahouses, serve as the main providers. *Yumcha* has become increasingly diversified, as street-side snacks and new dishes are added into the menu. For the transformation of *yumcha* from prewar Guangzhou to postwar Hong Kong, see Tam (1997: 294), Lee (2014: 45-48), and H. Ng (2001: 14-26). *Yumcha* in post-Mao China has been influenced by Hong Kong. (Klein:2007).

3 Examples include Yamada (1926: 97-99), Takamura (1926: 23-28), and Kasei kenkyūkai (1927: 159-160).

of the Jade Garden in Hong Kong.⁴ Japanese customers were in particular pleased to see *dimsum* trolleys. As time went by, the Jade Garden realized that it had to change some practices to fit into the Japanese eating customs. For instance, following the common practice of Chinese restaurants in Japan, *dimsum* lunch buffet (1750 yen) was added. One year later, in 1978, the first *yumcha* house locally founded in Japan, Honkon Charō (Hong Kong Tea House), was open in Kobe. Owned and run by an overseas Chinese family, it recruited *dimsum* chefs from Hong Kong.

In the 1980s, more Chinese restaurants in Yokohama, Kobe, Tokyo and Osaka offered *yumcha* service. For example, Tsui Hang Village Tea House, the first *yumcha* restaurant in Yokohama Chinatown, opened in 1982. Tōtōkyō was founded in Shibuya, Tokyo in 1980. In general, their number remained small and the prices were high. *Yumcha* was not yet a popular form of dining.⁵ The breakthrough came in the 1990s when the popularity of Hong Kong cuisine reached the apex. In the survey I conducted a random sampling of 450 Japanese in June 2015, 31% of respondents regard the 1990s as the heyday of Hong Kong cuisine in Japan (see Figure 1).⁶

When did Hong Kong Cuisine Reach Peak Popularity in Japan?

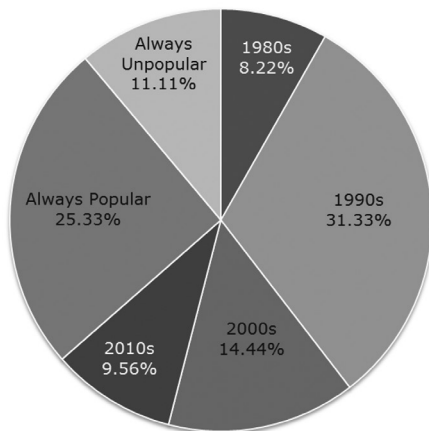


Figure 1: When did Hong Kong cuisine reach peak popularity in Japan?

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- 4 'Suienshuka' in *Asahi yūkan* (p.7), 21 June 1979. The Jade Garden closed its business in Tokyo in 2006 when the Tokyo metropolitan government took back the land for road expansion.
 - 5 During my study for a master's degree at the University of Tsukuba between 1985 and 1988, I once treated a Hong Kong friend *yumcha* in a Chinese restaurant in Tokyo. That lunch cost me about 10,000 yen. This was my only *yumcha* experience in Japan in the 1980s.
 - 6 The survey form consists of 14 questions. Of the 450 respondents, 400 replied online and 50 filled in the form. 30% are males, and 70% are females. 82% live in Japan, whereas 18% live in Hong Kong. Over 80% are in the thirties to the fifties.

In the 1990s, hundreds of Chinese restaurants serving *yumcha* mushroomed all over Japan. (Seibidō 1997) Popular *yumcha* restaurants were Jūkeisarō (since 1990, Yokohama Chinatown), Manchinrō tenshinpo (since 1993, Yokohama Chinatown) and Hong Kong Garden (1998-2006, Nishiazabu, Tokyo). The number of Japanese tourists to Hong Kong peaked at 2.38 million in 1996, a year before the handover. (Census and Statistics Department 2000: FD4) Basically all Japanese tour packages included *yumcha* in the itinerary. The popularization of multinational cuisines and the passion for exotic food in Japan in the 1990s also smoothed the way for the *yumcha* boom. (Cheung 2008) The 1990s was also the period of the globalization of Hong Kong cuisine triggered by the mass migration of Hong Kong chefs. Hundreds of Hong Kong chefs went to work in Japan and thus the quality of *yumcha* was substantially improved. (Cheung 2009: 35) Besides, the frozen *dimsum*, locally produced or imported, made *dimsum* a common menu in Chinese restaurants (such as Bamiyan), fast-food chains (such as Mister Donut) and convenience stores (such as 7-11 and Lawson). It became a lucrative business that many Japanese food manufactures jumped on the bandwagon. For business use, Syuleyka and Nissui were major suppliers.⁷ For household use, Ajinomoto, Nisshin, Heichinrō, Kōchō and Soshūrin competed with each other in the frozen food market.

Yumcha has continued to grow steadily in Japan since the 2000s and *yumcha* is widely available in major cities in Japan. Many Chinese restaurants have added *yumcha* menu. Some Hong Kong catering groups also opened seafood restaurants (Super Star Seafood Restaurant in 2000) or dessert cafes (Sweet Dynasty in 2002 and Zen in 2007) in Tokyo in the 2000s, serving Hong Kong *dimsum* for the Japanese middle-class. In 2008, the Dimsum Master Academy was founded in Tokyo, hiring more than thirty *dimsum* chiefs from Hong Kong to train local chefs. As of 13 February 2017, there are 2344 restaurants in Japan that offer *yumcha*. Tokyo alone has 827 restaurants.⁸ *Yumcha* has become an easily accessible food choice, rather than a rare exotic dining experience. According to my survey conducted in June 2015, 62% of the Japanese respondents regard *yumcha* as the most representative Hong Kong cuisine (see Figure 2). Unlike Vancouver and Sidney where Hong Kong immigrants are the main patrons of *yumcha* (Tam 2001: 65), in Japan, the size of Hong Kong sojourners is not big enough to support the *yumcha* business. In other words, *yumcha* in Japan is primarily for the Japanese.

7 Syuleyka employs chefs from Hong Kong and Taiwan, supplying frozen *dimsum* for more than three hundred restaurants in Japan.

8 See <http://tabelog.com/rstLst/RC030102/> (accessed 13 February 2017).

What is the Most Representative Hong Kong Cuisine in the Eyes of the Japanese?

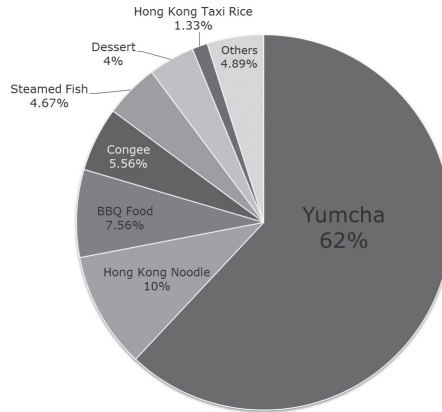


Figure 2: What is the most representative Hong Kong cuisine in the eyes of the Japanese.

History of *Dimsum* and *Yumcha* in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns

Yokohama *Chūkagai* and Kobe *Nankin-machi* are the two largest Chinatowns in Japan where food business has been the main economic activity since the 1960s.⁹ Yokohama Chinatown, the largest Chinatown in Asia, alone has more than four hundred restaurants. These two Chinatowns have become hotspots for gastro-tourism. Since the Cantonese is one the largest sub-ethnic groups in Japan's Chinatowns, Cantonese cuisine is influential. At first, Chinatowns did not have *yumcha* restaurants. Cantonese restaurants served *dimsum* (mainly *shaomai*) only as a side dish or appetizer.

Cantonese *dimsum* was introduced in the Meiji period. Chinese restaurants in Yokohama, Kobe and Nagasaki sold *shaomai* and steamed bun (*mantou* in Chinese, *manjū* in Japanese) in the Meiji and Taishō periods. In the 1920s, some Chinese restaurants in Japan changed the recipe of *shaomai* and steamed bun to accommodate local taste.

In the Meiji period, Cantonese *shaomai* was made by the chefs from Guangdong and Hong Kong in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns mainly for the Chinese workers. In 1881, Bao Tang (1855-1905), a Cantonese migrant who went to Japan via Hong Kong in 1869, opened Hakugatei in Yokohama Chinatown to serve Cantonese cuisine. The restaurant later moved to Isesakichō, a busy district just a few blocks away from the Yokohama Chinatown. His fourth son, Bao Bogong (1890?-1958), changed the recipe

9 Yokohama Chinatown used to have more diversified economic activities, but it became predominantly a gastronomic hot spot since the 1960s. (Sugawara 1988: 160).

of *shaomai* in the late 1910s by mixing shrimp and green pea with ground pork, selling it as a takeaway food. This new *shaomai* was overwhelmingly received by the Japanese and he was remembered as the father of Japanese *shūmai*. (Han 2013: 590) Another *shaomai* revolution took place in 1928 when an eatery in the Yokohama Station, Kiyōken, invited Wu Yusun, a famous Cantonese *dimsum* chef in Yokohama Chinatown, to make *shaomai*. Yusun added scallop, onion, and green pea into ground pork. Compared with the original Cantonese *shaomai*, it was mild-flavored and less fatty. The Japanese liked to dip it in soy sauce before eating. The Kiyōken *shūmai* remained delicious when it was cold. Hakugatei and Kiyōken set the standard for Japanese *shūmai*. In the postwar period, localized *shūmai* has replaced original Cantonese *shaomai* as the standard *shaomai* in Japan, served in restaurants, schools, convenience stores, on airplanes and at home. In 1967, Kiyōken introduced vacuum bag for its *shūmai*. *Shūmai* has been big in the frozen food industry in Japan since the 1960s.

Steamed bun was another *dimsum* localized in the 1920s. Chinese steamed pork bun was sold in Chinese restaurants in Yokohama Chinatown (e.g., Edosei founded in 1894) and Kobe Chinatown (e.g., Rōshōki founded in 1915) in the Meiji and Taishō periods. In 1927, Nakamura, an eatery in Shinjuku, Tokyo employed some Chinese chefs to make steamed pork bun for Japanese customers. *Chūka manjū* (or *Chūka-man*, literally Chinese steamed bun) was born. Compared to the original Chinese steamed pork bun, it was less meaty, greasy and strong-flavored. Other restaurants and food companies copied it and *Chūka manjū* was popularized nationwide in a very short time. Cookbooks and recipes on *Chūka manjū* also appeared for the convenience of housewives. (Kokuritsu eigyō kenkyūjo 1948: 7-8)

Although *shaomai* and *mantou* had been popularized and localized for a long time, Japan had no *yumcha* until the 1970s. The first *yumcha* restaurant opened in Kobe (Honkon Charō) in 1978 and Yokohama (Tsui Hang Village Teahouse) in 1982 respectively. Owned and run by Chinese residents in Japan, both restaurants hired *dimsum* chefs from Hong Kong.

In the 1980s, Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns were transformed from ethnic ghetto for Chinese workers to gourmet hotspots for domestic tourists. (Tsu 1999) Gastronomic tourism became the major economic activity. Japanese visitors went there for exotic food experiences and *yumcha* was a perfect choice. The craze for Hong Kong movies and the increase in Japanese outbound tourists to Hong Kong also triggered people's interest in *yumcha*. A Japanese guidebook on Hong Kong published in 1984 reads: 'I have heard that there are many Hong Kong people who feel uneasy and even suffer from insomnia if they do not go to *yumcha* that day.' (Kani 1984: 270) During this decade, some established Chinese restaurants in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns started their *yumcha* business, hiring *dimsum* chefs from Hong Kong. Being a relatively new culinary culture in Japan, *yumcha* became a major attraction in the two Chinatowns.

Yumcha reached its peak in Japan in the 1990s and 2000s when a large number of Chinese restaurants all over Japan offered *yumcha*. In order to maintain a competitive advantage in *yumcha*, Chinese restaurants in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns hired Hong Kong *dimsum* chefs and made their places glamorous and luxurious. For instance, in 1990, Jūkeisarō was founded in Yokohama Chinatown, hiring Hong Kong *dimsum*

chefs and serving *yumcha* set menu or buffet. In 1993, Manchinrō (since 1892), one of the oldest and most famous Chinese restaurants in Yokohama Chinatown, built a six-story *yumcha* restaurant, Manchinrō tenshinpo. It recruited seven *dimsum* chefs from Hong Kong to put in charge of *dimsum* production. In its heyday, this *yumcha* restaurant hired 19 Hong Kong chefs and 40 Japanese chefs.¹⁰

In the early 2000s, *yumcha* continued to be popular in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns. Tenten-tsunetsune kaitenbō introduced *kaiten yumcha* (*dimsum* on a conveyor belt) to Yokohama Chinatown in 2003.¹¹ At first, this new *yumcha* format was widely publicized by the media and well-received by customers. It eventually went out of business in 2011. From the late 2000s onwards, the popularity of *yumcha* has begun to fall. Such factors as the emergence of new Chinese residents (*shinkakyō*) in Yokohama Chinatown,¹² shrinking sales in Japan's eating out market, and losing interest in Hong Kong among the Japanese, have played a role in the decline.

Localization of *Yumcha* in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns

Tourism is a major force in gastronomic globalization and localization. (M. Hall and Mitchell 2002: 71-90) In the process of culinary globalization, localization is often a strategy or contributing factor. For example, McDonald's uses localization as globalization strategy in East Asia. (Watson 2006). Coca-Cola modifies its taste, ingredients, marketing strategy and safety standards to meet local needs in different parts of the world. (Foster 2008) Following the popularization of *yumcha*, the level of localization has increased accordingly. *Yumcha* in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns is highly localized to cater to the needs and preferences of Japanese customers. Targeting domestic tourists rather than foreign tourists or Chinese nationals, Chinese restaurants in the two Japanese Chinatowns have adopted some localization measures to promote their *yumcha* business. The localization of chefs and ingredients can also significantly reduce the production cost.¹³

In general, the degree of localization in Chinese restaurants in Yokohama and

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- 10 Chow Wing-shang, a Hong Kong *dimsum* chef, was invited to join Manchinrō tenshinpo in 1993. For an interview on his work experience as a *dimsum* chef in Japan, see Lee (2014: 93-104).
 - 11 Jasmine, a *yumcha* restaurant, created and launched *kaiten yumcha* in December 1997 in Shinjuku, Tokyo. It ended its business in 2001. Tenten-tsunetsune kaitenbō was inspired by Jasmine.
 - 12 New Chinese residents (*shinkakyō*) refer to Chinese migrants who came to Japan after the late 1970s. They are very different from old Chinese residents (*rōkakyō*) whose families have been in Japan for generations. (Tan & Ryū 2008)
 - 13 One has to pay about 400,000 yen a month to hire a Hong Kong *dimsum* chef. This figure is based on the interview I conducted with Mr. Tse, a *dimsum* chef who worked at the Chinese restaurant Keirin in Tokyo, 1990-1998, on 28 February 2015 in Shatin, Hong Kong. Hiring a Japanese *dimsum* chef only costs 230,000-300,000 a month.

Kobe Chinatowns is influenced by a number of factors: First, new restaurants tend to be more localized than old restaurants. Second, small restaurants tend to be more localized than big restaurants. Third, restaurants owned by the Japanese and ‘new Chinese residents’ tend to be more localized than those owned by ‘old Chinese residents.’ Fourth, low-end eateries and takeout food stalls tends to be more localized than well-established high-end restaurants. The localization of *yumcha* in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns can be seen from the following eight aspects: ordering process and consumption methods, *dimsum* dishes, ingredients, chefs, interior design, beverage, business hours and perceptions.¹⁴

First, the ordering process and consumption methods are different. In Hong Kong, the customers pay the bill based on the number and type of *dimsum* they have ordered. They usually choose their dishes from the trolleys or by marking an order sheet. Most restaurants in Hong Kong do not have a *dimsum* menu or offer a set menu. In Japan, one can hardly find a single Chinese restaurant that charges customers solely by counting the plates. A mixed format that combines a la carte, set menu and buffet is commonly used to maximize profit and offer customers dining options. A standard set *yumcha* course consists of ten dishes ranging from 1300 to 3200 yen per person, whereas a standard *yumcha* buffet offers a selection of 30-50 dishes at 2000-3000 yen per person. For instance, Shōfukumon, a *yumcha* restaurant in Yokohama Chinatown, specializes in buffet (2800 yen, 50 dishes). It also offers *yumcha* set menu (2500 yen, 10 dishes).

Second, *dimsum* dishes served in restaurants in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns are different. Some popular dishes (such as chicken feet in black bean sauce, steamed beancurd sheet roll with duck feet, pig stomach *shaomai*, steamed **beef tripe** with ginger and spring onion, etc.) in Hong Kong are missing in Japan. Mr Chow, a Hong Kong *dimsum* chef used to work at Manchinrō tenshinpo, explains: ‘The Japanese regard all internal organs, chicken leg and duck feet are unhygienic and therefore one cannot find chicken feet in black bean sauce and steamed beancurd sheet roll with duck feet in Japanese *dimsum* menu. When the customer orders soy sauce chicken, we will remove the chicken legs from the dish.’ (Lee 2014: 103) In general, *dimsum* restaurants in Chinatowns in Japan do not often offer a wide range of dishes, but they have some innovative dishes. To many Japanese, any small dish in a bamboo steamer can be called *dimsum* and thus they are less constrained by Cantonese or Hong Kong culinary traditions. New dishes founded in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns include steamed vegetable with fermented bean curd, scallop dumpling with XO sauce, deep-fried asparagus and scallop, black pepper *shaomai*, fish roe and shrimp dumpling, and shark fin steamed bun with XO sauce served in Shōfukumon and abalone steamed chicken, *shiitake* mushroom *shaomai*, shrimp rice cake, mini mooncake and fried wonton congee served in Honkon charō. Dōhatsu, a Cantonese restaurant founded in Yokohama Chinatown in 1868, created a fusion *dimsum*, French toast Malay cake that mixes Malay steamed cake and French toast together.

14 Sidney Cheung has identified the following four aspects of localization in Hong Kong-style *yumcha* in Yokohama Chinatown: the popularity of set menu, order from pictorial menu, localized taste and full-day service. (Cheung 1998: 36-37).

In Hong Kong, Chinese restaurants usually offer a wide variety of desserts, such as custard bun, Malay steamed sponge cake, white **sugar** sponge cake, black **sesame** roll, red bean cake, water chestnut cake and mini egg tart. In Japan, the choice is somewhat limited. Basically all *dimsum* restaurants in Japan serve mango pudding and almond tofu as desserts. In the imagination of the Japanese, they represent Hong Kong dessert and Chinese dessert respectively.¹⁵ As a matter of matter, very few Chinese restaurants in Hong Kong serve mango pudding and almond tofu. Like chop suey in the United States (Liu 2009:1-24), mango pudding and almond tofu have become imagined authentic Hong Kong and Chinese desserts.

The Japanese way of eating *dimsum* is not the same. In Hong Kong, people share the dishes, whereas in Japan, they have their own dishes. The Japanese have their habit of eating. For example, Hong Kong people like to dip spring roll in Worcestershire sauce, whereas the Japanese use not only Worcestershire sauce, but also soy sauce, salad dressing, citrus vinegar, spiced salt and X.O sauce.

Third, *dimsum* restaurants in Japan prefer local ingredients and seasonings. Food safety of imported Chinese foodstuffs is a growing concern among Japanese consumers. (Smith 2015: 146-187) Many *dimsum* restaurants in the two Chinatowns try to use local ingredients to meet the food safety expectation of the Japanese. Heichinrō lists the place of origins of the ingredients used in its *dimsum*. About half is from different parts of Japan, 1/3 is from China and the rest is from other parts of the world. The safety assurance certificate is issued for all imported Chinese ingredients. Using Japanese ingredients can sometimes improve the quality of the *dimsum*. For instance, Mr Tse, the *dimsum* chef of Keirin, found out that when he used Japanese glutinous rice flour and lotus seed paste to make glutinous rice dumpling, the taste became better.¹⁶ Using Japanese ingredients has been a selling point for some restaurants. Heichinrō is famous for using Japanese pork and Hokkaido's scallop to make *shaomai* and Nissin flour to make all its steamed buns. Honkon charō uses Sanda beef (Danba calf in Hyōgō Prefecture) and Kagoshima pork to make *dimsum*. Many Chinese restaurants (such as Jūkeisarōm, Kōchō and Fūkipazurō) in Yokohama Chinatown are famous for using pork from Kagoshima black pigs to make *shaomai*.

Likewise, many Chinese restaurants in Japanese Chinatowns use Japanese seasonings, such as salt, soy sauce, miso paste, and vinegar and refrain from using MSG, chemical seasonings, additives, artificial colors and preservatives. For example, Heichinrō applies no chemical seasonings, additives, artificial colors, or preservatives, to all its *dimsum*, fresh or frozen. Manchinrō also stresses that no chemical seasonings are used in its *dimsum*. The *shaomai* specialty store, Hakuga in Yokohama, has this motto: 'No chemical seasonings or additives used. It is safe for the children to eat.'

15 The association of mango pudding with Hong Kong among the Japanese can be traced to the 1990s. For instance, a Japanese guidebook on Hong Kong cuisine published in 1998 refers to mango pudding as 'the king of Hong Kong desserts.' (Hirase 1998: 15).

16 Interview with Mr. Tse was conducted on 28 February 2015 in Shatin, Hong Kong.

Fourth, Hong Kong chefs are being replaced by Japanese chefs in *yumcha* restaurants in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns. In the 1980s and 1990s, a large number of Hong Kong *dimsum* chefs were recruited to work in the two Chinatowns. Using Hong Kong *dimsum* chefs should be seen as a quality assurance rather than a symbol of uncompromising authenticity. Each Hong Kong *dimsum* chef usually supervises and trains several Japanese assistants. Mr. Chow Wing-sang, a former *dimsum* chef at Manchirō tenshinpo, recalls: 'We Hong Kong chefs took charge of all important jobs, including wrapping *shaomai* and Shanghai soup dumpling. The Japanese were asked to take care of chores, such as moving *dimsum* to the steamer and washing the ingredients.' (Lee 2014: 100) In recent years, the number of Hong Kong *dimsum* chefs in Japan has been decreasing; some have been replaced by the very Japanese disciples they trained. Manchirō tenshinpo hired 19 Hong Kong chefs and 40 Japanese chefs in the mid-1990s and now is hiring 7 Hong Kong chefs, 16 Japanese chefs and one Mainland Chinese chef. All *dimsum* chefs in Shōfukumon are Japanese. The executive chef, Takashima Ryō, is a disciple of Tam Hikoaki, a Yokohama-born Cantonese Japanese and the executive chef of Akasaka rikyū, a well-known luxurious Cantonese restaurant in Tokyo. The head chef of the *dimsum* section, Sasaki Shingo, worked under Hong Kong chefs in Suika Chinese restaurant in Yokohama Chinatown.

Fifth, *dimsum* restaurants in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns may not adopt Chinese or Hong Kong style in interior design. A typical Hong Kong restaurant is equipped with round tables with crisp white linen table clothes. This design makes changing the chairs, sharing the dishes and cleaning the table easy. In Japan, all seats are fixed, people do not usually share their meal, and the waiter cleans the table before serving the next customer. Hence, not many *dimsum* restaurants in Japan have adopted the round table design. While some *dimsum* restaurants in Tokyo look like French restaurant (e.g., Le Parc in Ebisu) or spa (e.g., Karin in Roppongi), Chinese restaurants in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns are much more conservative and down-to-earth. Older restaurants like Manchirō tenshinpo and Jūkeisarō have Hong Kong and Chinese flavors in design. New and small restaurants tend to adopt a more basic and functional design. The second floor for *yumcha* in Shōfukumon is like a *taishū shokudō* (eatery for the masses) in Japan. Long narrow wooden dining tables are used. Tenten-sunetsune kaitenbō should have turned what supposedly a *dimsum* house into the look of a conveyor belt sushi restaurant.

Sixth, drinking Chinese tea is not very important in *yumcha* restaurants in Japan. In *dimsum* restaurants in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, the first thing that customers do is to order their favorite Chinese tea. Customers have to pay 'tea money' (tea charges per person). In Japan, *dimsum* restaurants do not charge 'tea money.' If the customers do not order a pot of tea, they can have a cup of cold water or barley tea for free. If they order a pot of tea, they have to pay for it (usually 300-600 yen a teapot). Old restaurants in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns have more options for tea. For instance, Jūkeisarō has 15 kinds of Chinese tea for the customers to choose. Some restaurants pay less attention to serving tea. For example, Shōfukumon only offers three kinds of teabag, namely Jasmin, Tieguanyin and Pu-erh. Some Japanese customers drink beer, soft drink or Shaoxing wine while eating *dimsum*.

Seventh, *yumcha* is served as lunch and dinner in Japan. In Hong Kong, people have *dimsum* in the morning and noon and thus most restaurants open early in the morning. In the evening, restaurants turn to serve seafood and banquet menus. In Japan, people seldom eat out for breakfast and thus most restaurants only serve lunch and dinner. *Dimsum* restaurants usually open at 11 am and close at 10 pm, serving *yumcha* all day long. For example, Manchinrō tenshinpo is open every day, 11 am to 10 pm, serving only *dimsum*.

Eighth, *yumcha* is being perceived as a healthy food culture in Japan. *Dimsum* is not regarded as a healthy food choice in Hong Kong as most *dimsum* dishes contain a high level of calories, saturated fat and sodium. The health-conscious Japanese customers not only eat *dimsum* in a healthy way, but also associate *yumcha* with beauty and health. In my June 2015 survey, 89.34% of the respondents believe that Hong Kong cuisine is good for health (see Figure 3).

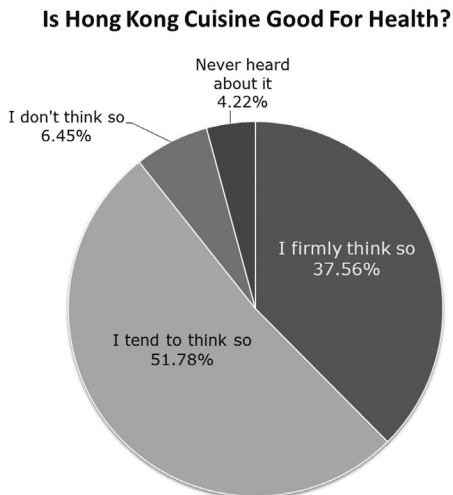


Figure 3: Is Hong Kong cuisine good for health?

Likewise, though in a less degree, 54.44% of my respondents think that Hong Kong cuisine can promote beauty (see Figure 4 over page).

The emphasis on health and beauty is influenced by the concept of *ishoku dōgen* (medicine and food share the same origin).¹⁷ Many Chinese restaurants in Japan have underlined the medical value of *dimsum* to attract female customers. Shōfukumon

17 The term was coined by the medical doctor Arai Hirohisa in 1972, although this philosophy has existed in China for a long time. As noted in a *Nikkei Plus 1* article on 23 June 2007, Dr Arai attributes the longevity of Hong Kong people to the balanced diet they take.

Is Hong Kong Cuisine Good For Beauty?

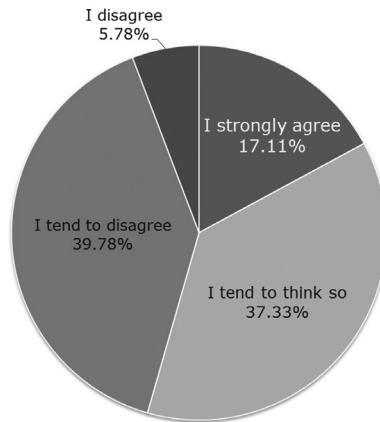


Figure 4: Is Hong Kong cuisine good for beauty?

claims that its famous shark fin dumpling can improve the skin quality. Jūkeisarō states different medical values of his Chinese tea, such as anti-aging, prevention of high blood pressure, better skin quality, quality sleep, stomach pain relief, anti-constipation, cancer prevention, diabetes prevention and diuresis. Shukō hanten (1946-2008), a Cantonese restaurant in Yokohama Chinatown, launched the 'beautiful skin dessert series', including swallow's nest, shark fin almond tofu and mango pudding. Dōhatsu recommends its jujube tea and oriental beauty tea to female customers, claiming that they can enhance health and beauty. Yōkihi Boutique and Cafe Chinois is a western-style cafe in Yokohama Chinatown serving coffee, sweets cakes and Chinese *dimsum* for female customers. Its set menu, 'Yōkihi beautiful skin *dimsum* course', is popular as customers hope that their skin would be as soft as the great beauty Yang Guifei (719-756). In sum, *dimsum* served in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns are originated in South China but remade and domesticated in Japan. The highly localized *dimsum* in Japan is very different from that in its place of origin in Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

Concluding Remarks

In the process of culinary globalization, a food item has often been adapted into different varieties. Sushi has become a global delicacy and many nations are connected in the sushi business. (Bestor 2000) Sushi menus in Hong Kong and Singapore are full of transnational imagination and local preference. (B.W-M. Ng 2001; 2006) Chinese cuisine means different things to different people. (Fernandez 2002; Hayashi 2005; Morikawa 2005) Ronald Robertson (1992: 104-105) refers to localization occurring in the process of globalization as 'the particularization of the universal'. Manuel Castells (1996: 428) also points out that 'space of places' will resist any form of globalization

that does not respect locality. The Japanese tend to turn foreign cultures into their own culture. (Tobin 1992) In the context of Japanese culinary culture, all foreign foods are subject to localization. Rossella Ceccarini (2011: 34-38) shows us how Japanese cafes have turned Italian pizza into something uniquely Japanese. Aoki Tamotsu (2001: 219-236) examines the domestication of Peking duck in Japan.

Authenticity could be compromised to fulfill local needs in running food business overseas. Like Chinese restaurants in Bulgaria preparing food in a Bulgarian style (Jung 2015: 150-169) and Chinese restaurants in the Philippines serving spring roll with peanuts and sweet and sour sauce (Fernandez 2002: 185), *yumcha* restaurants in Japan do business in a Japanese way.¹⁸ This historical and ethnographic study indicates that *yumcha* has been domesticated in Japan for about four decades. The Japanese feel at home with *yumcha*. It is now no longer an exotic and exclusive dining experience, but a culinary choice that one can consume it anytime in the “cultural supermarket”.¹⁹ Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns remain the two popular destinations for *yumcha*. A case study of the two Japanese Chinatowns shows that *yumcha* in Japan has been highly localized to suit local tastes and follow Japanese eating habits. This kind of culinary localization can be caused by both business strategy and unintentional process of cultural assimilation. The Chineseness or Hongkongness of *yumcha* is diluted and Japanese imagination is added. In the consumption of *yumcha* in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns, the Japanese will likely reinforce their stereotypes of China and Hong Kong through the lens of the tourist gaze.²⁰ *Yumcha* restaurants are not slow to satisfy the appetite and meet the expectations of Japanese customers. *Yumcha* is thus redefined, reimagined and remade in contemporary Japan.

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18 *Yumcha* in Taiwan has also undergone the process of localization, providing a good case for comparative study. *Yumcha* restaurants in Taiwan serve *dimsum* for lunch and dinner and include salad and sushi as *dimsum* dishes. (Wu 1995: 9-10)

19 ‘Cultural supermarket’ is coined by Stuart Hall who examines how individuals choose from various identities. See S. Hall (1992: 274-316). Gordon Mathews understands the formation of self and identity through consumption. (Mathews 2000)

20 ‘Tourist gaze’ is a useful concept to explain how stereotypes are reinforced in tourism. (Urry 1990). Eating *dimsum* in Yokohama and Kobe Chinatowns has the same effect on Japanese consumers in reinforcing the stereotypical images of Hong Kong.

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