Establishment Prospectus

Kikkoman Corporation has established the Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture (KIIFC) as part of the commemorative events celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of our company. The purpose of the Institute is to conduct research, promote cultural and social activities, and collect and disseminate information regarding soy sauce, a fermented seasoning.

Today's soy sauce has been adopted into various cuisines around the world. It is regarded not only as a seasoning appropriate for dishes involving the use of rice and vegetables, but also as one that is capable of accenting the characteristic flavors of a variety of food ingredients. With its unique flavor and aroma, soy sauce contributes significantly to international exchanges in food culture, as well as the internationalization of Japanese cuisine.

Mankind aspires to live each moment of each day in the most meaningful manner. To address this hope of people throughout the world, the Kikkoman Institute for Food Culture intends to pursue studies from a variety of perspectives on the constantly developing culture of fermented seasoning, and soy sauce in particular, that the future will bring. The KIIFC will examine changing values in the coming 21st century in the light of the culinary cultures of Japan and other nations.

It is our desire that the activities of the Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture will contribute in a modest way to the enrichment of food culture and the well-being of all people.

Yuzaburo Mogi
President & CEO, Kikkoman Corporation
July 30, 1999

Korean Cuisine and Food Culture

By Dr. Deson Chon
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The University of Shiga Prefecture, Dr. Deson Chon, whose family originated in Gyeongsangnam-do, South Korea, was born in Uji, Tokyo in 1953. He graduated, with a Science Doctorate, from Osaka City University. He was a professor at Korea University in Kodaira, Tokyo, and has been Research Director researching the flavor of Morangbong since 1995.

With a great interest in food culture, Dr. Chon divides his time at The University of Shiga Prefecture by also acting as visiting professor at Osaka University of Economics and Law, and as a joint researcher at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka.

The Korean Cuisine Boom

With Japan and Korea jointly hosting the 2002 World Cup, Japan is enjoying a “Korea Boom” with particular focus on the cuisine of Korea. Although neighboring countries sharing a similar lifestyle, comparison of the food cultures of the two countries shows a wide range of differences.

Upon visiting Korea, people are without a doubt impressed by the large number of dishes and large volume of food served from the Korean course menu called hanjeongsik. While this is a characteristic of the Korean cuisine, the Japanese point of view wonders, if there is too much food to be eaten, why not decrease the quantity and lower the price? The extravagant Korean course menu adheres to traditional convention by mustering rice, soup, kimchee, namuru (seasoned vegetables), chigae (a stewed dish), chima (a steamed dish), kisa (grilled dish), pokkumu (a fried dish), chourim (a boiled dish), chon (a scared dish), yakiniku (grilled meat) sets, tofu (soybean curd) sets with a variety of dishes prepared with grilled meats or tofu as base. These set menus also include so much food that it typically can’t all be eaten, and leave the impression of having eaten a splendid meal.

The presentation of the dishes has its roots with the nobles and upper classes of the Choson Dynasty. The format of presentation, generally called sans_an_harimono, is based upon the number of dishes to be served, with a different name for 3, 5, 7, 9, and 12 separate dishes. During the Choson Dynasty, the social status of a household determined the number of dishes served at meal time from a covered container called a choppu. 3 separate dishes was the norm for commoners, although wealthy commoners were permitted to serve up to 9 separate dishes. The serving of 10 dishes or more was reserved for the nobles, while the emperor’s daily menu, called naruom, consisted of 11 separate dishes.

This large quantity of dishes and the way of presenting them is influenced by the hanjeongsik tradition. The value placed on laying an extravagant table at mealtime has its roots in Confucianism, which gained a strong influence during the Choson Dynasty.

From a Buddhist Culture to a Confucian Culture

Buddhism first spread to the Korean peninsula in the fourth century. By the second half of the sixth century, Buddhism had become the state religion of the entire Korean peninsula, and the eating of meat was minimal. This near vegetarian diet continued through the first half of the thirteenth century. This food culture was changed by the Mongol invasion and lasted for the 130 years of Mongol control.

The meat-eating culture of their new nomadic rulers had a wide impact on the mostly vegetarian food culture of the followers of Buddha. Taking into account the deliciousness and the health aspects of eating the meat forbidden under Buddhism, the Korean peninsula saw a revival of the food culture
A Spoon Culture and a Chopsticks Culture, of tea and snacks were offered. Surrounding large temples tashin areas reserved for drinking tea, or taga, the monks also incorporated tea into their extravagant entertainments. They developed light snacks, called korutounpan, or tea master, from China in the seventh century, and was an indispensable part of Buddhist ceremony. Depending upon the record, it was introduced in Korea in the sixteenth century. Buddhist ministers or tea masters knew not only the effects of food on health, but the effects of food on the mind. In the monastic community, this practice of mindfulness became part of daily life.

The tea ceremony didn't stop with Buddhist rituals. In the temples, the monks also incorporated teas into their extravagant entertainments. They developed light snacks, called korutounpan, or tea master, and teas made from corn, wheat, and barley are used in households for medicinal purposes, but it seems that the negative influence of Confucianism had an effect on even the beverages of the temples.

In Confucianism, the teachings of Confucius and Mencius ex-press the belief that religion itself is not what is important, but rather impr-omance should be placed on extending the relationship between the teach-ers and pupils and the values of respect. A person's life was to be measured in terms of the successful completion of various rites of passage. With many people gathering at the various ceremonies celebrating these rites of passage, the food and drink served was very important. Therefore, mastering the art of cooking was crucial. Since the pre-presentation of the meal for these ceremonies was a cooperative effort, the style of cooking which developed was widespread. It is clear that these Confucian principles introduced in the Choson Dynasty are present even today in Korea's food culture.

Beverage Culture

With the rise of Confucianism and decline of Buddhism, the customs of drinking tea also diminished. In Korea today, you can drink coffee and all types of teas. While green tea is available, you won’t find it as readily as in Japan. Green tea was only recently introduced to Korea. Why is that?

The custom of drinking green tea was introduced with Buddhism from China in the seventh century, and was an indispensable part of Buddhist ceremony. Depending upon the record, it was introduced in Korea in the sixteenth century. Buddhist ministers or tea masters knew not only the effects of food on health, but the effects of food on the mind. In the monastic community, this practice of mindfulness became part of daily life.

Cooking and the Belief that Food and Medicine Are the Same

At the root of Korean cooking is the idea that food has medicinal properties. Koreans recognize medicinal properties in a variety of foods and beverages such as fruits, seasonings and spices, kochujang, mineral water and liquors. This strong belief in the positive and negative effects based on the belief in the natural powers of yin and yang, and the five elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water of foods has contributed to the production and spread of Confucianism. This belief extends from the belief that, as humans are products of nature, it is necessary that we absorb and depend on nature's blessings. Positive and negative is realized by the workings of the five elements. Within this belief, health is achieved by including natural green, red-, yellow-, white-, and black-colored (representative of the 5 elements) ingredients in equal amounts in the diet. The expression of these beliefs in cooking can still be seen in the modern Korean diet. The balance and comple-mentation of these beliefs is obvious in pippinpapu or mixed rice. It is often served at yakiniku restaurants, where it is called Yakiniku, and consists of meat, fish, and vegetables cooked and served on top of rice. It is a dish which clearly displays all five of the elemental colors. In summary, healthy eating means that with each meal, all gifts of nature should be included.

Another popular dish in Korea is called jukgoreum (see photo). This dish is made from a fish stock and includes a variety of vegetables, this single dish is very nutritious. This dish cannot be eaten with chopsticks.

A Spoon Culture and a Chopsticks Culture

Spoons and chopsticks are used together on the Korean peninsula. Rice is served with and soups and broths are eaten with a spoon. Chopsticks are used only for eating solid foods. In short, soups take on the leading role with chopsticks playing a supporting role at Korean mealtime. Spoons are placed directly in front of each person at the dining table, while chopsticks are used to eat soups. The meal starts by grabbing the spoon, tasting the soup, tasting the water "juice" from the bowl. This bowl is empty of rice. From the this way of eating is completely different in Japan where chopsticks are used, quite unexpectedly, most people don’t notice the difference.

A wide range of differences between a spoon culture, which uses spoons as the main utensil, and a chopsticks culture, which utilizes chopsticks as the main utensil, is visible. There is a relationship to the size of serving dishes. When eating rice with a spoon, the bowl or plate does not have to be small enough to hold. While simply support-ing the bowl or plate with the left hand, rice is scooped up with the spoon and brought to the mouth. Because of this, it is considered a good manner to hold dishes while eating.

In Japan, where chopsticks are the main utensil for eating, it is very easy to spill food on the way from the dish to the mouth. Therefore, the dish is held close to the mouth with the left hand while eating. Since the dish must be light and small enough to hold, the quantity of rice is decreased, making second and third helpings necessary. Until quite recently, the spoon culture of the Korean peninsula used large metal dishes to serve large quantities of food. Since so many helpings were necessary, the main focus was actually required that some food be left over. With recent improve-ments in lifestyle, the old formalities have disappeared with the dishes becoming smaller, the habit of leaving food uneaten has faded, and asking for a second helping is now permissible. Not unexpectedly, old customs and manners can still be seen among many elderly people.

In comparing Japan's chopsticks culture with Korean spoon cul-ture, the prevalence of royal dishes is evident. While many types of rice and grieved dishes are available. These gruels are not limited to plain white-rice gruels, but also include those made by including meats, fish, and vegetables. This variety has been expanded because of the use of chopsticks.

One Korean dish, which combines rice and soup is called Japppu-ju, though it is not a gruel, and is eaten with a spoon. As the soup is made from a fish stock and includes a variety of vegetables, this single dish is very nutritious. This dish cannot be eaten with chopsticks.
The sterilizing powers of alicin, a component of garlic, also acts as a

where kimchee originated, the use of garlic is undeniably linked to both the flavor and value of kimchee.

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Another important seasoning in Korea is garlic. Though garlic is a

tonchimi.

The Value of Kimchee

Kimchee has made a sudden and dramatic advance into Japan. Consumption in 2001 was 320,000 tons, making it the most popular in the pickled-food industry. Though kimchee has been ranked number one in the consumption among pickled foods since 1996, actual consumption over those five years has increased by 300%. This is proof that not only is kimchee popular among Japanese consumers, but also proof that the high value of adding kimchee to the diet is well recognized. Kimchee, with its incredible value, has long maintained the health aspect of the diet of those living on the Korean peninsula.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century, red pepper-miso began to be used in Korea. Previously, shiso, or miso containing Japanese pepper was available. Since the substitution of Japanese pepper with red pepper was first recorded in the region known for this miso production, the process spread across the peninsula. This is the origin of today's red pepper-miso, known as kochujan. Used for flavoring in all types of dishes, kochujan is an invaluable condiment. It can be said that the use of this spicy and general purpose condiment contributed to the general spiciness of Korean cuisine.

With the establishment of a meat-eating culture came the use of a

An early winter morning... Chinese cabbage to be used for kimchee awaiting shipment

The Developers of Kimchee's Flavor

This new process had a dramatic effect on the way kimchee was made as well as its flavor. Previously, with only salt and a small amount of seasonings used, the chief flavor was salty, slightly spicy, and with the acidic taste of fermentation. It was a very simple fla-

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Another important seasoning in Korea is garlic. Though garlic is

A Red Pepper and Pickles Culture

The introduction of red pepper was a revolution in the pickling process, as well as in the making of kimchee. Red pepper played a large role in broadening the variety of kimchee dishes which previ-

Capsaicin, the component which makes red pepper spicy, acts as a food preservative. Not limited to red pepper, this quality can also be found in other "hot" foods such as Japanese pepper, black pepper, wasabi, garlic, mustard, and ginger. Though we tend to think of the use of such foods in cooking as being meant to improve flavor, it is thought that the original purpose was based on the need for a food preservative. Before red pepper was used in kimchee, such spicy ingredients such as Japanese pepper, mustard and garlic were used in the pickling of vegetables for the purpose of preservation.

Not only were the preservative qualities of red pepper an incen-
tive for its use in vegetable pickling, but the red color also played a large part. The vivid contrast between the color of the red pepper and the greens, blues, and whites of vegetables made the dishes that much more appealing. New variations can also be created by mix-
ing red peppers with garlic.

Spiciness and saltiness combine to make a good balance. With the use of spices a salty flavor becomes milder. Since spiciness tends to be more noticeable than saltiness, we notice the salty flavor less and the typically simple flavor of pickled dishes broadens into a complex combination of flavors. A decrease in the amount of salt with an increase in the flavor of pickled dishes was made possible by the introduction of red pepper.

Kimchee dishes incorporating seasonings and garnishes be-
gan to be added to the previously wetty kimchee dishes such as tomchimi and muerakimchee. With the process of removing the wa-
ter from vegetables with salt and pickling with spices, the Chinese cabbage kimchee that we see so often today was able to make its debut. The application of seasonings such as powdered red pepper, garlic, salted fish organs, and minced fruits between the large leaves began at the same time as the standard Chinese cabbage kimchee was developed.

The Value of Kimchee

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A group of housewives washing Chinese cabbage for use in kimchee

Another aspect which lends depth to the flavors of kimchee is the variety of salt. Surrounded by the sea on three sides, the cuisine of the Korean peninsula includes a variety of salted fish organs. As a food which is preserved in large quantities, it is often mixed with pickled vegetables. The Capsaïsin found in red pepper is thought to be the ingredient which made the combination of vegetable pickles and animal-product pickles possible. Salted fish organs contain far, Capsaïsin, however, prevents those fats from spoiling when the foods are kept for a period of time. Therefore, the inclusion of salted fish organs in pickled dishes adds to the variety of kimchee dishes.

Another important aspect of the Korean Peninsula is the use of spices with salt as seasoning. The model for this is certainly the pickeled dish known as kimchee.

The use of red pepper was first recorded in the year 1614 when it was brought from Japan and known as "Japanese pepper." Therefore, it cannot be said that the use of red pepper is an ancient tradi-
tion. First thought to be a poison because of the death of some people who drank a mixture of pepper and shochu liquor, it was considered dangerous. It took one hundred years for these negative ideas about red pepper to change. The cultivation of red pepper as a crop was first recorded in a 1715 publication, while the first re-
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