

Special issue: Exploring the Path of Soy Sauce (part 1)

Illusive Soy Sauce Discovered at Xishuangbanna

In search of the roots from China to the Thai interior

Xishuangbanna, or Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, is located at the southernmost tip of Yunnan Province near the borders of Myanmar and Laos and is populated by more than ten nationalities including the Dai, Hani, Jinuo and the Bulang.



Kosaburo Arashiyama

Mr. Arashiyama was born in Tokyo in 1942. Formerly Chief Editor for Heibonsha Taiyo, Mr. Arashiyama has authored many essays, including the fairy tale *Pikki to Pokki*, *Chuusan Kaikyū no Tomo*, *Shinzuiso Futsuu no Chimatsuri*, *Otoko and Seken* and novels including *Kuchibue no Uta ga Kikoeru*, *Koiyokocho Koikoyomi* and *Kenko Satsujin Hisho* unlimited in length and breadth. Mr. Arashiyama's cookbook titled *Shiroto Hochoki* was recipient of the fourth Kodansha Ltd. Essay Prize.

Map of Xishuangbanna and neighboring countries



Introduction

Prior to the introduction of soy sauce to Japanese cooking, salt and vinegar were the primary seasonings. Basically, soy sauce is created when salt is added to the malt formed from the combination of soybeans and wheat. *Miso* is the original combination of soybeans and wheat, while the *tamari* that forms on top of the *miso* is the basic ingredient used in soy sauce. Depending upon the way the soy sauce is to be used either the basic *tamari* itself, a heavy blend, or a light blend creates three general varieties of soy sauce.

While it is generally assumed that rice is the primary food in the Japanese diet, it can also be said that soy sauce is a primary component. The Japanese enjoy the delicate flavor of soy sauce in a boundless number of dishes including *sashimi* and *sushi*, *tempura*, *sukiyaki*, broiled fish, *natto*, seaweeds, *mochi*, *yakitori* and countless other common and specialty dishes. The Japanese have also found that the addition of soy sauce to western dishes such as steak and hamburger, and even French cuisine suits their taste. Quite simply, the Japanese cannot imagine a life without soy sauce.

Soy sauce is not limited to Japanese cuisine but rather, has become a seasoning used widely throughout the world. Soy sauce is used to delicately flavor many French dishes, though the Japanese tend to notice the flavor of the soy sauce right away. Though at one time, Americans described Japanese immigrants in a derogatory fashion as smelling like soy sauce, this same soy sauce has become a common seasoning in the U.S. as well.

If soy sauce is the god of flavor, then each drop of soy sauce contains the essence of that god. When and from where did this formidable seasoning find its way to Japan? This essay covers information gathered from all over Asia to discover the origins of soy sauce.

To the Origin of the Mother of Soy Sauce

In an 18th century French encyclopedia compiled by 264 authors and edited by Diderot and d' Alembert, the following is stated under the "*SOU* or *SOI* (cooking terminology)" listing for soy sauce.

A type of sauce used in cooking by the Japanese and popular throughout Asia. The Dutch, placing a high value on the sauce, brought it back to Holland. An extract or juice suited to meats, especially game hen and ham. Made from blending the extract of mushrooms, large amounts of salt, pepper and ginger in



The cover of an 18th century French encyclopedia

different quantities to produce heavier sauces that require little or no preservation. When the extract is stored for extended periods in a sealed pot, a small amount mixed with more common types of juices increases both preservation qualities as well as flavor. The Chinese also produce soy sauce, but the Japanese types are considered superior, as the flavor of Japanese meat dishes are far more delicious than Chinese meat dishes.

The phrase "...the Japanese types are considered superior..." leaves one wondering to which variety of soy sauce they were referring. The French description of soy sauce as a juice or extract clearly refers to the *tamari* extracted from the *miso*. Since *miso* unmistakably originated in China, it seems strange that the authors of this encyclopedia would not recognize the fact that soy sauce then must also have originated in China.

The Soy Sauce Road—Shanghai, Hangzhou, Jing Shan Si

Located at the mouth of the Yangtze River, Shanghai has long been China's window to the world. Though the position of the port differs today, Shanghai has prospered as China's base for international trade since the time of the Tang (ad 618—907) and Song (ad 960—1279) dynasties. During this time, Shanghai was



A free market in China. A large variety of stalls line both sides of the street.

also the point of entry for many Japanese Buddhist priests who, upon returning to Japan, introduced a variety of continental cultural traditions. One of these, the novice priest Kanshin, who ventured into Hangzhou, introduced Jing Shan Si *miso* to Japan.

In terms of population, Shanghai ranks number one in the world with 16,000,000 residents. Therefore, food is naturally a primary concern. With the oldest “food history” in the world, the cuisine of Shanghai is the pride of China, and soy sauce is a basic ingredient in its dishes.

The fact that the people of Shanghai greet each other with “Have you finished eating?” rather than a more standard greeting is typical of a people with the oldest food culture in the world.

Supporting the lifestyles of the people of Shanghai are the many markets with stalls selling spring rolls and steamed dumplings lining the street. Stuffed with shrimp, fish, crab and vegetables, both are dipped in soy sauce before eating. Other well-known Shanghai dishes are named depending upon the amount of soy sauce used in preparing them. The traditional red color of Shanghai cuisine comes from soy sauce. Meat dishes containing a large quantity of soy sauce are known as “red” while dishes with a small amount of soy sauce are known as “white.” In all forms of Chinese cuisine, there can never be enough variations in the color, aroma, or flavor of soy sauces for seasoning.



Chinese soy sauce. The aroma of soybeans and the flavor are both strong.

I ventured to Hangzhou in search of the Jing Shan Si *miso* considered the origin of Japanese soy sauce. Though Jing Shan Si *miso* can still be found with diligent searching in Japan, I failed to find it in the markets of Hangzhou. This region, located in a Yangtze River basin, produces a wide variety of processed soybean prod-



A Chinese soy sauce factory. Ingredients are placed in these specialized pots and left to ferment for eight months.

ucts and barrels containing these products overflow in the markets. Jing Shan Si *miso*, however, was not one of the products sold. After writing the characters for Jing Shan Si *miso* and asking anyone who would listen in my very limited Chinese, an elderly person finally informed me that I should be looking at a soy sauce shop.

I found a large soy sauce shop at the riverbank. This shop boasted a tremendous variety of salted fermented foods made from an equally wide variety of ingredients, each with its own individual flavor. In this country with its food culture based on fermented foods, including soy sauce, there are four major categories of fermented foods divided in terms of ingredients and method of production. The four types can be described as pickled vegetables, soybeans and other beans (*miso* and soy sauce fall into this category), fish and shellfish, and meats including beef and pork.

ry), fish and shellfish, and meats including beef and pork. Soy sauce shops such as this one, so old that no one can remember when or how they began, are thought to have begun the tradition of food fermentation by adding salt with its natural preservative qualities to foods. From ancient times, soy sauce has been used not only as a preservative, but also as a seasoning in China.

Jing Shan Si, the Origin of Japanese Soy Sauce

Jing Shan Si, located in the mountains to the west of West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, is the temple rich in history where many Japanese priests, including Kanshin ventured to study Buddhism. Today however, few people know of this temple, and I was forced to ask a bamboo cutter familiar with the area to be my guide to the temple.

Climbing the mountains daily to cut bamboo, my guide was a good walker and keeping up with him was a challenge. Just as I began having trouble breathing, my tireless guide called out and pointed. It seemed that we had reached the first gate to the temple, though no sign of the gate remained. Since we had reached the first gate, I gathered my strength for the last climb to the temple itself.

Once again my guide called out and pointed. Standing in a thicket was the temple’s vermilion-lacquered bell tower. After climbing for three hours and feeling a great sense of achievement at having reached the home of Japanese soy sauce, I felt a great rush of disappointment at finding that the only remnant of Jing Shan Si was the vermilion bell tower and a single bronze incense burner standing just in front of where the main hall had stood.

Unable to get any clue to Japan’s introduction to soy sauce from the remains of Jing Shan Si, I remembered what I had been told at the soy sauce shop in Hangzhou. “There is a place in Yunnan that still makes *miso* and soy sauce in the old way.” Since Yunnan is also the origin of Japanese culture, I eagerly decided to make my way there.

A Journey by Train Across China to Kunming

Though air travel is possible throughout China, I felt that in making such a long journey, the only way to really feel the vastness, experience the history and see the landscapes of my dreams was to travel by train. The rails carried me 1,100km through 427 tunnels, over 653 trestles, and allowed me to feel the energy of 1,300,000,000 people.

Even on this train, where I was permitted to peek into the kitchen of the dining car, I could see that soy sauce is a very basic and necessary ingredient to the dishes served. Though western foods such as bread and dishes including omelets were served, I chose to stick to traditional Chinese dishes. I was able to make out the menu as soon as I realized that the names of the dishes, though written entirely in Chinese characters, basically described the ingredients, the way they were cut and the seasonings used.

Illusive Soy Sauce Discovered at Xishuangbanna

In searching for the roots of Japanese soy sauce, I found myself following a maze. I began in the border region of Xishuangbanna. I flew in a propeller-engine plane to Simao airport in Yunnan Province’s subtropical zone and then hopped aboard a bus for the 11-hour ride to Jinghong at the heart of the Xishuangbanna region. The mountain road to Xishuangbanna lies in a forest of broad-leaf trees resembling oak or camellia.

This forest is said to extend from the Himalayas to the Yangtze River delta, encompassing an area the size of the western half of Japan. In this region with environmental similarities to the region covering southeast to eastern Asia, the food culture is comparable. For example, *natto* or



Crab soy sauce paste. This paste is made with crushed fresh-water crab.



A variety of soy sauces are sold in Jinghong, the heart of Xishuangbanna. The paste-like soy sauce is sold in quantities wrapped in banana leaves.

fermented soybeans can be found throughout Yunnan Province just as they are found in the mountainous regions of Thailand and Indonesia. If we list characteristics of the food cultures of such regions around the world we find that all include the following:

1. Techniques involving production of malted alcoholic beverages
2. Tea leaves used as both food and drink
3. A fondness for very sticky foods such as *natto* (fermented soy beans) and *mochi* (sticky rice cakes)
4. Heavily salted for preservation purposes, fish products (both meat and organs) are common
5. Mixtures of fish and rice are pickled with salt

Looking at this list, it is easy to see that the food cultures of these regions include a wide variety of fermented foods. Fermented foods were originally developed because they could be stored for long periods of time even in the high temperatures of the subtropical belt. The people of these regions, however, developed the foods to increase both variety and flavor while maintaining the preservation qualities.

Though it is said that soybeans, the basic ingredient of soy sauce, originated in northeastern China, this is difficult to believe. Had soybeans originated in that region, the use of soybeans should be most diverse in that part of China. However, we see much more variety in the dishes and uses of soybeans and soy products in southern parts of China, particularly in Fukien and Guangdong. Though the actual origin remains unclear, the secret seems to lie in the wide variety of processed soy products in this subtropical region where fermented foods, including *miso* and soy sauce were developed.

Upon entering Jinghong at the heart of Xishuangbanna, I found people, lifestyles and villages more similar to those of Thailand than China. Located at the southernmost tip of Yunnan Province on the borders of Myanmar and Laos, the women of the various tribes, including Dai, Hani, Jinuo and Bulang dress in vivid blues, reds and yellows. The villages of the many tribes are most frequent around Jinghong in a delta of the Mekong River. By traveling farther up the Mekong and deeper into the forests, the villages become fewer and fewer and the ways of life more and more ancient. In my search for the origins, as well as the original methods of production of Japanese *miso* and soy sauce I crossed the Mekong and headed for a Dai village.

The women of the Dai are tireless in their work. From farming to the more traditional work of women, they work from morning to night. One friendly woman let me watch as she made preserved foods, even allowing me into her home. I was surprised to learn that the large majority of her food processing included the same tech-

niques used in making soy sauce. I asked the woman whether she had any of the processed soybeans used for making soy sauce. She informed me that though the Dai used *miso* and soy sauce for seasoning and that until her mother’s generation they had made both *miso* and soy sauce by hand, these days both were generally purchased in Jinghong. Handmade soy sauce had disappeared from Xishuangbanna. The woman told me that the Hani processed soybeans for use in a product that was neither *miso* nor soy sauce. Interested in finding out what this might be, I boarded a boat for a 30km ride down the Mekong to a Hani village on the Myanmar border.

Arriving in the Hani village, my interpreter introduced me to another very kind woman who invited us over to the hearth from which she removed something resembling a round Japanese cracker. Was this the mysterious soybean product which is neither *miso* nor soy sauce? It certainly smelled like soybeans. When I asked if they ate this “cracker,” the woman laughed at me and began cooking. First, using long chopsticks, she heated the “cracker” in the hearth. Next, she combined the warmed “cracker” with salt, finely chopped red pepper and an aromatic herb-like grass in a mortar. Finally, she poured the mixture into a bowl and then added hot water and offered it to me. With the first sip, I unthinkingly exclaimed “*Miso* soup!” in Japanese. What I found myself drinking was very similar to *natto miso* soup so common in Japan. The “cracker” that the woman had first shown me was, therefore, *natto* shaped into a sort of dumpling and hardened by heating. By processing the soybeans in this way, the hardened *natto* dumpling could be stored for a long period of time. It could be combined with hot water to make soup or added to other dishes as seasoning. Using gestures to communicate, the kind woman showed me in detail how to make the hardened *natto*. The method was very similar to that used by Japanese farmers until quite recently in making balls of *miso*. There must be a connection!

The *miso* soup I discovered in Xishuangbanna shattered my belief that the flavor of *miso* soup was purely Japanese. Though the addition of red pepper, a comparably small amount of salt, prevalence of the flavor of the soybeans due to short-term fermentation, and a much thicker consistency made the Hani *miso* soup differ slightly from Japanese *miso* soup, I had definitely found signs of the “illusive homemade soy sauce.” With new hope, I continued my journey through the tribal villages of the Mekong River.

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Illusive Homemade Soy Sauce

My interpreter and guide, after inquiring at house after house, found the illusive homemade soy sauce for me. In a village 40km along the Mekong, it seemed that the prettiest woman in the village would show me how the homemade soy sauce was made. First, the woman removed the lid of a pot containing a dark brown liquid. Upon tasting the liquid, I discovered that it was soy sauce.



The people of Xishuangbanna make wide use of both *miso* and soy sauce.

Sun-drying *momi* in Xishuangbanna. There is clearly a connection between rice and soy cultures.



Though the soybean aroma was stronger than that of Japanese soy sauce, and the flavor much sharper, this was definitely soy sauce. The woman told me that although she clearly couldn't show me the entire process, she could show me the first steps in processing the soybeans for the production of soy sauce.

The base product from which the *tamari* is extracted for making soy sauce is made in much the same manner as the hardened *natto* made by the Hani without the final roasting. The mysterious process for making handmade soy sauce is a very involved process requiring a long period of fermentation. Discovering the method for making soy sauce by hand left me wondering when and who had thought up this puzzling and elaborate process.

A book on agriculture published in China in approximately ad 450 covers a wide variety of farming, cooking, distilling and fermenting techniques. The process for making soy sauce is also detailed in this book considered proof of the highly developed culture existing in China at the time. The method for making soy sauce by hand in Xishuangbanna is in no way inferior to the method described in the ancient book. Finally, I had discovered the "illusive handmade soy sauce" of Xishuangbanna. As culture seems to have flowed along the Mekong over the mountains into Myanmar and Laos, I found myself wondering whether the process for making soy sauce by hand had also traveled into the mountainous region of Thailand. Though I wanted very much to head to Thailand, I decided to continue my search for the origins of soy sauce in Korea.

Korea—Bridging Continental Culture

The written word for soy sauce first occurs in Japanese history in the first year of the Taiho era (ad 701) under Emperor Mommu's reign when the Fujiwara clan established the "Taiho Laws." As this is when feudal states were first established and organized, it is said that the word was used by those who studied *Shurai*, an ancient Chinese book. *Shurai* describes 120 uses for soy sauce, but in Japan at the time soy sauce was collected in place of rice as a tax to pay the salaries of officials. Later in the Nara Period, the character for soy sauce appears often in written records in the form of wooden tables, indicating that soy sauce had become a common product in the lives of even the general public.

Although the establishment Taiho Laws followed *Shurai* by 1,300 years, it seems that there were quite a large number of people in Japan who had seen the written word for soy sauce. In ad 360 the emperor Ojin received ten scrolls of the "Analects of Confucius" from a messenger of the ruler of the P'aekche kingdom on the Korean peninsula. A phrase in the "Analects of Confucius" say that "...one should not eat without soy sauce." In an encyclopedia of *miso* and soy sauce published by Kawamura, the envoy who brought the "Analects of Confucius" to Japan was a scholar and lecturer, said to have descended from royalty himself, widely respected by the royalty and nobility of the P'aekche kingdom and familiar with the 120 uses of soy sauce as described in *Shurai*. It is said that Japan was established as a state by the Yamato Imperial Court under the emperor Ojin. Therefore, it can also be said that the word soy sauce has been with Japan since its original unification.

From the Asuka and Hakuho Periods and into the Nara Period, the word for soy sauce can be seen in many records and literature. In the eighth year of the Tempyo-shoho Era (ad 756), the treasure house at Todaiji Temple in Nara was completed. Among the relics stored there were ancient documents of the emperor Shomu. In these documents and others from the Heian Period we find other forms of the characters for soy sauce recorded. One of the common forms of writing soy sauce during the Heian Period seems to refer to the path which soy sauce and the culture associated with it followed through the Korean peninsula in making its way to Japan.

There are two opposing explanations for the introduction of the rice-paddy form of cultivation and other aspects of continental culture to Japan. One explanation is that this culture was introduced



A Hani woman washes Chinese cabbage to be used in *kimchi*.

from the north, while the other supposes that the culture was introduced from the south. The first explanation is that the culture and lifestyle developed in the Yellow River basin in the north-east of China and moved down the Korean peninsula from where it was introduced into Japan.

The second explanation is that the culture developed in southern China, moved towards the sea and followed the Japan Current west to Kyushu. Though it is difficult to determine which presumption has more merit, the variations on the characters used in writing soy sauce during early eras tends to support the theory that continental culture was introduced to Japan via the Korean peninsula.

Miso and Soy Sauce in Korean Cuisine

In what ways are *miso* and soy sauce used in Korea? I decided to look through the Namdaemun market, known as the "source of Seoul's energy." At the market wide varieties of peppers and *miso* used to make *kimchi* are sold, as is bottled soy sauce and even the Korean version of *tamari* extracted from a processed soybean concoction, or *miso*, and used to make soy sauce. Though we often think of garlic and red pepper as being the most common seasonings in Korean cuisine, in fact, the seasonings at the heart of all Korean cuisine are soy sauce and *gochu jang* (*miso* which has had powdered red peppers added). Depending upon the type of dish, garlic, sesame oil, powdered red pepper, ginger and other spices may be added, but only soy sauce and *miso* can be said to season almost all dishes. When I tasted the soy sauce, I found a clear soybean flavor with a lot of body, but with a different flavor than that of Japanese soy sauce. Saltier than the soy sauce found in Japan, the flavor was almost that of a "young" soy sauce that hadn't fully ripened.

In Korean cooking, soy sauce is rarely used "as is." Rather, other ingredients such as *miso*, garlic, *gochu jang*, onions and red pepper are combined with soy sauce into an all-around useful seasoning. In Korea, with its long tradition of processed soybeans, soy sauce holds a very high position among seasonings. In dishes prepared for religious ceremonies, soy sauce and sesame oil are the only seasonings permitted. It is said that the use of other seasonings that we often associate with Korean cuisine such as red pepper, garlic, ginger and salt seems to be forbidden in dishes served at such ceremonies.

So, how is this all-purpose seasoning used to season Korean dishes? I went to a common restaurant to find out. If we think of Korean cuisine in general, the first type of dish that comes to mind is, of course, *yakiniku* (grilled meat). Within the general heading of *yakiniku* there is a wide variety of dishes depending upon the type and cut of meat used, as well as the way the meat is grilled. I decided to try the traditional Korean *yakiniku* dish which, though always on the menu of high-class restaurants, can sometimes be found in more common restaurants. First the raw meat, which had been basted with a seasoned sauce, was brought out. The meat had been beaten to tenderize it and then sliced into very small pieces. The seasoning in which the meat had been basted was the same concoction mentioned above. This particular combination seemed to be a blend of soy sauce and *miso*. It seems that every restaurant has its own particular blend for this seasoning. When onions and garlic are added, the flavor becomes quite distinct. For *yakiniku*, this distinctive seasoning paste is placed in the center portion of a specialized pot, called a Genghis Khan pot, with other seasoning sauces and then vegetables and *harusame* noodles are boiled in the mixture. The finished dish resembles Japanese *sukiyaki* more than what we normally consider *yakiniku*. The meat is very tender and

the flavor of the vegetables is absorbed by the other ingredients. The sweetness of the flavoring sauce suits the entire dish well. The flavor can be adjusted by adding some of the *gochu jang* that is available at every table, or by asking for soy sauce. Finally, after the meat and vegetables have been eaten and only the soup remains, buckwheat noodles are added and boiled in the soup. The noodles can be made spicy and the flavor improved by adding *gochu jang* to the soup as it boils.

In this way, soy sauce and *miso* have become necessary ingredients in Korean cuisine. Homemade soy sauce does exist in Korea today, and can be found in almost every home in country villages. Having discovered homemade soy sauce, I continue my journey to the north to a farming village in Gangwon Province.

Soy Sauce made from Miso Dama

I arrived in the elegant city of Kangnung, located on the coast approximately 200km east of Seoul. From Kangnung, I traveled approximately 10km north to a quiet farming village where the houses still have thatched roofs. Immediately upon arriving in this small village where it is said that soy sauce and *miso* are made by hand, my guide, a university student from Seoul, went in search of a home where the raw ingredients for *miso* and soy sauce were made by hand.

The basic raw ingredient for Korean *miso* and soy sauce is *miso dama*; water-soaked and softened soybeans which are crushed into tiny balls. A very small woman invited us into her earthen-floor kitchen where two pots were hung over the cooking stove. First, the woman removed boiled soybeans from a pot, placed them in a bowl and carried them outside where she placed them in a mortar and crushed them with a very fine pestle until they reached an almost sticky consistency. Next, she placed the bean paste back in the bowl and took it to her veranda where a wooden frame covered with layered oil-paper and white cloth was waiting. This first step in making *miso* and soy sauce by hand was completed when she used the frame to strain the bean paste through the cloth. The resulting paste is then bound up tightly in straw and hung from the ceiling inside the house to ferment for two to three weeks. After that the mixture is dried and matured for approximately one month on a special shelf in the barn to complete the process of making *miso dama*.

I asked the woman how *miso dama* was used to make soy sauce. She took me to the special shelf in the barn and removed a brick-like object. It looked like *miso dama* that had been cut and laid out and was very dry with a black mold growing on it. This natural black mold is the determining factor in



Pots for fermenting soy sauce lined up in this yard.

making soy sauce and *miso*. The woman placed the dried *miso dama* in water and washed the mold off the surface with a brush. Next, she took the *miso dama* over to the stand where processed soybean products are arranged in pots of varying sizes. She then opened a pot and placed the *miso dama* in a grid pattern on the bottom of the pot and then filled the pot with a saltwater mixture she had prepared earlier. Finally, she added dates, red pepper, and charcoal and closed the pot. The final three ingredients, she said, were to both flavor the mixture as well as to keep it free of contaminants. After the mixture has been in the pot for three days, the pot is opened early in the morning and fresh air and sunshine added to the mixture. In the afternoon, the pot is again closed and after approximately two months of fermentation the soy sauce is ready. Prior to use, the liquid is filtered, heated and cooled once. It is then bottled and used in small amounts.

The method for making soy sauce by hand that I found in Korea is exactly the same method as that used in the Yunnan and other frontier regions of China right down to the daily exposure to the morning air. I found myself fully in support of the theory stating that "The Soy Sauce Road" began in continental China, traveled down the Korean peninsula and then into Japan.

The Sea around Mokp'o and the Dadohae Sea

Mokp'o is a port city in South Cholla Province at the edge of the Korean peninsula. As home to the largest fishing port in South Korea, it is also home to the salted fish organs that are such a necessary part of the Korean diet. The assortment of salted fish organs to be found in Korea is truly impressive with South Cholla Province alone known for over eighty varieties. The diversity in the names of salted fish organs comes from the base ingredients with dishes being distinguished based on the type of fish used, the seasonings used to flavor them or the different organs or eggs used. In Korea, salted fish organs are not just eaten "as is," but are also used to pickle *kimchi* and as seasoning to flavor cooked foods.

In China the liquid is filtered off of salted fish organs and combined with soy sauce to make fish soy sauce used to season foods in the same manner as standard soy sauce. When I asked whether there was fish soy sauce in Korea, I was told that Koreans use soy sauce made from soybeans and that the use of salted fish organs is confined to side dishes and seasoning. The sea to the west of Mokp'o is the Yellow Sea.

Continue a little further and you'll reach the Chinese continent where processed fish and fish soy sauces are produced along the coast. By moving inland, the origins of processed fish and fish soy sauces, the countries of southeast Asia, are reached. The processed fish culture of Korea must surely have deep ties with the similar cultures of southeast Asia.



Heading out to fish in the ocean at Mokp'o at the height of shrimp season.

Look for the second half of
Exploring the Path of Soy Sauce
in the next issue.
References used in writing
this article will be listed
with the second half of this article.

Photos obtained, with gratitude,
from the book *Oshoyu No Kita Michi*
by Kosaburo Arashiyama and Katsuo Suzuki,
published by Tokuma Shoten.