

The Great Proliferation of Quern-Stones

Zen monasteries quickly modified the noodle-making techniques that their priests brought back to Japan from China for the domestic production of Japanese noodles, *udon* and *hiyamugi*, which rapidly became a regular part of the diet of apprentice monks. Wheat flour was the primary ingredient in these noodles. At the same time, the technique for cutting *tettaimen* led to development of three varieties of *zatsumen*—noodles made using millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*), or buckwheat—at Zen monasteries. Of the three varieties of *zatsumen*, soba noodles, made from buckwheat, grew to be a popular type of noodle in Japan and flourished during the Edo period (1603–1868).

In addition, within half a century the quern-stones introduced by Eisai (1141–1215) and Dogen (1200–1253) had become a common tool in the lives of ordinary people of the Kamakura period (ca. 1185–1333). Historical records show us how the flour food culture took firm root in Japan.

Zenrin Kouta's Tenshin (Light Refreshments)



Statue of Ryoyo Shogei. His cottage temple, Muryozan Jukyo-ji Temple, was rebuilt into a large temple complex, Muryozan Denzuin Jukyo-ji Temple, by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1602. Photograph by Tadashi Iguchi

As mentioned in Part 1 of this article, the term “*udon*” first appeared in the 1352 records from Horyu-ji Temple. The same record indicates that *somen* was one of the rewards presented for victory in battle. However, though it seems that the first entries of the words “*udon*,” “*somen*” and names of other Japanese noodles should be found in Kamakura-period

records of Zen monasteries, none have been found.

Luckily, information about noodles from this period has been supplied by *Zenrin Kouta*, also referred to in Part 1. The author, Ryoyo Shogei (1341–1420), was a priest of the Jodo-shu, or Pure Land school of Buddhism. In his twenties, Shogei traveled throughout the country studying various precepts of Buddhism. He also studied a wide range of non-Buddhist topics, including Shintoism and *waka* poetry (poems consisting of 31 syllables with 5-, 7-, and 5-syllable phrases in the first stanza and two 7-syllable phrases in the next). In 1415 Ryoyo Shogei established the Muryozan Jukyo-ji Temple in Edo. It was not a complete temple complex, but merely a small cottage. Shogei lived and preached in this humble temple for the rest of his life. Later, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), founder of and first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate, restored the temple to bury his mother, Odai (Buddhist name Denzuin), who died at Fushimi Castle in Kyoto in 1602. The temple was then renamed Muryozan Denzuin Jukyo-ji Temple.

Zenrin Kouta ridicules the Zen sect and was presumably written in response to differences between prescribed Zen behaviors and what Shogei actually witnessed and experienced in Zen monasteries.

A hot drink was immediately served to each individual as

he took his place. The first tenshin dish served was a bun made with wheat flour or kudzu starch. Other dishes that could be served as tenshin include atsumono stew, bing such as nyuhin (made with wheat flour and shaped like a breast) and manju, and noodles such as udon, murahi, ryuyomen, tohimen, tettaimen, uchimen, three varieties of zatsumen, somen, kayomen, and hiyamugi. The monks slandered one another for their poor skills in preparing these dishes.

This *tenshin* record implies strong Chinese ties. No records following *Zenrin Kouta* of or from Zen monasteries have been found that mention *bing* or noodles such as *ryuyomen*, *tohimen*, *uchimen*, or *kayomen*. The hot drink served with *tenshin* is called *shugoto*, an appetite stimulant with which several Chinese medicines including *kujin* (*Sophora flavescens*), cinnamon, licorice, and sorghum are mixed in hot water. *Atsumono* were originally Chinese dishes of meat or fish stewed with vegetables and thickened with *kudzu* starch. In monasteries, imitation meat or fish was made using flour as Zen monks were forbidden to eat meat. The three hot dishes mentioned in the 1352 Horyu-ji Temple record were *atsumono* stews. It is presumed that Horyu-ji Temple, while not of the Zen sect, imitated the *tenshin* served at Zen monasteries.

Over time, the light meals served as *tenshin* underwent changes. Significant changes occurred around the time of the civil war known as the Onin war (1467–1477) that initiated the “Warring States Period” of Japanese history, with the following being the last record of the original-style *tenshin*. The January 25, 1459 entry in *Onryo-ken Nichiroku* states, “*Tenshin* consisted of *shugoto* served first, followed by *san-*



Hiroshi Ito

Born in Mukojima, Tokyo in 1938. He graduated from the Faculty of Business and Commerce, Keio University, in 1963. He is the second-generation owner of Nagaura, a *terakata*-style soba (buckwheat noodles) restaurant in Ginza, Tokyo. *Terakata* refers to a style of soba dish prepared using the traditional method of the Myokoji Temple in Aichi prefecture. Ito is the author of *Tsurutsuru Monogatari* (published by Tsukiji Shokan), and, in addition to working at his restaurant, he devotes his life to the study of food and diet of the Edo period, using historical materials and diaries collected by his father from noted temples throughout Japan. Ito has had the great honor of preparing Myokoji soba for His Imperial Highness, Prince Mikasa, during a visit to Myokoji Temple.

*hozen**, *sato*¹, *yokan*², *rochokan*³, *manju*⁴, *somen*, seven varieties of *chanoko**, and *ocha*⁵.

*unknown dish; ¹sugar; ²jellied adzuki-bean paste; ³thought to be a type of sausage-like dish containing no meat; ⁴steamed bun; ⁵green tea

After this record, *shugoto* and *atsumono* were no longer served as *tenshin*.

The February 13, 1488 entry in *Onryo-ken Nichiroku* tells us



A woodcut print based on the *Zenrin Kouta*, by Ryoyo Shogei. Written when Shogei was an apprentice monk to ridicule disparities in Zen philosophies and practices. Property of the National Diet Library

that *tenshin* normally consisted of *manju* (steamed bun), noodles, green tea, and a cake. This shows us that the traditional Chinese *tenshin* had been completely transformed into a uniquely Japanese version. It was from this time that *manju* became the only type of *bing* and *somen* the only type of noodle served as *tenshin*. This development suggests that the *tenshin* described in Ryoyo Shogei's record from the Kamakura period still maintained its Chinese roots.

The Birth of Udon and Hiyamugi

Somen, *udon*, and *hiyamugi* are mentioned in *Zenrin Kouta*. These three varieties are considered Japanese noodles developed at Zen monasteries soon after the introduction of Chinese *somen* to Japan during the Kamakura period.

Kyoka Hitsuyo Jirui Zenshu (a Chinese encyclopedia-like document of people's domestic life believed to have been compiled during the period from the late tenth century to the late thirteenth century) describes two methods for making *somen*, one that uses oil and one that does not. Dough that contains oil can be stretched to a diameter as small as desired because moisture does not evaporate. In contrast, dough that does not contain oil often breaks before it is stretched to the desired diameter. Japanese Zen monks gave the name *hiyamugi* to noodles made without oil and stretched to the point just before the dough breaks. Noodles made without oil and stretched significantly less for a much larger diameter were called *udon*. *Somen* made with oil must be dried and stored to remove the oil, while *hiyamugi* and *udon* can be cooked and served immediately. This convenience was essential for foods adopted by Zen monasteries. *Udon*, in particular, became an indispensable part of the daily diet at Zen monasteries because it was easy to make and prepare and its filling effects lasted for several hours. *Udon* was the first variety of noodles widely accepted by the general public as the use of quern-stones became more common. Today *udon* is normally made by cut-

ting flattened dough into thin strips. Originally, however, it was made by stretching dough as with *somen*. This stretching method is still used for some specialty *udons*, such as Inaniwa *Udon* in Akita prefecture and Goto *Udon* on the Goto islands.

The tradition of Zen monks making noodles themselves was passed down to the monks of Shokoku-ji Temple, established during the Muromachi period (1336–1573), as well as those of many other Zen temples. Within the Shokoku-ji Temple complex, monks of Untei-in Temple were in charge of making *udon* and *hiyamugi*.

The January 22, 1439 entry in *Onryo-ken Nichiroku* states, "The shogun visited Shojo-in Temple. He first offered incense to the soul of the founding abbot... He ordered that *udon* be delivered on the 25th." Shogun Yoshinori (sixth shogun of the Ashikaga shogunate) ordered the head of Onryo-ken (dormitory for Shokoku-ji Temple's monks) to deliver *udon* for a gathering at the shogun's mansion. As instructed, the monks of Untei-in Temple made and delivered the shogun's *udon* on the designated date.

The April 14, 1463 entry in *Onryo-ken Nichiroku* states, "Untei-in began making *hiyamugi* this morning. It certainly has become an established annual custom."

It would have been regular practice at Untei-in Temple to begin making *hiyamugi* around April 14 of every year.

It was around this time that *somen* production requiring certain techniques and skill and a wide space, transferred from Zen monasteries to other artisans, marking the birth of the *somen* industry. The July 6, 1463 entry in *Yamashina-ke Raiki* states, "1. *Somen* delivered from *somen* shop. A total sum of 100 *mon* was paid." *Somen* production at Kennin-ji Temple passed to the temple's neighbors and that at Eihei-ji Temple monastery to merchants in Maruoka.

Zatsumen

Ryoyo Shogei mentioned in his *Zenrin Kouta* that Zen monks made three varieties of *zatsumen* (noodles made with less common grains) in addition to other noodles. Just what was *zatsumen*?

The October 3, 1490 entry in *Onryo-ken Nichiroku* states, "The Yoneyama Yakushi list of items to be avoided each month arrived from Manpuku-ji Temple in Noto." Yoneyama Yakushi, a temple in Echigo (present-day Niigata prefecture), maintained a list of items, mostly foods or drinks, that should be avoided each month. The list was sent to Onryo-ken by Manpuku-ji Temple in Noto (present-day Ishikawa prefecture). The items to be avoided were as follows: burdock in January, green onions in February, green tea in March, garlic in April, *zatsumen* in May, cucumbers in June, yams in July, *daikon* radish in August, chestnuts in September, sake in October, tofu in November, and Chinese holly (*Osmanthus heterophyllus*) in December. Avoiding these items was said to eliminate diseases. This list represented the third year of a three-year record of items avoided monthly. Records for the first two years indicated that *somen* was avoided in May, but this was changed to *zatsumen* in the third year.

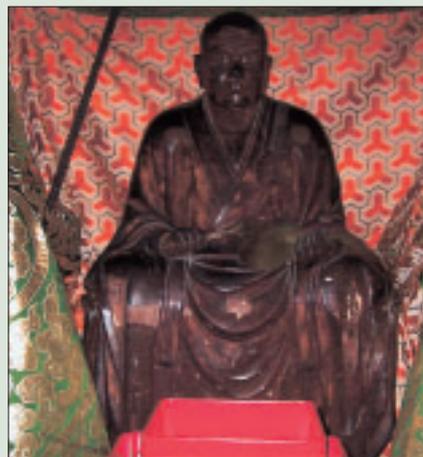
Clearly, *zatsumen* was noodles made from grains not included in the five major grains. According to widely accepted belief,

the five major grains during the Nara (ca. 710–794) and Heian (ca. 792–1185) periods were rice, foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*), millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), soybean, and wheat. According to records from the time, those of the early Kamakura period (ca. 1185–1333) were rice, sesame, barley, wheat, and beans.

During the Kamakura period, foxtail millet and millet were removed from the five major grains of the previous periods, and sesame was added. Therefore, foxtail millet and millet, formerly considered major grains, and buckwheat became the less commonly used grains of the Kamakura period. Today, Japanese people consider foxtail millet, millet, and Japanese barnyard millet (*Echinochloa esculenta*) less common grains. During the Kamakura period, however, Japanese barnyard millet was replaced by buckwheat as a standard, though less commonly used, grain. Buckwheat was cultivated during this period and some records, including the following two, show that farm rent was paid in buckwheat.

Koyasan Bunsho no Shichi (1291), written by Hosshin, is an inventory of the author's household goods and foods. Hosshin was a monk at the Enryaku-ji Temple monastery and a rice and money lender. A part of his inventory reads, "Rice: 21.5 *koku*; barley: 7 *koku*; wheat: 3 *koku*; soybeans: 3 *koku*; adzuki beans: 2.2 *koku*; buckwheat: 1.5 *koku*." (One *koku* is equal to 180 liters.) During this time, lenders provided farmers with buckwheat seed in exchange for a percentage of the farmers' harvest (*Chusei Saiko* by Yoshihiko Amino). Another work from 1324 includes a line regarding rent collected by land owners. "1. Autumn buckwheat: 5.095 *koku*"

From these records it is clear that with the spread of quern-



Statue of Shoichi Kokushi, who established Tofuku-ji Temple in 1243. Kokushi went to China in 1235, where he became interested in quern-stones and drew detailed sketches of watermills that he brought back to Japan. Property of Tofuku-ji Temple

stones for grinding grains, buckwheat came to be recognized as one of the most suitable grains for making flour and its demand increased. The three varieties of *zatsumen* referred to by Shogei are noodles made from foxtail millet, millet, and buckwheat.

In his book titled *Soba-shi-ko*, Shigeru Niijima, a researcher

of Edo period noodles, introduced the menu from a soba shop named Yamanakaya Matabe from the 1787 edition of *Shichiju-go Nichi*, a guide to popular shops:

*Awa-kiri*¹: 5 small plates, prices beginning at 4 *monme*

*Hie-kiri*²: 10 large plates, prices beginning at 7.5 *monme*

¹Cut foxtail millet noodles

²Cut Japanese barnyard millet noodles

This citation shows that there were shops selling noodles made from less commonly used grains during the Edo period. The availability of quern-stones made attempts to grind even less common grains into flour a natural progression that led Zen monks to use foxtail millet, millet, and buckwheat as they used

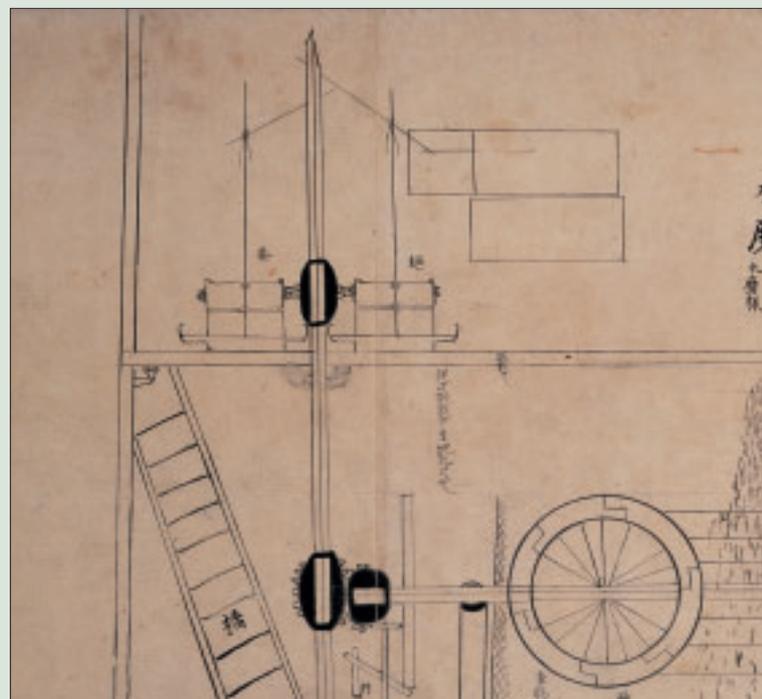
wheat. Among the three types of *zatsumen*, soba (buckwheat noodles) gained popularity over time, and has remained a popular noodle dish to this day.

The Spread of Quern-Stones

Eight years after Dogen (1200–1253) returned from China, Enni Ben'en (1202–1280, known posthumously as Shoichi Kokushi), who later founded Tofuku-ji Temple in 1243, went to Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) China for six years. In *Zenshu Hen-nen-shi*, Horyu Shiraiishi wrote:

After returning from China, Enni Ben'en founded Shoten-ji Temple in Hakata and Sofuku-ji Temple in Yokodake, Dazaifu. Mitsuda Yazaemon brought back silk-weaving techniques and developed the Hakata-ori textile and Hakata *somen*. Kikuan, a boy servant at Shofuku-ji Temple, made *somen* that led to development of Iyo *somen*.

Mitsuda Yazaemon, who accompanied Enni Ben'en to China,



This detailed sketch of a watermill shows how horizontal torque received from water current is converted into by rotating millstones. This mechanism, which allows for two simultaneous grinding processes increased

brought back techniques for making *somen*, and Kikuan, the young servant at Shofuku-ji Temple, introduced these techniques to Iyo (present-day Ehime prefecture on the island of Shikoku). Although the authenticity of this story cannot be verified, the description of the development of *somen* is very likely true.

Enni Ben'en had a great interest in quern-stones and millstones, crucial tools in the production of flour foods, and brought back detailed drawings of watermills, one of which remains to this day at Tofuku-ji Temple and has been designated an Important Cultural Asset. It is not certain whether this drawing resulted in construction of an actual watermill.

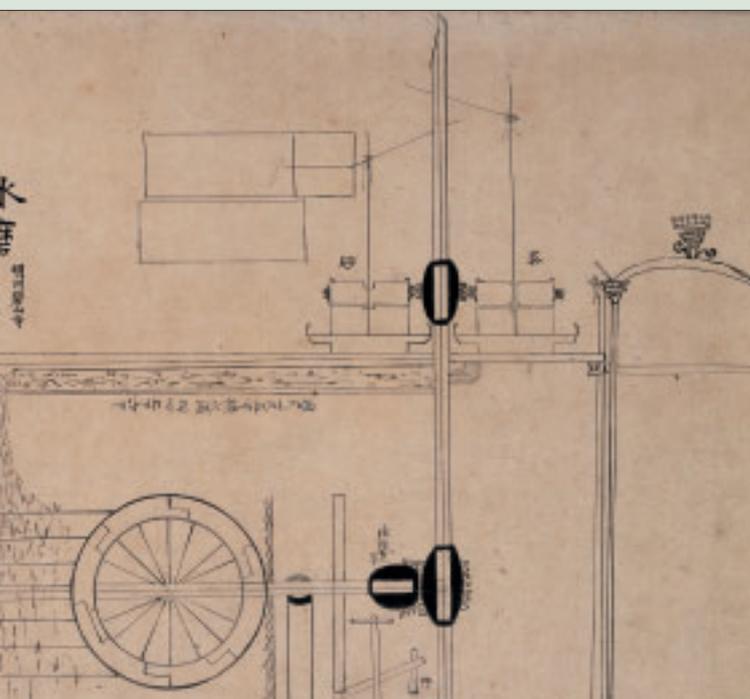
The December 9, 1976 edition of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper reported that two pairs of quern-stones had been recovered, along with celadon and white porcelain objects, from a ship that sank off the Korean peninsula. The article reported that the ship belonged to Tofuku-ji Temple. A record, valuable in showing just how common quern-stones had become

by the mid-Kamakura period (1185–1333), tells us of Rikio-maru, a boy who tended Ninna-ji Temple’s cart-pulling cows. In those days, people believed that children had the spiritual power to manipulate cattle so that those who tended cattle wore boys’ attire and maintained the suffix *maru* in their name, commonly used for young boys, even after they had grown into adulthood. In this record Rikio-maru lists his household assets:

One rice paddy, two upland fields, one cow in poor condition, one upright mortar, one pair of quern-stones, two water troughs, one trivet, one iron pot, one stone pot, one cast-iron pan, one sake jar, one drip jar, one sake bottle, one unglazed sake bottle, one old sake serving pot with spout, one ceramic pot, one pot, one paper umbrella, two staffs, one container with legs in poor condition, one dipper, one large rice-cooking pot, one tray table.

March 17, 1261 (*Chusei Saiko* by Yoshihiko Amino)

As we can see from the record above, even the most ordinary



vertical torque. Rice is pounded on the first level by a pestle, and tea and flour are ground on the second level production. Important Cultural Asset, property of Tofuku-ji Temple

person living in Kyoto owned a pair of quern-stones.

Roughly twenty-odd years ago, I visited the late Dr. Yoshihiko Amino, a researcher on medieval Japan, while searching for quern-stones from the Kamakura period. After explaining to him my reasons for looking for historical data on quern-stones, Dr. Amino readily pulled out three sheets of paper from a large stack of books in his hallway. Rikio-maru's document was one of these. I was so impressed by the document that I remember it well to this day. Though kept at Kyoto University for some time, the document is now included in the book *Kamakura Ibun* (edited by Rizo Takeuchi; *Kamakura Ibun Kenkyukai*), making it available to the general public.

In his book *Chusei Saiko*, published in 1986, Dr. Amino mentioned the emergence of quern-stones in Japan and emphasized the importance of their appearance as follows:

It is truly an important fact that quern-stones existed among the rich variety of utensils and household goods. Quern-stones were absolutely necessary for a diet consisting of foods made

with flour....

Emperor Hanazono’s diary has an entry dated June 5, 1332 that mentions a tea party in which guests competed at distinguishing different flavors of tea. *Chama*, or quern-stones for grinding tea, were prevalent among the court nobles and people often played games in which they competed for prizes by tasting different varieties of tea and guessing at where the tea had been grown.

Although the Rikio-maru document has just the one small ref-



The man with his long hair tied back is the cow handler. Kasuga Gongenki Emaki, property of the National Diet Library

erence to quern-stones, the reference and its Kamakura-period origin are extremely important to me as one who has been researching the history of noodles in Japan. Within half a century after Eisai and Dogen brought the first quern-stones back from China, they had already spread until even

commoners in Kyoto owned them. This is proof that people of the Kamakura period were eating foods made with flour.

Only three documents noting the household goods of commoners and farmers remain from the Muromachi period (1336–1573). According to *Chusei Saiko*, by Yoshihiko Amino, one of these documents lists the assets of Hejiro, a farmer in southern Kyoto, in 1425. “One upright mortar, three pestles, one pair of quern-stones, one plow, one harrow, one spade, three iron pots, three pots of varying sizes, one trivet.” Another document lists the assets of Izumitayu, a village headman in Wakasa province (present-day southern Fukui prefecture), in 1450. “Two upright mortars, one pair of quern-stones, one plow, one pair of quern-stones for grinding tea, two tea bowls, one trivet, one oil jar, three pots of varying sizes.” These two documents show that common people owned quern-stones, and that Izumitayu even owned one pair of quern-stones for grinding grain and a separate pair for grinding tea leaves, proving that quern-stones were common not only in the Kansai region, but in other parts of Japan as well during the Muromachi period. This clearly shows just how fast flour foods (noodles) spread in Japan.

Corrections to Part 1 article in Food Culture No. 16
 Error: *Uton* (today's *udon* noodles), *Kagen-ki* (from the July 7, 1347 entry)
 Correction: *Uton* (today's *udon* noodles), *Kagen-ki* (from the July 7, 1352 entry)
 Error: Ryoyo Shogei (1394–1420)
 Correction: Ryoyo Shogei (1341–1420)

References

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- *Kyoka Hitsuyo Jirui Zenshu*, Kyoto Shohakudo
- *Koso Den 6–Eisai Asu o Tsukuru*, Seiko Hirata, Shueisha
- *Tenzo Kyokun-Zenshin no Seikatsu*, Hisao Shinohara, Okura Shuppan
- The Yomiuri Shimibun (December 9, 1976)
- *Chusei Saiko*, Yoshihiko Amino, Nihon Editors School Shuppan