

contemporary practice of husband-alone transfer. Alternate attendance surely had an impact on many different aspects of the lives of *bushi* family members left in the domain. At the same time, it seems fairly obvious that the presence of retainers – rendered by their duties temporary bachelors – had a lot to do with the expansion of prostitution, not only in Yoshiwara but more widely, as an acknowledged and popularized social structure of the time. The study of alternate attendance must not be left as simply a “male history”.

This book paints a vivid picture of the Edo life of daimyo retainers. But participants in the procession to Edo and residents in the daimyo compound were not necessarily all “pure” retainers. Rather, a considerable number of them were temporary employees dispatched from agencies. In order to comprehend the social, economic, and cultural impact of alternate attendance, attention must also be given to these peripheral people.

Tour of Duty is a seminal work on alternate attendance not only for English-language researchers but Japanese researchers as well. It is my hope that this book will be widely read in Japan.

Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience of Shanghai.

By Mark Swislocki. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009. Pp. xvi + 304.

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Feelings of nostalgia for food are widespread in the People’s Republic of China at present; nostalgia for the practices, tastes and methods that supposedly evoke a fantasized version of ancient China, but also a more recent past, for example the Maoist era, despite its rationing and austerity. In this book devoted to Shanghai, Mark Swislocki shows how this nostalgia can also be followed like a thread leading through the modern history of the city. For him, “culinary nostalgia has been a valuable framework for articulating both ideology and utopia, and for learning how to live with the consequences of the one or the absence of the other” (p. 5). This is the reason for his choosing this particular city to illustrate the importance attributed by the Chinese to food, specialty foodstuffs and regional cuisine restaurants. The author also reveals an epistemological attitude in choosing to concentrate his research in one locality, thus deconstructing the notion of national territory where boundaries have varied greatly over time according to the political orientations of the Empire.

By inscribing his work (probably born of a Ph.D. on a wider theme¹) in the context of a long history of Shanghai since the Ming dynasty, Swislocki fills a gap left in the extensive research on the modern history of the city that has been undertaken in recent decades. After the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 and its provision for international trade, Chinese gastronomists endowed the city with a reputation for munificence and diversity of food art, but until now no complete study has been devoted to the topic. If one wanted to summarize the history of food in Shanghai from the mass of documentation presented, one could say that from the Ming dynasty onwards, its prosperity was based on the production of salt and on the cultivation of commercial plants, especially cotton, and this to the detriment of food crops. Shanghai became a city of commerce, enlivened by a constant flow of traders from every corner of China, where professional and regional guilds exercised considerable influence. These “outsider” businessmen contributed to the birth of a flourishing industry of restaurants serving regional cuisine from all over the country. This first episode in the busy life of the city was soon

1 Mark Swislocki, “Feast and Famine in Republican China: Urban Food Culture, Nutrition, and the State,” Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2002.

followed by the arrival of Westerners in the mid-nineteenth century, who reinforced the role of Shanghai as an economic and commercial centre. They also contributed to the diversification of the food available in the city by introducing their own food habits, which rapidly engendered a new style of restaurant that was specifically Western. Their presence meant that Shanghai became a cosmopolitan city and a grand bazaar offering foodstuffs from the world over. From the mid-nineteenth century, and even more so during the twentieth century, it became renowned as a social melting pot accommodating every new experience in culinary appreciation, whether Chinese or Western. During the Nanking decade (1926–1937), although Shanghai cuisine had no place in the pantheon of grand Chinese cuisines, the city acquired a reputation for regional cuisines, Cantonese being the most celebrated.

As the author clearly shows, this presentation does not appear canonical in relation to the Confucian tradition. In fact Shanghai was failing in its responsibility to provide its inhabitants with basic foods, having abandoned food production in favour of commercial activity. This was why, in guides and within the conventional framework of the local gazetteer, several literati attempted to present an alternative image of Shanghai: that of a city where single agricultural productions were specific to climate and topography, the first of which was the honey nectar peach. This fruit appears in these works as the emblem of Shanghai and is endowed with a strong symbolic meaning in Chinese historiography. According to legend it had been cultivated in the Shanglin garden of the Han emperor Wu (reign 140–86 BC). Long after the cultivation of this fruit in the famous gardens of the Ming dynasty had been discontinued, its memory was still celebrated. In the eighteenth century there was even a treatise devoted to it, although there was little trace of the splendid orchards of yore. But by then the city was beginning to accept itself for what it was. It had become integrated into the complete picture of China as a key element in the economy of Jiangnan and the Empire, and its culinary history was recognized through the regional cuisines developed by the trade guilds.

Different representations of the city were perpetuated via renewals of form and content. All through its recent culinary history Shanghai has presented contrasting facets: a city famous for commerce, spending, snobbery; renowned for ostentatious banquets for the new rich and for Chinese and foreign businessmen, but at the same time a town of workers and refuge for those who had been eating little in the street markets; a cosmopolitan city with all the cuisines of Europe but also the town with the greatest variety of regional Chinese cuisine; a venue for the exploration of a new Western food culture, a symbol of modernity whose courtesans were its mediators and heralds; a showplace for a reform of family values based on the transformation of the Chinese woman into the up-to-date housewife, expert in the ways of Western nutrition and hygiene, amongst other things.

Of course with the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the control of the city by the Chinese Communist Party, everything changed. Eating became a moral consideration and a hedonistic attitude to food was discouraged. Reforms were carried out by the Shanghai Food and Drink Service Company (Yinshi Fuwugongsi 饮食服务公司), with the primary preoccupation being to provide the population with staples based on a system of rationing and ration coupons. This reform was followed in 1958 by the establishment of compulsory canteens on a national scale. But from the early 1960s onwards a countercurrent appeared. Indeed, from 1960 to 1966, as authorities became aware of the fact that knowledge and skills were dying with the passing of the oldest chefs, they launched a campaign to re-appropriate the culinary traditions of Shanghai. Although a few gastronomic landmarks had been preserved for important guests and Chinese dignitaries visiting Shanghai, most of the top restaurants had closed without trace, or were only serving "food for the masses". The Shanghai Food and Drink Service Company reorganized public food in Shanghai in several ways: rationalization of the products sold at pavement stalls; revival of the regional cuisine industry and its promotion on a different scale; the relaunching of the cultivation of the honey nectar peach. Moreover Shanghai, at the instigation of the Shanghai Food and Drink

Service Company, became the training centre for chefs from all over China. For the first time schools were opened for professional catering staff. Previously training had been acquired through informal apprenticeship *in situ*. Swislocki relies on previously unexploited material from municipal records to document the stages of this repossession. Obviously the Cultural Revolution brought to a halt the salvage operation; what followed is another story.

This beautiful book represents a huge task, based on the scrutiny of an extensive corpus of varied source material: newspapers, archives, monographs, biographies, literary texts, etc. It is a goldmine for historical specialists on Shanghai, who will find a huge amount of information, suggestions, ideas and trails to follow, sometimes light-years away from food and the culinary arts. Food historians will give it pride of place on their bookshelf because it is seldom that one can gain direct access to the belly of a city. They may however be a little disappointed by the author's focus on Shanghai. Indeed, the intention to limit research to one city is legitimate and praiseworthy, but only on the condition of avoiding provincialism. And the author may not have avoided the snare. Shanghai is singular and unique, but while preoccupied by Shanghai, the author hardly ever offers comparisons with other Chinese locations or other cultural areas. His bibliography and his reasoning betray a lack of interest in works on the history of food apart from the pioneer, but no longer recent, work by K. C. Chang (*Food in Chinese Culture*) published in 1979, from which the author distances himself with a naive and unhelpful critique.

The work published in Europe and in China in the last thirty years that could have nourished his reflection is ignored. The few pages (pp. 6–11) devoted by Swislocki to the contrast between national and regional cuisine, for example, could have benefited from his reading J. Goody (*Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*) published in 1982 but still relevant today. Why is there no national cuisine in China in the accepted sense of the term? What is haute cuisine? How can one define a regional cuisine? These questions (there are many others), essential to the subject of this book, have not been effectively addressed. Also, the sinologist reader is likely to be annoyed by the choices made by the publisher. Why is there no index of Chinese characters? Only p. 82 includes four characters corresponding to a transcription! The maps are unattractive and some of them are difficult to read. The illustrations are dull and imperfect; they belie the excellent reputation of works published by American university presses. It is unfortunate to detract in this way from the quality of a work that deserves more attention to such detail.

A word of advice: read this book carefully to extract its *substantive marrow*, as the truculent Rabelais would have said.

Preachers, Poets, Women, and the Way: Izumi Shikibu and the Buddhist Literature of Medieval Japan.

By R. Keller Kimbrough. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan: 2008. Pp. xiii + 374.

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This book explores the many texts supposedly concerning the life of Izumi Shikibu 和泉式部, a famous mid-Heian poet who served at court. The author shows that legendary qualities ascribed to this female figure came to be shaped through the lens of religious discourses in the medieval period, and that these discourses helped popularize Izumi Shikibu into the household name she is today. Expansive in scope, this panoramic investigation covers works from the Heian era into the late medieval and early modern periods, and examines both textual and visual narratives. Copiously footnoted