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Tradition, entrepreneurship, and innovation: The craft of Japanese fine dining

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Abstract

Research Summary: This study explores how traditional craft produces novelty, which appears to be at odds with its emphasis on continuation. While prior research has explored how tradition is rediscovered and revived from the past, traditional craft can produce intrinsic novelty potentially through its own repetitive acts. This study examines a Japanese cuisine *Kaiseki*, which is traditional but simultaneously innovative. The analysis of a well-known chef's design processes reveals that the chef designs novel dishes by responding to what has been done before, making something better and differently and thereby going beyond the limit of the tradition; *Kaiseki* tradition is re-enacted through such practices. A process philosophy of Gills Deleuze is engaged to explain our concept of "tradition as capacity" as well as "tradition as object."

Managerial Summary: Tradition is now seen as important source of value. This study explains how craft can be both traditional and innovative. Typically, innovation has been explained by recombination with new technologies and restoration and reinterpretation to reinvigorate identity rooted in the past, this study sheds light on the intrinsic novelty within the practices of craft. This novelty is evident in

traditional Japanese cuisine, called *Kaiseki*, which is traditional but also innovative because customers seek novel exquisite experience as they do in any Michelin Guide starred restaurants. Through the analysis of a chef's practices, we propose a new conceptualization of tradition as capacity. The creative force of this tradition as capacity is important for creating new opportunities and novel values.

KEYWORDS
craft, Deleuze, innovation, process theory, tradition

1 | INTRODUCTION

Business studies of craft has emerged as a promising field (Bell et al., 2019; Bell & Vachhani, 2020; Kroezen et al., 2021; Ocejo, 2017; Sennett, 2008) developing an alternative to late-modern efficiency-oriented mass-production (Judge et al., 2020; Luckman, 2018). Craft as form of organizing and attitude to work seems centered on what Sennett (2008, p. 9) described as the basic human impulse to do "a job well for its own sake" (cf. Baer & Shaw, 2017). Quality and community are typically valued higher than efficiency and competition and for this reason craft represents an alternative and sometimes a basis for resistance to "financialization" in a capitalist economic system (Luckman, 2018; Thurnell-Read, 2019). The quality of craft is primarily based on homage to materials, techniques, aesthetic and performance regimes of style (cf. Sennett, 2008; Spinosa et al., 1999), recorded in a living archive of knowledge and methods of making (Pozner et al., 2022). People passionate about craft look for traces of a maker in the made, someone that has prioritized "human engagement over machine control" as Kroezen et al. (2021) put it.

Tradition is an important aspect of this craft. Tradition, however, does not necessarily mean craft works are simply old. Many kinds of traditional craft, which face the need to attract contemporary customers that seek something special, urge each maker to produce something novel and unique. Among various crafts, fine dining is an interesting context where customers seek not only food and drinks rooted in a traditional culture but also novel experiences. Work awarded with Michelin Guide stars comes with an enormous pressure to display creativity and innovativeness (De Massis et al., 2016; Koch et al., 2018; Lane & Lup, 2015; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). Traditional fine dining in Japan—called *Kaiseki*—is no exception. As a craft, however, emphasis cannot be on innovation only, nor even too much on innovation since the risk is that one will fall out of the *Kaiseki* category.

We approached this tension between traditional and innovative as a particular form of entrepreneurship (Katz & Gartner, 1988; Sternberg & Krauss, 2014). From a process-theoretical perspective (Helin et al., 2014), we are given conceptual means to see craft practices as entrepreneurial when they refuse to rest in the firm ground of tradition. Instead, they "take" (*prendre* in original French) an inaugural action against the difficult tension "in-between" (*entre* in French) tradition and innovation as an opportunity-creating potential (Buenstorf, 2007). Such craft-entrepreneurship creatively makes opportunities by reinterpreting, disrupting, and stretching tradition by creatively using its tension with innovation.

The present study examines a *Kaiseki* chef's design as an entrepreneurial process of creatively handling this tension between tradition and innovation. The organizing of the course menu involves various natural ingredients, skilled techniques and original combinations thereof, for novel exquisite experiences, making profit along the way and being recognized for its uniqueness. This is all done while *Kaiseki* is framed as prototypical traditional cuisine that incorporates and embodies nature, allowing the way the season expresses itself through nature to enter into the

dish. Over 14 months we observed and recorded how a well-known chef, awarded stars by the Michelin Guide, designed monthly menus. This inspired us to address our research question of how the tension of tradition and innovation are entrepreneurially addressed such that "innovative craft" is achieved in the high-end restaurant business, with positive implications in terms of its strengthening of competitive advantage.

The study's analysis activates the process theoretical framing that brings us to a more detailed understanding of how innovation emerges from within tradition. This study contributes to the craft literature by proposing the concept of "tradition as capacity" as opposed to "tradition as object." Prior studies have focused on objects such as old recipes, ingredients, past product models, inherited texts, and old phrases. In a sense, the tradition embodied in these materials and discursive objects is retrieved from outside the everyday practices of craft and reinterpreted and recombined into something new. On the contrary, we show how a traditional craftsperson produces innovative works in the repetitive practices themselves, by responding to what has been done in the field in his or her own ways, without treating traditional objects as sacred. This clarifies how innovation stems from the traditional practices themselves.

Following this introduction, Section 2 provides a process theoretical framing for our study, situated in the literature of the tradition and innovation relationship. Section 3 describes the research design and method before we, in Section 4, provide the findings. The discussion, Section 5, suggests that drawing on process thinking allows us to elucidate the "tradition as capacity" view based on the findings. In this view, the chef's disrupting and stretching of tradition intensifies the relationship to tradition and overcomes its pull toward sameness. We develop theoretical implications from this result, centered on this process view of "innovative craft" with further implications for entrepreneurship research. Finally, the conclusion discusses the limitation and directions for future research.

2 | PROCESS PERSPECTIVE ON INNOVATIVE CRAFT

2.1 | Tradition retrieved from the past

There have been many debates on tradition and innovation. We follow Dacin et al.'s (2019, p. 356) broad definition of tradition as: "consciously transmitted beliefs and practices expressing identification with a shared past." They contrasted "tradition-as-constraint" and "tradition-as-resource" (p. 344), which is of relevance for an analysis of tradition and innovation in innovative craft. Tradition is often seen as given and as such a hindrance to innovation as it imposes constrains on what is possible, lock-in path-dependencies or imprints (Stinchcombe, 1965). However, tradition is also "giving," analyzed by Ricoeur (1991) as action, indicating it has agency (Hatch & Schultz, 2017). This tension between innovation and tradition (Erdogan et al., 2020) has been debated extensively (Sirmon et al., 2022).

Within the research that treats tradition as resource, as opposed to constraint, we still find that tradition is conceived rather narrowly as object that is to be rediscovered, used, and renewed. To elucidate this, we organize the literature along two axes related to how the tradition is treated. One is whether the tradition is treated as mainly material or mainly as discursive. The other is whether the tradition is treated concretely or abstractly. We can map four groups according to these two axes.

First, tradition treated as concrete material. In this stream of research, scholars have explored a way to "recombine" tradition with new technology. Messeni Petruzzelli and Savino (2014) offered a comprehensive search and recombination model where past knowledge is an aged component. De Massis et al. (2016) also explored this recombination of tradition with new technologies: "by combining codified or tacit forms of past knowledge with new technologies, it is possible to elicit two different types of product innovation strategies: an innovation of functionality or an innovation of meaning" (pp. 97–98). Furthermore, some scholars examined how the tradition itself was renewed. For instance, Erdogan et al. (2020) propose "tradition through innovation," by documenting various cases of innovation through which tradition is preserved mainly by the use of new technologies that update the tradition. In this context, tradition is still transplanted from the past into a new context. Along this line, Sasaki et al. (2021) discussed

some creative practices to adapt and reinvent traditional craft products for foreign markets; for example, by finding a new use of the same or slightly modified product and by using the traditional techniques to develop a completely new product.

Second, tradition as abstract material. Here, scholars examined ways to embody tradition as an abstract ideal in a new form. Ravasi et al. (2019) documented cases of "innovation within tradition" when they studied designers of Vespa and Ducati motorcycles and Alfa Romeo automobiles that would "proudly share stories about new models being identified as a Vespa, an Alfa, or a Ducati in the absence of visible logos" (p. 1541). These designers do not simply repeat the same thing or imitate the old models. They carefully study old models, identify important details, and give a new form to the tradition. Continuity is achieved while renewal is introduced. This shows that the innovation within tradition adheres to the traditional style, which is not simply repeated but reproduced. Sasaki et al. (2021) similarly documented "cultural transposition" by which the traditional aesthetics and techniques can be applied in a new line of products that embodies the tradition of the original culture. This resulting tradition is abstract because it depicts the overall aesthetic "language" rather than a specific element that people can point out as traditional per se.

Third, tradition is treated discursively and concretely. Much debate centers around the strategic use of past (Anteby & Molnár, 2012; Foster et al., 2011; Suddaby et al., 2016; Wadhwani et al., 2018): Firms often use their history rhetorically to make themselves legitimate. Hatch and Schultz (2017), for instance, discussed how the Danish firm Carlsberg rediscovered its founder's original phrase *Semper Ardens* in Latin, meaning "always burning," and reused it to renew its corporate identity multiple times. Sasaki et al. (2020) similarly observed in family businesses that the new generation explores the hermeneutic openness to differential interpretations of a family motto. The motto is elaborated and updated to reflect the cotemporary context and, in some cases, is completely rewritten to adapt and renew obsolete practices.

Fourth, tradition is treated discursively and abstractly. Here it is revived as a signifier under which new activities can be organized, a signifier that is ambiguous or perhaps "empty" because it is devoid of content (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Cappelen and Pedersen (2021) explored a way that a new tradition is created through discovery and reinvention of history. A group of chefs and others created a new "empty signifier"—New Anatolian Kitchen. They traveled around the region and discovered traditional ingredients and recipes, hence retrospectively created content. While the tradition is used, some ambiguity is maintained so that something new can be created more freely and attract a diverse set of players. Kroezen and Heugens (2019) use a similar argument for an analysis on an organizational-institutional level: "the relatively ambiguous meaning of *speciaalbier* offered enough leeway to allow for both traditional and more modern interpretations of craft practice" (p. 997). Ambiguity helps address the tension between innovation and tradition. This ambiguous signifier is abstract in the sense that without its own specific contents it can be associated with a variety of concrete discursive objects. The ambiguous is often a resource for entrepreneurial action, making creative use of the in-between (*entre-*, in-between in French) that the ambiguous represents (Chia, 1996).

In short, the tradition is both materially and discursively rediscovered and reinterpreted and is then recombined and reshaped concretely as a product or reembodied abstractly as the overall aesthetic or as an ambiguous signifier. In these research streams lies the assumption that tradition is given from outside. The two streams of research along the first axis can be contrasted clearly—tradition as material and as discursive—because they deal with tradition as some object retrieved from the past. The tradition can be material objects such as ingredients, techniques, artifacts and products or discursive objects such as phrases, texts, logos, and brand names. In this sense, the tradition is embodied, more or less concretely, in the object.

We propose an alternative to this view of tradition. Practices can enact tradition from within their doings and sayings (Schatzki et al., 2001). Practices do not simply *use* tradition as material or discursive objects but is both material and discursive at the same time (Barad, 2007). Tradition here is within the material and discursive practices, not in the objects used in the practices. Zundel et al. (2016) sought to move beyond the view of history as a resource to use and instead to emphasize the meaning of "being historical." We take this further in a more process-oriented understanding (Hjorth, 2014) and suggest that it is in an embodied performative "*becoming* historical" that tradition

is enacted as a temporality of time—a "traditioning" time, as a verb rather than a noun—in specific contexts (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012). We will discuss this next.

2.2 | Tradition enacted in traditioning

The assumption of tradition as object from the past limits the possibility to examine the tension between tradition and innovation. If we locate tradition within an object, we end up treating tradition as given and static, preventing an analysis of the vivid "conversation" into which it enters with innovation. Tradition in such conceptualization is imported from a past elsewhere, a recorded and remembered past. Instead, we can examine the tradition within a specific enactment of time, a temporality performed in *traditioning* practices in the present. This allows us to see tradition as more vivid and dynamic, and what it will affirm.

We identify craft that does not rely on an external authority to make itself traditional, but that performs practices enacting a temporality that is traditioning. In traditional Japanese *Kaiseki* cuisine, chefs have been producing traditional courses repetitively for a long time. Prior studies have shown that as chefs discover old culinary tradition within the region (Byrkjeflot et al., 2016; Cappelen & Pedersen, 2021; Erdogan et al., 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli & Savino, 2014), they are not traditional on their own but imported the object of tradition from elsewhere. If tradition is expressed in objects in this case, tradition is an external time of the past with normative implications. In contrast, *Kaiseki* chefs designing a course do not need to fit the foreign tradition to the contemporary context, as they already enact tradition by repetitively making courses.

To understand this "innovation from within tradition," we need to build on process thinkers such as Deleuze (1994) who identified difference in repetition. He emphasized that difference emerges from within repetition in each unique context. Difference is not thought on the basis of a prior model against which we can measure our actions. Instead, difference is thought as an event that springs from an encounter with something that cannot be thought, only sensed. Experiencing the simultaneous recognition of a *Kaiseki* course without being able to include it in an empirical category centered on identity means we encounter a sensation. This is felt as an affect, and the difference emerges from within such an event. If we treat tradition as something foreign and distant, then we do not explain the creation of novelty itself but simply would reduce the novelty to some external object.

Our central question is then: How can a traditional craftsperson produce innovation from within repetition? Deleuze and Guattari (2013) suggest that creativity is thought as "being a foreigner … in one's own tongue" (pp. 114–115, p. 122). Our own language is in a sense the tradition that is given to us as it had existed prior to our birth. Nonetheless, we do speak it every day repetitively and there is no transcendent origin we can identify. While the official language is defined by authority and often used politically, our everyday language is always our own and resists control. When Deleuze describes, by citing Proust, great literature as written in a sort of foreign language, this is a way to say that language is stretched to its limit, so that it starts to lose its familiarity (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 370). This we find is performed in our *Kaiseki* case: the tradition is within our own language but at the same time "being a foreigner in it," making a creative *traditioning* lead tradition beyond its limit.

3 | RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 | Case context

We observed Kenichi Hashimoto, PhD, whose restaurant Ryozanpaku was awarded two stars from the Michelin Guide consecutively. While he has since suffered from health issues and the restaurant is not in operation as of 2024, we observed his design practices while he was actively leading the *Kaiseki* field in Japan. When we observed

he had long established himself as a starred chef and we limit our scope to the practices of that fully accomplished chef.

Most *Kaiseki* restaurants represent thoroughly the traditional Japanese culture: The interior is carefully designed in the purely Japanese style, most staff members wear traditional dress *Kimono* and the Japanese-style garden is meticulously maintained. It is as if you entered a villa 200 years ago. And these high-end *Kaiseki* restaurants are priced competitively with other Michelin Guide starred restaurants, for example, USD150–400 per person. Most customers treat their visits to these establishments as special occasions. Importantly, because almost all customers live in the modern lifestyle, experiencing the tradition that has largely been lost in everyday Japanese lives is part of the value the customers appreciate. In this study, we take the maker perspective; as we show below, because the chef does not have direct and explicit communication with customers, customers' reactions and evaluations manifest themselves within the chef's design practices.

There is said to be no fixed structure to a *Kaiseki* course and each restaurant uses a different order of dishes although there is family resemblance to form a category of *Kaiseki*. The course starts with appetizers, *sakiduke*, followed by a traditional soup, *owan*, which is considered to be the most important in the whole meal. The next course is typically sliced raw fish, *mukouduke*, then a stewed dish, *takimono*, a grilled dish, *yakimono*, and then a combination of multiple items, *hassun*. A fried dish, *agemono* and a vinegar dish, *sunomono*, will then follow. The final is some rice, *gohan*, serviced with pickles. The meal ends with desserts, *omizugashi*.

3.2 | Research procedure

To understand how a chef designs a course menu, we observed the chef as he was designing the course. The first (native, local) author knew relatively little about *Kaiseki* when he started this research. He started learning *Kaiseki* by visiting restaurants, talking to chefs, reading books, and trying to make some of the dishes from recipe books as well as attending occasional cooking classes. Then, he had the opportunity to observe the chef, known for his innovative style cooking. The first author also had chances to visit the central market with him several times to learn how he chose ingredients, which turned out to be a critical factor in designing the course, as discussed below (one market visit lasted for about 3 h 30 min).

Toward the end of the month, the chef sat down in front of his computer and wrote up the whole menu from scratch. He worked on this task on his own without including staff members (similar to other chefs discussed in Lane & Lup, 2015; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). We filmed this session, curious about the sources of the novelty. Because we were observing him, he continuously explained verbally what he was doing to us while writing the menu. We also asked questions to clarify his thinking when he did not make it clear verbally. Mostly we asked about reasons for the particular choices he made. Then, a week or so later, the restaurant staff had a tasting session, many of which we also filmed. They discuss how the dishes turned out, how they should serve the dish, and so forth. Sometimes, the chef changed the menu based on the discussion in these sessions. We observed 14 courses during 14 months from December 2011 to January 2013 (average 1 h 43 min of video recordings, min 1 h 9 min and max 2 h 20 min). We attended nine tasting sessions in total (average 2 h 22 min video recording, min 1 h 45 min and max 3 h 6 min). All were done in Japanese, which the first author speaks but not the second author. We machine translated the transcripts into English—enough for understanding the general patterns, but the first author made careful translations of key parts of the quotes and descriptions, that is, those central to the first-order concepts, and discussed them in English.

The chef organized a workshop to discuss culinary design, inviting three well known chefs in *Kaiseki*, French and Chinese (all Japanese) as well as one Japanese confectionary designer, one cheese maker, and one whisky blender. The idea was to discuss how each designed his or her own works. So, each brought a piece of food or drink and explained the design practices. We then visited the three restaurants of the chefs, *Kaiseki*, French and Chinese,

and experienced the courses and later interviewed the chefs to deepen our understanding of their practices. For the purpose of this paper, we include the data of the other *Kaiseki* chef, who was in the same category as our primary chef: Video recording of interview (2 h 10 min) as well as the workshop (4 h 46 min). We used this additional data to compare and corroborate the analysis with our in-depth data with the primary chef.

We transcribed all the conversations recorded in the video. Although we started the research inductively without a particular framing, our analysis was abductive (Lorino, 2018), examining the data under the light of theory as shown below. We followed a coding procedure outlined by Locke (2001). We began with a relatively open question: "How does the chef design the course?" This quickly brought an interest in the relationships between innovation and tradition in that process: "How does the chef design the course both innovatively and traditionally?" This question prompted us to seek all relevant quotes and practices of designing dishes. We coded each of these data fragments with preliminary categories such as setting the theme of the month, focusing on the seasonal ingredient, and introducing a foreign ingredient in a traditional dish—open coding (Locke, 2001, p. 67). We could identify various practices of creating novel dishes, which often deviated from traditional recipes.

Nonetheless, it was not straightforward to identify quotes and observations on tradition because all he did was conceivable under the term "traditional" and he was always trying to create something novel. We noticed that whenever he referred to tradition, he was distancing himself from it. For instance, when he mentioned a traditional dish, he sought to design something slightly different from it. Furthermore, when he mentioned an ancient practice, for instance, about over 1000 years ago, prior to the *Kaiseki* tradition, he used the piece of information to relativize the *Kaiseki* tradition and justify his deviation from *Kaiseki*.

At this moment, we sought to turn to the literature on craft and tradition to discern how what we were observing can be related to what had already been discussed. This allowed us to see that the chef's practices were traditional and innovative throughout. We came to realize that tradition was not an object for him to use but his practices were "traditional." With this clarity, we went back to the data and recoded all the data again to identify various ways in which his practices were traditional—axial coding (Locke, 2001, p. 74). This broadened our analysis, not just quotes and practices in which tradition is made a theme but also all aspects of practices. For instance, while he carefully designed dishes by setting a theme and stretching a technique, he did not reveal these details to customers. This analysis still allowed us to emphasize the moments in which he treated tradition as object, for example, referring to ancient books and rituals, but we could discern a nuanced distance and playful relationship he maintained with such traditional objects.

This second round of coding then constituted our first-order concepts as shown in Table 1. Then, we derived a secondary theme by aggregating these first-order concepts. This aggregation did not unfold in a linear fashion but required constant back and forth with the first-order concepts. We sought to strike the balance of discerning the subtle difference in the ways the chef's practices were traditional and innovative while having enough variety of first-order concepts for each second-order theme. These second-order themes are then related to each other, as presented in Figure 1. The findings are documented below according to these first-order and second-order themes.

4 | FINDINGS

We first describe the chef's design processes and then report the findings.

4.1 | Design processes overview

The chef begun by setting the theme of the month, for instance, because customers have eaten and drunk too much in early January—a traditional festive period, he set the theme of January as "refreshing and light." He then moved

TABLE 1 Analysis summary.

First-order concepts	Description	Examples	Second-order themes
Discovering old knowledge and techniques from books and lectures	The chef discovered ancient recipe books and attended lectures organized by the trade association. He does not simply appropriate a recipe from the book but uses it to relativize and broaden his already solid understanding of the *Kaiseki* tradition, often recasting the tradition.	He learned from a book that people in the Edo period matched duck with parsley (芹) while the Japanese are familiar with the combination of duck and leeks, based on a popular saying, "The duck carries its own leek." This is not a discovery of a tradition but the re-examination of an already established tradition. He also used references in the Western and other culinary culture. He read many ancient recipe books: "I read the book by Georges Auguste Escoffier, a thick yellow page like recipe book."	Using external sources to relativize and broaden the well-established tradition
Learning about different culinary cultures	The chef not only eats broadly not just in Japanese but in many other culinary traditions but also reads books and attend lectures.	The chef reads many books like a book by El Bulli. This is not to use anything specific but to broaden his perspective in designing the course. He went through the official training of Korean palace cuisine from a well-known expert in South Korea.	
Referring to contemporary sources for an alternative practice	He also gains hints from other contemporary media such as novels, manga and films.	The chef saw in comic (manga) that an old person ate octopus (iidako) in Oden (hotchpotch) dish, which promoted him to cook the octopus differently. His writer friend told him about the fictional story of an ancient sword master Miyamoto Musashi, who invented a grilled miso dish with garlic. He made this part of the course. The fictional tale does not give ground to the tradition but makes it more interesting and entertaining.	
Letting customers derive their own interpretation	The chef does not explain his design ideas to customers and let customers derive their own interpretation. He emphasized the term "diffuse reflection" rather than linear reflection.	"Only a small percentage of customers can articulate their interpretation. A musician in New York, a Japanese playing percussion, cried easting the course. I did not make her cry. She is so sensitive as to create a drama within herself." He often used the expression that customers can sense some abstract theme, season or ideas: "It is idealistic that the autumn spreads over within the mouth (秋が口の中に広がる)." It is up to the customer whether she can feel the autumn in the mouth but this is what the chef tries to create.	Keeping the design details implicit for embodied experiences
Letting customers feel the theme and the course	No explanation is given to the theme or no written menu is provided unless asked. The chef treats his course as a story to experience like opera and musicals.	In June, he picked the theme of pickled plum, which he is known for. He adds the plum in many dishes but does not reveal it: "I add it but it cannot be sensed. It is very interesting that the plum flavor disappears." The chef often cooks with charcoal grill in front of customers. The temperature is rather low but customers think it is very high. Using	

TABLE 1 (Continued)

First-order concepts	Description	Examples	Second-order themes
		this gap of perception, he cooks Japanese lobster and abalone at a lower temperature—usually customers would find tepid food untasteful. In this case, the chef not only discloses the technique but deceive their perception.	
Letting customers feel the techniques and skills	No explanation is given to the techniques and skills. A simple dish may require much skill, time and effort but is simply presented.	The chef uses drained yogurt in Tofu sauce to make the sauce finer. This is simply presented as white Tofu sauce (白和え), never mentions yogurt, rarely used in *Kaiseki*. He mixes one expensive sea food in soy sauce to match with abalone. The expensive seafood is typically a main ingredient to showcase but not mentioned in this case.	
Extending traditional techniques	The chef seeks to refine traditional techniques and stretch what they can do. He takes a very old technique like konjak and tofu and reframe them differently.	The chef makes tofu himself and explored various different kinds of tofu such as shrimp tofu and suppon (soft turtle) tofu. He also explored various ways of smoking. Smoked tofu is one of his inventions. He also imitated smoke by grilling eggplant and putting grilled duck on top of it to create the smoked duck flavor.	Respond to the current state of the culinary culture to show what the chef can do better and differently
Decomposing and recomposing an existing dish	He takes a familiar dish, decomposes and recomposes it in a refined way to make something different.	He made Tofu by jelling Yuba, tofu skin; Yuba is made as the skin of soy milk in the process of making Tofu and is part of Tofu. He broke up Tofu first and then putting it back together into another kind of Tofu. Cucumber sandwich is rebuilt as a fried cucumber with egg yolk vinegar sauce (kimizu).	
Matching a familiar ingredient with something new	The chef develops his own style of matching fruits with seafood. Fruits are rarely used in *Kaiseki* except for dessert. He experiments with various combinations.	Grilled octopus is matched with roasted cheese and mango sauce. He went beyond seafood as well. Strawberry is served with green onion and smoked tofu. Tofu is not usually served with fruits. He also combined grapefruits, mustard green, and steamed chicken with a white tofu sauce.	
Replicating a foreign dish in a *Kaiseki* way	The chef often tries to replicate the dish that he has experienced in a foreign country. He penetrates and discovers some secret ingredients or techniques and seeks to refine them.	The chef heard about a German dish of potato that is mashed and baked and created his version using sea urchin inside. He also replicated a potato salad, with kimizu (egg yolk) sauce, which works in place of mayonnaise and added fried and grilled tofu and small grapes and finalized it with grated yuzu citrus.	Responding to the foreign culinary culture to show the *Kaiseki* chef can do better and differently
Exploring a use of a special foreign element	After the chef encountered a foreign material such as cheese that has little odor and clear taste, he then explores various ways of using it.	The chef encountered a renowned whisky blender, who wrote a book titled, "Whisky is Japanese alcohol." He started to explore ways of using whisky both in the dish and as accompanying drinks.	

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

First-order concepts	Description	Examples	Second-order themes
		He also developed a style of using various kind vinegar such as apple vinegar and tomato vinegar. He claims that balsamic can be part of Japanese cuisine as it should have traveled to China through the silk road and tastes similar to Chinese black vinegar.	
Displacement of an element in a different form	He takes something foreign to *Kaiseki* and adopts it as part of the course or displaced a familiar item in a foreign domain.	He adopted fried oyster in *Kaiseki*. Fried oyster is a typical Western-inspired dish made at home. He had served this large summer oyster raw but a customer asked it to be fried. Since then, he incorporated it as part of the course and made a special tomato sauce. He made ice cream of white radish with gin and of bamboo shoots with gin; white radish and bamboo shoots are a typical vegetable used in the course, but not in dessert. This is a reverse case where the familiar with displaced.	
Balancing with addition of a Japanese element	To bring a foreign looking dish to Japanese, the chef adds one ingredient such as wasabi and sesame.	The red leaf shaped carrot with red wine is made into Japanese by adding sesame on top of it. He made a chestnut cooked with wine and rum but added soy sauce to render it Japanese: "It went too far and I added soy sauce to bring it back."	Bringing together disparate elements retrospectively
Balancing with other mundane dish	The chef contrasts a novel dish that may not easily fall into *Kaiseki* and some mundane, typical *Kaiseki* dish to show the *Kaiseki* identity but also the breadth of his skills.	"Perhaps, if we make something in full speed, customers are overwhelmed and cannot enjoy the dish… So I add something relaxed and something very simple together." The other chef said something similar: "For the customer, it is not clearly perceived and somehow their attention is directed over there. If we present all the things with a strong message, the customer would be tired and cannot sustain their attention for the later part of the course."	
Creating an alibi for deviation	Often, he gives a verbal explanation to how the novel dish that has not been part of *Kaiseki* can be considered Japanese.	He used the fact that garlic had been used in an ancient Japanese culinary tradition, before the culture of *Kaiseki* to justify his use of garlic. He makes bouillabaisse, a typical French dish, saying that it can be considered Japanese and in fact he can make it better, with Japanese seafood. Tomato, for him, is for the umami flavor, which is familiar to the Japanese culture.	

on to designing each dish, by typically picking key ingredients. He went to the market every morning at six and procured fish, meat, vegetables, fruits and other materials (see also Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). He emphasized the importance of staying informed about the seasonal ingredients. He said:

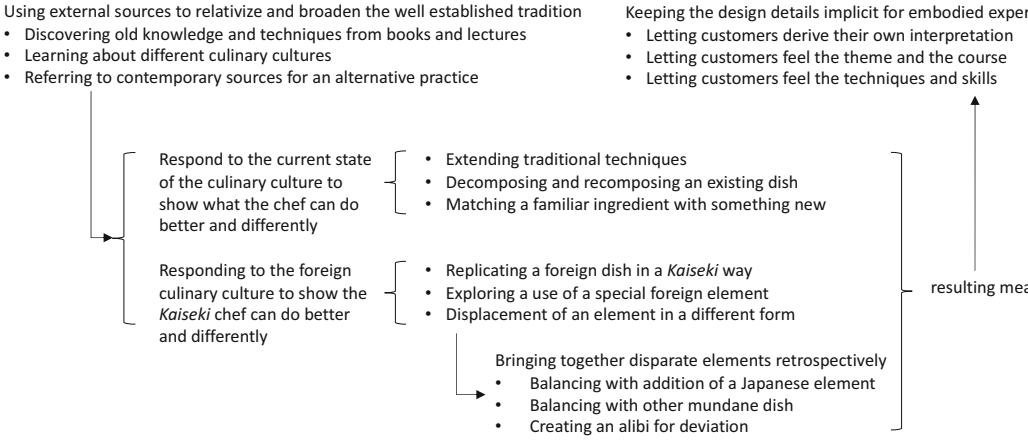

FIGURE 1 Summary of design practices.

> *It is challenging to come up with the menu every month. … If you go to the market everyday, you discern which ingredients are emerging in the season and then design dishes. … You know there are handbooks of ingredients. But seasonal items circulate based on completely different routines from season to season.*

He was also aware of the daily price changes; early season materials and fish on stormy days tend to be expensive.

Once the design orientation was set by the first move, he then constructed the dish by combining materials. For this, he considered the match between ingredients in terms of texture, flavor, and color. There is in fact a traditional concept *deai-mon*, or literally "encounter," of juxtaposing unusual ingredients. Typically, something from the sea and something from the mountain are matched for interesting flavors, for example, bamboo shoots and seaweeds, and eggplants and red herring. The constraints in preparation and presentation were important. If several complicated preparation methods were used at the same time, the staff members would be overwhelmed. To avoid this, he combined the dishes that could be prepared beforehand and those that could be made right before serving in order to manage the workload.

This whole design process is traditional as *Kaiseki* is organized around seasonal ingredients and based on such design principles as *demai-mon*. The resulting dishes are presented in traditional plates and bowls, for example, ceramics and lacquerware, and with natural color schemes. Furthermore, the chef repetitively designed the course menu every month in the same *Kaiseki* format described above, conforming to the tradition in this sense. Yet, the analysis revealed that each design within the course is novel and appears to deviate from the tradition. We next delve into various aspects of this relationship between innovativeness and tradition.

4.2 | Explicit references to tradition

Now we explain the findings in the order summarized in Table 1. We identified three kinds of references to books, recipes, and other media on tradition. First, the chef studied traditional recipes and culture in general, for example, customs, rituals, and art. He read books and attended some lectures—particularly, lectures organized by the local trade association. Yet, he used such a study differently from what the literature suggests (Cappelen & Pedersen, 2021; Erdogan et al., 2020; Hatch & Schultz, 2017; Messeni Petruzzelli & Savino, 2014; Ravasi et al., 2019). He did not discover the tradition as an outsider but sought information that could deepen his already

deep knowledge of the tradition. For instance, he mentioned a book published in 1782 titled *One Hundred Delicacies with Tofu* but did not use any of the recipes in the book. He was inspired by the fact that the people in the Edo era were keen on inventing ways to enjoy the benign item like Tofu.

> *The book was published in the time when the economy was rather booming, and the price of tofu, as somebody analyzed, was similar to the price now, it is cheap. Why did they come up with 100 recipes? People had been eating well and satiated…, the author proposed reconsidering the attitude toward food, showing the variety of good dishes one can prepare using an ordinary ingredient like Tofu… We now see chefs use foie gras and caviars, but… I choose the side of* One Hundred Delicacies of Tofu. *I have to use expensive items to make the course look gorgeous, but at the end of the day I would like to make the other kind of expression.*

He thus obtained inspiration for the style of practice rather than a specific tradition. Similarly he learned from a lecture that the Japanese used to eat a lot of garlics, an item rarely used in *Kaiseki*, more than 1500 years ago, before *Kaiseki* tradition was created, and used this information to justify his use of garlic in some instances.

> *[A scholar] gave a lecture and explained that Japan had the history of using spicy flavors and in fact much garlics in the Heian period. I thought garlics would be too much but if we use spices in this hidden manner, it would work well. Unless you are told, you don't notice it but it worked well this time.*

Here, he did not discover the tradition and then designed a dish but the other way around; he designed the dish and used the ancient piece of information to justify it.

He also learned about different culinary cultures both by eating at restaurants of all kinds (Lane & Lup, 2015; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007) and by being trained. For instance, he obtained the title of Chevaliers du Tastevin of Burgundy, France, a protector of Burgundy wine. This was the tradition foreign to him. He learned about wine and offered a sizable list of wine and adapts the course to some of the wine.

Finally, he referred to many contemporary sources of information such as film, novels and comic (manga) for inspiration. For instance, a university professor on Chinese literature wrote fictional stories in which many strange dishes were mentioned. He read about bamboo shoots with vinegar sauce and the chef wanted to realize it and, after some experimentation, discovered a specific kind of vinegar can be used for this purpose. Note that this recipe was fictional and most recipes in the book did not make sense; but still he found it intriguing. He did not need any authentic information to comply with tradition.

4.3 | Keeping the design details implicit for embodied experiences

To contrast with the explicit use of references to tradition, we next discuss how he presents his own course. We were surprised to learn that the chef or the service staff members did not explain the dishes much to customers. The employee explained the category and some of the ingredients, for example, "This is a soup with icefish" and "These are sashimi, red snapper on your left, cuttlefish behind it…" The chef's intention is rarely explained. The chef in fact refused to explain much at all.

> *What I am considering is the diffuse reflection (乱反射), we cannot fill the gap, the customers are eating and create their own world and we cannot intrude into it. The customers cannot intrude into the world I am imagining, either. By the diffuse reflection I mean that the dish between me and the customer casts unpredictable lights and various interpretations. Like you cry by listening to the song of unrequited love.*

He also does not like the idea of showing the written course menu, as he said, "if customers ask for the menu, we provide it, but I basically think it's no fun to eat the meal by looking at it; as if they looked at the plot while watching a film… where is the fun?" Here, he mentioned that knowing what comes next in the course undermines the experience of the story. We can clearly see that the chef wants customers to experience the course as an event unfolding without giving much explanation.

We observed this when we visited many other *Kaiseki* restaurants in Japan. Another *Kaiseki* chef, who participated in the workshop that our chef organized, said something similar.

> *We can come up to a certain level of skills through big steps but after some point, our perspiration comes as the work of piling really thin layers of paper. You don't notice them if it is one or two sheets of paper, but if 10 or 20 are piled, you can see the thickness. As a customer, you don't know what exactly it was but you feel that the meal was somehow good. Big impression is left on them that this restaurant is different from others… Comfortableness is something like that. Because you don't notice it, not what you make an effort on or hear explicitly about, the fact that you don't explicitly receive anything makes it comfortable.*

Because customers come to *Kaiseki* restaurant to experience tradition, which has largely been lost in the contemporary everyday lives, the staff explains the tradition if possible; for instance, in June aristocracy in the past enjoyed ice that had been kept in a cool cave and therefore some of the dish has connotations of ice. Yet, the intention behind the design, for example, why the chef extended or deviated from tradition, is rarely revealed.

He does not reveal the theme, either. The September theme was spiciness and bitterness: "There is a passed down wisdom in China, that in September, to prepare our body for the transition from the summer heat to coldness, spiciness is quite effective." Then, he added various kinds of spiciness and bitterness, for example, wasabi, hot flavor of white radish, bitter gourd, black seven spices, and black pepper. Importantly, he explained that this theme must be hidden from customers: "We use various kinds of spiciness while hiding them," and "I can use the spices without customers noticing them."

The chef also did not reveal the techniques and skills to customers. For instance, he added a hint of vanilla to make a dish sweet without adding any sugar. The aroma creates the sweetness without the actual sweetness. The memory of the vanilla aroma involves the sweetness. But he did not add too much so that the customer would not notice the vanilla aroma. Sometimes, he added pepper to kill the subtle flavor of vanilla so that the customers would have no clue.

Therefore, the chef explicitly explained some peripheral aspects of the dish but made the core ideas implicit. In this sense, the tradition that is explicitly conveyed—the tradition that can be treated as an object—is only a small part of the experience. The large part of the tradition remains implicit.

4.4 | Making *Kaiseki* better and different

Next, we move to the chef's design practices. The chef was not trying to merely satisfy customers. Like an artist, he "responds to" the present state of the culture and society and proposes something better and different. He experienced what other chefs have done and sought to demonstrate that he could do it better and differently, not imitating it. Through this, he stretched or extended tradition. We examine three patterns of this in turn.

4.4.1 | Extending traditional techniques

The chef sought to stretch the traditional techniques. The chef invented a technique of making konjac, a traditional chewy item, without the typical odor. The special potato of which konjac is made requires special processing that

inevitably adds a characteristic odor. Because of this odor, konjac are not used for soup, which requires a subtle aroma. It is not served in dessert, either, for the same reason. It was used mostly in a grilled or stewed dish that can be matched with strong sauce diffusing the odor. The chef invented a technique to make konjac without odor and explored ways of using it in soup and in dessert. He said, "In truth, I have always wanted to use konjac; so if it is not possible this month, maybe next month."

Similarly, he invented new recipes using traditional ingredients. One was Ebiimo, a potato for which the region is well known. This potato has a very fine texture when smashed; the chef said, "It is Japanese cream." The chef then started to use it for many dishes, for example, "Ebiimo crème brûlée." The "crème" of the potato is substituted in the lactic. Crème brûlée is familiar to the Japanese and probably to many foreigners who come to this restaurant, but the use of the regional signature potato was a new idea.

The chef did not go through the typical apprenticeship. He acquired the techniques over the years through books and conversations with other chefs but had to invent most of them on his own. He said:

> *…the methods I have developed myself are quite different from [other chefs']… There are two ways to boil ingredients, for instance, one is to extract the gelatin from inside and the other is to quickly add gelatin from outside… If you cook long and wait for it to come out, you lose the highest point where you get the most power from the ingredient. But there are some ingredients for which you need to wait. You need to know the two methods and use them freely. But many chefs tend to try to cook longer.*

He does not follow the techniques blindly. While the chef knows and practices traditional techniques, he has the advantage of having invented his own techniques and can adopt and extend them freely.

4.4.2 | Decomposing and recomposing an existing dish

He often took a familiar dish and decomposed it and then recomposed it back together in a refined form. He did this with Ayu fish, which is a delicacy in summer. Usually, Ayu fish is grilled on a charcoal directly as a whole. The fat coming out of the fish itself is used to deep fry the hard head part so that the whole fish can be eaten even including the bones and the stomach—if not too large. The bitterness of the stomach is part of the delicacy. This is served with a bitter Tade (*Persicaria*) sauce.

The chef decomposed the fish into three pieces, two pieces of flesh and the middle bones. He then lightly fried the flesh parts and marinated with vinegar sauce. He then deep fried the bones to allow it to be eaten easily. He then made the puree of the stomach and jellied it together with Tade. He said, "We can let customers eat the bones. When the fish gets bigger, they leave the bones… But this way they can eat the bones." This Ayu is refined in a sense that each part is prepared in its best way and put them together to form the traditional whole.

4.4.3 | Matching a familiar ingredient with something new

The third way to make a traditional *Kaiseki* dish better and different was to develop his own style of matching a familiar *Kaiseki* ingredient with a foreign ingredient. One of his signature styles was the combination of seafood with fruits. While fruits are rarely used within *Kaiseki* except for the dessert, he discovered that seafood and fruits can produce a good match. For instance, he served abalone with mango. During our observation, he explored this style in many new ways. A staff member said, "It appears strange for customers that fruits and fish can go well together." Many customers said, "Wow!" and "What is this!?"

The chef used apple in Kabura-mushi, a typical dish in December. Usually, this dish is made of Kabura radish; the ground radish is covered with thick soup. In November, he used apple instead of this radish. The appearance is

similar and traditional but completely different taste. A sliced red snapper is hidden under the ground apple covered with the soup. The chef himself considered this dish as unusual, "I don't know a restaurant that makes something like this!? Can I really keep going like this?" (jokingly). It was clear that he himself found it unusual. The chef and the staff all agreed that this dish is a good one and offered it to customers.

4.5 | Making a foreign dish better and different

4.5.1 | Replicating a foreign dish in a *Kaiseki* way

The chef himself eats broadly, not only Japanese but any kinds of cuisine. At one time, he mastered Korean palace cuisine, and then delved into Chinese and Thai. Then, he often went to France, Italy, and other European countries to explore cutting-edge culinary culture. For him, it was meaningless to separate these different kinds of cuisines. He responded to what he has experienced himself as customer.

For instance, he mentioned several times that he wanted to make a dish that he had experienced in a Chinese restaurant in London, "lobster with ginger." He was intrigued by the flavor and analyzed it and finally discerned the use of whisky in the sauce. He himself was keen on whisky.

> *We visited a restaurant… in London and ate the dish called a "lobster with ginger," you crack the shell by hand and wath the hand in the finger bowl. It was actually a crab, not a lobster. Then, I examined the flavor and inquire into how to make it, and finally penetrated (見抜いた) that they used whisky.*

Note that he emphasized the fact that he penetrated the dish and identified the secret ingredient. This implies almost like a contentious engagement with another chef; he tried to prove that he could master what the other chef did and do it in his own way.

He also responded to what other players—not only fellow chefs—did. For instance, a large corporation in Japan started to market *Ponzu* jelly sauce (citrus with soy sauce). The chef had made the same ponzu jelly sauce for a long time and wanted to show that he could do it even better. So, he decided to use it on top of grilled duck. Yet, he started to make it even more interesting, balsamic jelly sauce. In the end, he combined duck, French pear and balsamic jelly sauce. Because this was completely western style, he added a little white sesame seeds on top to render it Japanese: "It becomes Japanese if you put a little sesame on it, white sesame." We discuss this little addition below.

4.5.2 | Exploring a use of a special foreign element

Another style he started to explore was the use of lactic ingredients, particularly cheese. This exploration started when he encountered a cheese maker who was making craft cheese in Japan. One particular cheese had a very clear taste with little odor and could be grilled slightly to create an elastic texture. The lack of odor and the subtle flavor made it useful for *Kaiseki*. At one night, a customer revealed that she could not eat shellfish and the chef quickly came up with the idea of grilling this cheese instead: "This is the first time to use cheese, well we have not encountered such a cheese." The customer liked it very much.

In the next month, he decided to put it in the soup. The soup is quite sensitive as the central feature of this soup is the water. This restaurant uses the water from the well in the premise, where the water from the mountain arrives after 30 years through strata. Then, the broth is made with dried kelp and bonito flakes, with a pinch of salt. The broth feels sweet although no sweetness is added. The kelp and bonito add amino acid and the salt emphasizes the sweetness. Due to this delicate flavor, chefs typically avoid adding anything strong, like cheese, but the lack of

odor made this particular cheese usable. This surprising combination reveals and heightens both the unusual nature of the cheese and the delicacy of the soup.

4.5.3 | Displacement of an element in a different form

The chef appropriated shaved ice as an appetizer. Shaved ice is a typical summer sweet dessert; with sweet syrup flavored as strawberry and watermelon. He came up with watermelon juice with some broth and vinegar taste. Then, he chose several summer vegetables to put under the shaved ice such as lotus roots, sweet potatoes and spaghetti squash. He then added shiitake mushroom cooked sweet to make complex flavors. He himself was excited about this, saying, "This is completely unusual… This has a big impact." Typically, he has several small dishes assorted on a large plate for appetizers, but this time he decided to use this alone as a single appetizer.

4.6 | Bringing together disparate elements retrospectively

We have seen three ways to incorporate foreign elements into *Kaiseki*. Next, we discuss three ways to formulate such foreign-appearing dishes as part of the traditional *Kaiseki* style. First, the chef added some signature Japanese ingredient to bring the deviated dish into Japanese, as we have seen in the case of sesame on top of the duck, pear and cheese. The chef similarly decided to use banana and came up with the banana wasabi cream. He said, "It is the first time to use the raw cream in the course." He added wasabi to render it Japanese: "Although we find cream repulsive, but if you put wasabi, it becomes acceptable."

The chef used a second kind of practice of balancing with other mundane dish. That is to say, by juxtaposing a novel item with a prototypical *Kaiseki* dish, he could not only maintain the overall *Kaiseki* style but also show the breadth of his practices. As customers have seen red leaves in November and some still in early December, he came up with using a red carrot cut out into the shape of an autumn leave in the December course. In addition, *kintoki* carrot, with characteristic red color, was a signature vegetable in winter. He boiled it with red wine, to heighten the red color for the red leave and added a variety of spices to create a complex flavor. This was an unusual carrot dish. The chef said, "Well, I would like to include something weird like this." He certainly recognized the danger of adding something "weird." He then balances this with something more benign and familiar.

> *…as the alibi for doing as much as this [weird thing] we make the boiled white radish. We keep the balance, this weird thing can be an entertaining novelty. But if we only made this one, then we would lose the credibility, it would become just a strange idea. So if we come up with something new, we need to come up with a contrast, otherwise the experience will dissipate, so we need to hold it on.*

The boiled radish looks simple but requires much work and skills. He said, "To boil the white radish, I add a hint of sugar; the diastase [in the radish] would chemically combine with the sugar and drain out. So, I take out the spiciness without actually adding the sugar sweetness, and let the broth seep into the radish." Making this kind of simple dish with care and solid skill demonstrates that he has the capability to do the traditional dish properly. This gives him an excuse to deviate and add something unusual.

The third practice was to use rhetoric to justify what he has made should in fact be considered as Japanese. We have seen this above in the case of garlic. He cited history to justify the use of cream: "Then, the flavor called *Daigomi* in the Heian era was probably similar to this, somehow between cheese and cream." That is to say, he implied that the ancient Japanese cuisine had this kind of lactic ingredient. The phrase *Daigomi* remains part of the everyday Japanese language and any Japanese customer knows it. Although the *Kaiseki* tradition does not use milk or cream, he referred to the history prior to *Kaiseki* to justify it. Again he does not necessarily explain this to

customers but can justify his dish when challenged. We also suspect that he wanted to justify his design to himself as well.

5 | DISCUSSION

5.1 | Tradition as capacity

We asked how a traditional craftsperson can produce innovation from within repetition. Prior studies on innovation and tradition have treated tradition largely as an object to discover, restore and use. Tradition is then something given from outside the present practice, namely the past and often a distant one. However, this view of tradition as object retrieved from outside limits our view of the generative and innovative aspect of tradition in craft. Process thinking suggests tradition is more lively and dynamic; it holds a capacity for innovating through repeating. We examined the *Kaiseki* chef's practices that are already traditional but produce constant novelty, and revealed several ways of innovation from within tradition. We will begin by summarizing the findings in theoretical terms and then will discuss the theoretical implications.

First, the chef did not retrieve and use the tradition such as recipes and ingredients during the observation. What he was doing and producing was already traditional and there was no explicit tradition he imported from outside his everyday practices. We have seen that when the chef explicitly made a reference to tradition, such as old recipes and techniques, he was using it to relativize and broaden the already established tradition he practiced. For instance, he went back to the history prior to *Kaiseki* and justified the use of cream and garlics. He also gained inspiration from old recipe books, not for a specific recipe or ingredient to appropriate but the style and attitude, for example, his style of crafting ordinary elements extraordinary. The chef used the explicit references in the opposite manner than what the literature suggests, namely discovering traditional ingredients and recipes and restoring the tradition (Cappelen & Pedersen, 2021; Erdogan et al., 2020; Messeni Petruzzelli & Savino, 2014). He used them to distance himself from the tradition, as if he wanted to more clearly learn where its limits were in order to know how to move beyond them.

Then, where was the tradition? We suggest that his ways of working were tradition*ing* themselves, not specific objects—material or discursive—as the tradition. The *traditioning* was in the capacity to creatively respond to tradition. The chef was constantly responding to what has been done in the field, both the immediate field of *Kaiseki* but also the larger field of culinary tradition including other Asian, Western, and commercial food culture. He did not imitate what has been done but rather demonstrated his capacity to do the same in his own ways. His craft sought to demonstrate what *Kaiseki* could become. He extended traditional techniques such as konjac and Tofu to use these materials in new ways and explored his unique style of mixing fruits and seafood. He also took a familiar traditional dish and deconstructed it by breaking it apart and putting it together in a refined manner. We have also seen him appropriating foreign dishes and doing them in his own way as well as incorporating a foreign element. He also constantly expanded the boundary by incorporating something foreign to *Kaiseki*.

In this manner, the chef did not consecrate the tradition retrieved from the past. Instead, he took advantage of anything available to find better ways to respond to what has been done. He used some contemporary literary texts including manga. Indeed, he sometimes resorted to several traditional recipes such as boiled white radish. Yet, in this case, he emphasized that it was difficult and time consuming to make such dishes and thereby he could demonstrate his skills. Perfecting tradition was thus not excluded, but it only takes him to the limit of tradition. What was interesting, in this case, is that he used this perfecting as an excuse to explore wild ways to respond to the tradition; deviations are allowed once he demonstrates his traditional skills, his craft. In this sense, the seemingly static traditional dishes were used as part of his portfolio of unique responses, his becoming traditional: traditioning.

Customers, on the other hand, are not necessarily traditioning although fellow chefs and culinary experts sometimes come to his restaurant. Most customers, also with Japanese origin, live in modern and western lifestyle and are

not necessarily familiar with many elements of the Japanese *Kaiseki* tradition. Therefore, he needed to carefully think about how his dishes looked traditional. When he deviated too much from what is considered as *Kaiseki* according to the dominant way of understanding tradition, he added some Japanese element such as sesame, wasabi, and soy sauce to bring it close to Japanese, encouraging the conclusion that it was traditionally Japanese craft, for example, reference to umami flavor of tomatoes and garlics being a regular ingredient in the long past. Such explicit references to tradition were used only retrospectively after he had conceived the dish. Here, tradition embodied in the resulting object is more like a disguise.

When he responds to the tradition in his own ways, he offers his work for others to respond to. In this sense, his courses are similar to artwork presented by artists. He lets others derive their own interpretation and hopefully produce their own responses. Therefore, the chef made his design details hidden from customers and let customers feel and sense his dishes and make their own interpretations. He does not want to fix the meaning of the work and instead leaves it open to possible responses. This implicit meanings behind the craft objects imply tradition as capacity to respond, performed in traditioning. We cannot define and fix the tradition in some words; tradition escapes representation, but performs its potential to become differentiated.

5.2 | Difference in repetition

The capacity to respond is precisely what Deleuze (1994) sought to explain in his treatise on difference in repetition, on how novelty and difference can be created from within repetition, for example, speaking the language that is handed down but in novel ways: "being a foreigner in one's own tongue" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, pp. 114–115). We rely on his theory to draw implications from the findings. Deleuze showed that repetition, as in craft, is not imitation of the same but a "response" to an encounter with a "problem" (p. 107, p. 164). Instead of merely repeating the same thing, one encounters a problem, which then demands a response, questioning the limit of existing solutions.

What has been done in the field poses a problem to the chef—it is an encounter with a limit. In the tradition*ing* move, he then responds in his own way by creating rather than conforming. Deleuze presented this response as a form of "learning" (p. 164). He wrote, "We learn nothing from those who say, 'Do as I do.' … Our only teachers are those who tells us to 'do with me,'" (p. 23) implying that the learning is not about imitating the procedure given by the teacher but about finding ways to respond together with the teacher. Even the most solid tradition, for example, a dish fettered to a season like *Kaburamushi* in December, the chef did not treat as given but as a problem to respond to, trying to do it better than what has been done before, including what he himself has done before. Craft as a job done well for its own sake (Sennett, 2008) places the maker in a position where how tradition has become what it is transparent to the maker. This is how she or she masters tradition, and also how a creative response, bringing tradition beyond itself—traditioning—is incipient.

We emphasize repetition because the chef was engaged in the recurrent practices of designing the course within the same traditional format, rather than confronting something foreign and sacred that serves as an origin to model after. Deleuze (1994) used repetition not to mean doing the same but to refer to the condition where nothing is privileged as a transcendent principle. The chef treated everything as useful hints for his response, without consecrating one of them. This helps explain how innovation can be produced from repetition. Innovation and tradition are contradictory only if we consider tradition as object, as something given and fixed. If we see tradition as part of the practice that repeats, traditioning as a process concept of enacting a temporality that opens for stretching tradition beyond its limits, then we see innovative craft is needed to make tradition *become*.

The chef's practice was in this sense at stake: Would it pass the "test" of repetition (Deleuze, 1994, p. 41)? The difference is not true difference if it is made against the identity of a given model. In contrast, true difference must be affirmative on its own, not negation of something else. Traditioning can thus be understood as an affirmation of tradition's potential to become other than it is. If a craftsperson begins with a right model and then deviates from it—negation—then the practice does not show the difference in itself, but only the appearance of difference. Repetitive

practices are tested to see whether the difference is truly affirmative. Traditioning practices face this test by seeking to respond to the problem in their own way. True, the chef tried explicitly to do something different from what has been done, but it was not to present the difference qua negation (difference for the sake of difference) but to develop his own distinct response.

To show the true difference within what appears to be the same, traditioning takes the practice beyond its limits. The resulting course is traditioning only when the difference is pushed to the "extreme" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 41). In a sense, it inevitably looks extreme because there is no correct model that fixes a correct answer. More importantly, as much as it is a test to pass, the chef needed to test his own capacity and thereby push his capacity to extreme. This is why we observed the chef making his dishes constantly with some audience in mind, not necessarily the immediate customers but also what past and present craft masters have done. Traditioning, we can say, needs itself to be affirmed for it to pass the test by bringing tradition beyond itself. Craft is often considered individualistically as the dedication of the whole person but at the same time collectively as rooted in the community (e.g., Kroezen et al., 2021). The response has to be one's own but also is collective as long as it is a response to what the community of makers has done.

Finally, the resulting course meal is traditional in "disguise" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 105). We have seen that the chef at times provoked tradition only retrospectively to make what he had made appear traditional. The resulting work that looks traditional is only an alibi; the traditioning lies in the capacity to respond, not in the result. Furthermore, to maintain the dynamic of the tradition as capacity, the chef kept the possibility of response open by not explaining his intentions, meanings and techniques to customers: He wanted others to respond to his dish in their own ways. Fixing the meaning of the design by explaining it would shut the possibility of further responding. Responding is done through performing, enacting a temporality of traditioning, that demonstrates the difference of tradition beyond its limits.

5.3 | Theoretical implications

We do share the view that innovation can build effectively on reflection on the past (Dacin et al., 2019; De Massis et al., 2016; Ravasi et al., 2019). In addition to what prior studies have discussed, this study revealed two novel roles that the past can play. First, the past is what the craftsperson responds to. What has been done in his field of practice is the most salient past that triggered the chef's responses. Because he wanted to improve upon what has been done, we are seeing the continuous improvements made by one craftsperson after another over a long period of time. Here, the continuation is not as important as the will to do things better. Nor is the past exalted to the state of awe, and the craftsperson's status and standing might be an important capacity to resist tradition as commanding primarily continuation of the past. The past set the condition upon which to make tradition become beyond its limit.

Second, the past plays the role of a "test." New designs are tested against the host of past works. The designers are faced with the question whether their response is good enough in light of the past works. For instance, the family mottos service this purpose in that whatever the current generation of the family does is tested against what previous generations have left (Sasaki et al., 2020). Although this aspect of the past has not been explicitly discussed in the literature, we believe this is important because here the past plays an active role. The past is not simply retrieved from the dormant state but is always there as a limit. Sensing where this limit is drawn is a question of having developed craft's intimate relationship with tradition. Rather than being a limit that commands obedience or pulls toward status quo, our case shows that the limit gives reasons to affirm traditioning, the practice of enacting a temporality that makes tradition go beyond itself, an entrepreneurial process we would argue.

Although the tradition as capacity to respond and pass the test was identified as an important concept for understanding the innovation from within tradition, or traditioning, questions can be raised as to how relevant the findings are in various other settings. In settings where tradition is retrieved from outside, the conceptualization of

tradition as object is salient. Nonetheless, prior studies have shown a variety of creative ways to reinterpret and revive the object of tradition in new contexts; and the concept of tradition as capacity to respond can help examine such creative practices further. Specifically, there is a possibility that the tradition as object triggers the development of tradition as capacity. In Ravasi et al. (2019), while Vespa and Ducati designers held the past models as given and sought not to deviate from them, we argue that they still had to acquire the capacity to respond to the past models in new ways. This has not been discussed much and can be explored further. Because the present study examined the case of an already mature and well-respected master, we missed the opportunity to analyze such learning and transformational processes. While this kind of nuanced discussion has yet to be developed in the craft literature, we believe the distinction between tradition as object and as capacity helps advance the discussion in this direction.

Similarly, the outsider's perspective is often important for craft. For instance, Sasaki et al. (2021) revealed that when the traditional capacity was used to design a completely new product for a foreign market, cultural intermediaries played an important role in translating this tradition to the context of the local market. The intermediaries can take some distance from tradition and thereby free themselves to consider radical new possibilities of tradition. That is to say, there is an advantage in treating tradition as object, brought from outside. In our language, we see the role of intermediaries to guide the craftspeople to discern what to respond to. The craftspeople often seek hints to find new traditions to respond to. This is why the chef we observed sought inspiration from ancient texts, not for specific recipes but for a hint to free himself (an entrepreneurial move). This also means that tradition as capacity is still needed to respond in a novel manner, but the tradition as object is also critical.

Tradition as object can be important in another way, as an empty signifier (Cappelen & Pedersen, 2021). While the tradition as capacity manifests itself within the repetitive cycle of response, such an empty signifier can introduce a large change that transforms the repetitive cycle altogether. As the same practice is given a different name, it may obtain new connections and new possibilities. This implies that the tradition as capacity to respond has a larger context in which it is always already given a direction. We did not necessarily analyze this larger context, and is something that could be included in future studies.

In relation to this issue, we need to discuss one caveat on the agency of responding, which this study did not address explicitly. Just as Hatch and Schultz (2017) suggest, we should consider tradition as capacity beyond skills of a single subject. Relational process philosophy suggests we think the capacity as a whole "assemblage" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013; Hjorth, 2014; Hjorth & Holt, 2024) of knowledge and techniques in the field, past examples accumulated through generations, discourses shared among chefs and with customers, and ingredients available in nature. This, assembled by a desire for great cooking, allows the assemblage rather than the chef to become that phenomenon of distributed agentic relationships that make tradition innovatively become different (Barad, 2007). We can now describe such an assemblage as generating a temporality for innovative practice we have called traditioning, a point to be developed further in future research.

6 | CONCLUSION

In a time characterized by a search for new economic models for creating value, with an ethics of care, priority of quality, and sustainable social and environmental relations, tradition and craft have gained much attention (Bell & Vachhani, 2020). Yet, tradition is often said to be at odds with innovation and creation of novel value. We propose that our study of innovative traditional craft can contribute to opening up a novel area of entrepreneurship, centered on a creative exploration of tradition as a source of difference. *Kaiseki* chefs are also entrepreneurs who need to constantly create value to attract new and repeating customers while at the same time exhibiting their homage to tradition as the primary legitimizing cultural resource (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). This study has shown one avenue of understanding how entrepreneurial practices can create novel value based on traditioning while something innovative is created and affirmed.

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