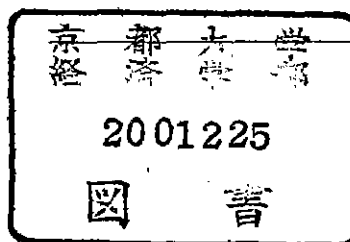


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A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF JAPANESE PICKLES.

1. "The deliciousness of home-made pickles is an indication of the efficient household management of a good housewife and commonly should be a matter of envy for all". This remark contained in the introduction to a work on Japanese pickles "*Tsukemono Hayashinan*" (漬物早指南 Primarily a guide to the art of pickling) written by an Edo wholesale dealer of these relishes in the seventh year of the Tempō Era (1836), is often quoted with much vigour even to-day, whenever a criticism is passed by a casual observer of the household management of present-day housewives. Whether the assertion be true or not, I do not care to decide, especially in view of the fact that the inhabitants of great cities today regard simplicity as the most convenient mode of life, and further because of the fact that our taste for our customary foodstuffs from the days of old seems to have vanished with others of our old ways and habits in these days of the new era the novel. What I propose to do here is to note freely our pickles from the historical standpoint of culture.

2. The kitchens of farm houses are usually spacious like those of Buddhist temples, not because farmers have often to entertain guests as in the cases of priests, but because seemingly of a necessity of their husbandry. As is the case in other countries, our common agricultural pursuits are not limited only to the cultivation of the soil, or irrigation; on the contrary they necessarily involve manufacturing processes which are performed at home with the help of our housewives. For example, in the preparation of the rice-cake, the native fare in several festivals, women mingle the rice in the mortar to help their husbands who do

the heavy work of pounding. Some such manufacturing processes are performed, of course, on the field itself, but most of them are carried out in the farmer's house. The kitchen, therefore, has been and is now a kind of a workshop and hence, necessity demanded it to be spacious. On the other hand, most of our farm products are seasonable and cannot be preserved for any length of time without some process of preservation, and for this reason fruits and vegetables especially are preserved as pickles in all countries, both in the East and the West.

3. François Appert, who was a French chef to Christian VII, King of Denmark, about 120 years ago, was the first European to invent in modern times an efficient method of preserving foodstuffs. His method was to preserve foodstuffs by air-tight jars in which they are kept, a method which was found by French scholars acting under instructions from the French Government, to be so perfect that the inventor was awarded a prize of 12,000 francs. He then put forth the subject of, his invention in a book entitled "*Le livre de tous les menages, ou l'art de conserver pendant plusieurs années toutes les substances animales et végétales.*" (Fifth Edition, Paris 1834). This information is given by C. Wagner in his book, "*Konserven und Konservenindustrie in Deutschland,*" published in 1907. I accept his view for the time being, though it seems doubtful whether there was no method of preservation of foodstuffs before this French cook. Previous to that, simpler methods of preservation, namely drying in the sunshine or in the shade, smoking or preserving in salt, were being freely used from very old times. But the new method tho exceedingly difficult and intricate in application in the preparation of the foodstuffs for preservation, technically effected vast and important improvements over the ancient methods. Moreover, the modern German fashion of restricting the sense of '*Konservenindustrie*' to the method of preserving foodstuffs by keeping them in tightly enclosed jars, and also by their evaporation by the aid of great heat or

quick air-currents, is traceable to this invention, and his method has remained as the foundation, notwithstanding that it has afterwards undergone several reforms. In the meantime, such investigators as Pasteur have indeed discovered the chemical principles, involved in Appert's practice, but they proved, it is said, only a part of the truth of Appert's achievement in theory. However, it cannot be denied that the rapid development in the methods of conserving foodstuffs is due in no small measure to the advance of science in modern times. Nature has deposited in all organisms elements of putrefaction. Every being is born, decays, and then is born a new in an endless circle. The air and water cause the disintegration of substances through putrefaction and fermentation. And foodstuffs, no matters how delicate, cannot escape this law of nature.

The remarkable development in the sphere of microbiology in the nineteenth century, indeed has contributed much towards the development of the methods of preserving foodstuffs. Investigations into the life of bacteria have revealed that they exist and thrive only under certain conditions and that, if those conditions could be removed, the germs would not be able to survive and in consequence could not spoil foodstuffs. Moreover a new phase, namely an art to keep foodstuffs fresh for a long time, was added to the mere preservation of them in our modern conserving industry. For example, pickled cucumber or smoked meat lose its natural flavour even as does the fresh product of agriculture by the preserving process; but vegetables preserved by the new means of artificial evaporation, or the refrigerated meat, a new commodity of world commerce, carried in the Giffard refrigerators aims to make us find no difference from fresh meat.

4. Preservable foodstuffs, not only those preserved by modern technique, but all of them at large, are very valuable for mankind indeed. Now foodstuffs can be freely transported from the place where they are plentiful to the regions where they are scarce. Seasonable products can also be

preserved for a long time, and thus the supply of foodstuffs can be regulated from season to season. The daily diet of a nation becomes in this way multifarious and plentiful. The modern methods of preservation have also solved the question of food provisions for the army and the navy to a great extent, especially in connection with military manoeuvres and ocean navigation. With the recent development in transportation on land and sea, occasions for assembling a large number of people at some point has enormously increased; and need for foodstuffs, that can be stored for some period of time and be used immediately for food as they are, has accordingly increased. As is well known, in Germany housewives have been expected from old times to pay special attention to the three K's, one of which is 'Küche' or the kitchen. Until about fifty years ago German housewives entertained a prejudice against factory-made conserves, and insisted more urgently than to-day on preserving with their own hands the vegetables and foodstuffs which they might need, in some cases by very primitive methods. However, they are more and more being induced to use factory-made foodstuffs, especially preserved goods, because, in the first place, they are better in quality, cheaper, and cleaner, than home-made ones; and secondly because modern women increasingly dislike to go to the bother and discomfort of preserving at home. Thus the general tendency of large-scale industry replacing home production is also seen in this field. Factory-made foodstuffs are intended to please the masses as far as possible and cheaper to make. They aim to satisfy the everyday wants of the common people and to be daily used by them, thus making light of the special appetite of an epicure. Nourishment is regarded as an important element of such foodstuffs. Plainness of food which can also be served quickly is another good point of theirs.

5. The following quotation is taken from the introduction to the work on Japanese pickles above-mentioned: "Preservation of food by aid of salt and soya-beans, and by several other means, was originated during the Namboku

Era (57 years in the middle of the 14th century), when the Japanese people, as a result of believing Buddhism, disliked to eat either raw fish or meat; and this custom was not to be regarded as a storing luxuriously of delicacies by the rich for future need." I have no intention here of enquiring into the origin of Japanese pickles. However, I am well aware that our people even in the early stage of our national history preserved marine products as well as green vegetables by drying or pickling them, endeavoring in this way to provide and sufficiency of kinds of food for our daily needs; and it may be supposed that pickling greatly owes its development to the Buddhist teaching which combated the slaughter of animals for food and the eating of meat. The methods of the Japanese pickle-makers are just as various as the vegetables and fruits that are made into pickles and they are altogether different from those put up by western picklers. This fact may be assumed as an indication of the peculiarities of Japanese agriculture. In our rural life, which made the Japanese as a race habitually disinclined to eat butcher's meat (this means: beef, mutton, pork, veal), and which gave rise to our much condemned habit of leaving infants at the breast, not merely for a year, but for three, four, even six years, there was no place for cattle-breeding owing to the rank fertility, energy and vigour of the farmers and great importance was attached to the cultivation and improvement of our principal cereal, rice.

Japanese agriculture did not develop by combining such elements as the cultivation of grain, cattle raising, planting of fodder, animal labor, and the utilization of stable manures.

On the contrary, its development was due to such elements as the tilling of the paddyfields, the use of human excrement as manure, with fertilizers of various kinds especially fish, the cultivation of cereals, beans and vegetables of many different sorts on upland fields. Above all it has owed very much to the intense diligence of farmers, in their endeavors at the exhaustive utilization of the productive power of the soil, in direct opposition to

the often uttered grievance of the so-called 'exhaustion of the soil' in western agriculture. Although the area of the field cultivated by every farmer is small, the cultivation is very intensive; and he has come to understand relatively early the regular repetition of the annual cultivation of paddyfield, and the rotation of crops on it too, and the free rotation-system in upland farming. Thus he can avoid the danger of exhausting the soil, without allowing the land to lie fallow anywhere.—Our agricultural system may be perhaps called 'Feldgartenwirtschaft', following the example of German scholars of agronomy.—Especially our kitchen gardening is noted for its variety and richness. This is due, first to the fact that our country is geographically stretched out from the north to the south, and secondly because our people are very fond of vegetables. In effect special vegetables and special methods of utilization were adopted in our country. Truly there are some such vegetables as several sorts of cabbage, which were not cultivated widely in our country before our intercourse with the West. There are also naturally some vegetables, which are enjoyed generally by westerners and not produced here, but among our multifarious vegetables those are not few, which are regarded by several classes of people even as delicacies. Of course as Chamberlain (cf. *Things Japanese*, 5. ed. p. 179) remarks, a sort of Japanese pickles, the strong-smelling radish—its odoriferousness comes not naturally, but from the 'nukamiso' ricebran and salt in which it is pickled—(so-called 'Takuan,' called after its originator, a celebrated Buddhist priest of that name) would be as great a terror to the noses of most foreigners as European cheese, specially Limburger or 'Klostertkase' is to the olfactory nerves of most Japanese. But this is simply a matter of taste. At any rate in comparison with German social life, within which several dried vegetables are sold as so-called 'Kolonialwaren,' but not as home products, I think Japanese society shows a prominent feature in the utilization of various products of its own soil.

Certainly German culture in general embraces its own

prominent phase. While I was in Munich, twelve years ago, I was very fond of trying to drink beer from 'eine Masz' pot and to repeat that, taking with it rye-bread and spirally cut raw radish at uncovered round tables under the thick leaves of the chestnut on summer evenings. This affection came not only from my taste for simplicity, but is because moving pictures, the recent product of civilization, competing with one another for novelty of plot and excellence of technique, were thrown upon a screen in the same open garden of the restaurant. As several observers have noticed, German culture cannot be comprehended in its true perspective without the realization that the German people hold firmly the thoughts and ideas of Kant, Hegel, Schiller, and Goethe in one hand, while in the other hand they carry a banner on which is inscribed the word "practical." They are inspired by lofty idealisms and at the same time are practical enough to utilize modern scientific knowledge. One of the characteristics of the German intelligence is the ease, with which the German people put up with the contradiction between theory and practice, between speculation and reality. It seems to me that this characteristic is also betrayed by the above-mentioned scene in a restaurant. When I encountered some Italian seasonal immigrants peddling roast 'marone' on the sidewalks on a winter night, I could not help comparing this unelegant sight with a typical scene in our country of people eating sweet chestnuts and fresh taro under the charming autumnal full moon and cheering with each other in appreciations of the creative force of nature.

When I turned afterwards to London and took inexpensive lodgings, paying less than two guineas weekly for full board and residence, I thought to myself that the vulgar lamentation about the rise of the price of meat was reflected in the small quantity of meat in the food supplied. Thinking of that the early occurrence of the question of physical degeneration is not without reason, moved also by the fact, I hit instinctively upon a difference in the material welfare of the lower classes between the English and German nations

before the world war. For the present I have no intention of deciding whether the thought is right or not. But when I enjoyed the daily meals in harmony together with the host's family and tickled my palate with cauliflower pickles, orange marmalade, and several colonial products, I felt I was beginning to appreciate the friendliness of the British people and the real worth of their civilization.

The work of Japanese pickles above-mentioned deals with 64 different varieties of Japanese pickles even in abridged form from old times, as itself declares. It further says that, of the various preserves, pickles are most widely used among the people and have become essential to their daily life. Of course some observers remark, the fact that stomachache is very common among the Japanese people may doubtless be attributed as well to the inordinate use of pickles and of green tea as to the unwholesome habit of absorbing food rapidly (cf. Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 181). But to attain to the final conclusion in regard to the habit, we must wait till further hygienic investigations are made. In my opinion the wide use of pickles may be considered as striking an achievement in Japanese civilization as the amazing development we have made in our sericulture. According to the common opinion our country had no mulberry tree nor cocoon in ancient times, but our silk export today amounts to several hundred million yens annually. In modern civilization the amount of meat consumed by a nation may be regarded as a measure of its culture. We may therefore congratulate ourselves that the Japanese people have made great strides in the amount of the consumption of this foodstuff in recent years. But it is a matter of envy that in Germany there are various sausages which are used by all classes of people and which are full of nourishment, easily-digestible and cheap. German militarism we do not need to imitate, but there are some elements in German culture from which we may learn. I believe our "kamaboko" (fish sausages) which cannot be preserved for any long time can never be compared with

German sausages. However, our pickles which we have inherited from remote ancestors represent an important element in our proper civilization, and certainly it is our duty to develop as well as to appreciate them. How "umeboshi," pickled plums, and so-called "Kokkibento," rice-ball containing umeboshi within it, enabled our soldiers to be very effective in both the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese War is well known to us all. Our rice may some day be replaced by bread, but it is inconceivable that our pickles will ever be replaced by cheese.

6. Domestic affairs in this country seem to be undergoing the same transformation which is seen in Germany. Our country should indeed make use of the new technique in preserving fruits and vegetables as well as marine products. We may venture to hope that much (including fish fertilizers) may be made in future by manufacturing industry out of various marine products, the value of what was turned out being estimated in 1913 at 50,000,000 Yen; and the future of the canned goods business, which amounted in the same year to some 6,000,000 Yen, is equally promising. But it should be also necessary and useful to make a study, in the light of several sciences, of the possibility of the future development of our time-honoured pickles, especially as an independent or subsidiary industry for farmers. Such studies must be conducted severely by the empirical method. Especially will the application of chemistry and of microbiology in this connection be found profitable. At the same time I hope that the study of pickles will be made from the standpoint of not only of health, but also of other elements, specially of the taste of the nation and national economy,

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