

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Emotionalizing the Nation: Conflicting narratives in Japanese food identities

(<http://www.japanesefoodidentities.ugent.be>)

The Department of Languages and Cultures of Ghent, Hokkaido University, Freie Universität Berlin and Free University of Brussels welcome papers for the international symposium «Emotionalizing the nation: Conflicting narratives in Japanese food identities», to be held from July 1 to July 3 2015 in Ghent.

We invite papers touching the following research fields:

- \* Food and identity
- \* Food policies and food education
- \* Food safety
- \* Food security
- \* Performative aspects of food and eating
- \* Gendering food
- \* Food and ecology

The presented papers in Ghent should be 20-25 minutes and submissions should include: (1) Abstract of paper, 300 words maximum in a word document (2) Full name, title, affiliation, and contact details of presenter(s). Submissions should be sent by email by the deadline of May 15 2015 to: [andreas.niehaus@ugent.be](mailto:andreas.niehaus@ugent.be) and [tine.walravens@ugent.be](mailto:tine.walravens@ugent.be).

Submission outcomes will be advised by the end of May 2015. Participants will be responsible for organising their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

Outline of the conference:

In December 2013, washoku was added to the Intangible Cultural Heritage list (UICH) of the United Nations. The UNESCO acknowledged washoku as a social practice that provided the Japanese people with a sense of identity and belonging, promoted healthy eating and expressed respect for nature and environment. What is missing in the appreciation of the UNESCO however, is an understanding of the historical dimension, of political agendas and discourses of power that shape the notion of a 'national cuisine'. Indeed, while healthy diets and traditional food culture provide reasons for the state's promotion of washoku, the fact that Japan imports roughly sixty per cent of its food points to other motivations. Furthermore, the promotion of the narrative of healthy domestic food as part of a broader policy aim has faltered in the aftermath of a recent series of domestic food scandals and the repercussions of the nuclear disaster at Fukushima. Japan's food system displays contrasts and disparities. The globalization of the food supply chain and Japan's dependency on imports contrast the nostalgic return to the local and a rediscovery of the culinary roots of the nation. These conflicting narratives influence Japan's domestic policy-making and politics that are based on and tap into pre-existing emotions.

The symposium aims at analyzing food and food cultures in Japan as a collective system of meaning, which is shaped, produced and reproduced through cultural practice. By looking at the processes and patterns behind the construction of a timeless and pure Japanese cuisine (and its inherent contradictions), this approach also seeks to identify the agents involved in conflicting narratives and their respective aims. Research on culinary nationalism so far focuses on cultural and anthropological perspectives on the one hand, and on economic-political perspectives on the other hand. Clearly, there is much potential for interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary collaboration and research; potential

which as yet remains untapped. By bringing together researchers from the fields of history, cultural studies, anthropology ecology, food studies and political science, we hope to open up a systematic and fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue that will lead to a better understanding of the relevant aspects of culinary nationalism in Japan, as well as to a deepened conceptual understanding of the underlying patterns and processes of conflicting food identities.

The keynote lecture will be held by Theodore C. Bestor (Harvard University).

Best wishes

Andreas Niehaus & Tine Walravens

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