

# JAPN 305 Essay Presentation

Jovon Hutchins

# Research Question

What are some contributing/key factors that shaped Japanese culture as it is today?

# Paper Breakdown

## Essences of Washoku:

- Staple Foods
- Food Etiquette
- Changing Dynamics  
in Japanese Food  
Culture

## Essences of Chado:

- Philosophies
- Drinking Dynamics



# Essences of Washoku - Staple Foods: Rice

“The conventional meal of Japan comprises four types of food: rice, the staple diet; okazu, secondary components like fish or vegetables; soup called shiru; and tsukemono, vegetables pickled in salt or rice bran.” (Ishige, 2009, p.300)

-Rice collected as a tax by feudal lords

-“In Japan, as well as in countries in South-East Asia, rice has been regarded as a sacred grain in which the divine spirits dwells” (Ishige, 2009, p.301)

-Rice can be eaten with just about any other cultures side dishes



# Food Etiquette

“The philosophy behind Japanese food culture appears to be a paradoxical belief that no

cooking is the best kind of cooking.”  
(Ishige, 2009, p.302)

\*Because of this idea, he believes that the Japanese consider *Sashimi* to be one of the most simple and highest forms of food

- The concept of *Shun*

-Simple/Natural Foods



# Changing Dynamics in Japanese Food Culture

-Influences from the United States due to *yoshokuya* restaurants

-“These families purchased beef, pork, chicken, Worcestershire sauce and tomato ketchup, and prepared ‘Japanised’ Western meals or Chinese meals in the home. The people also, by incorporating dishes that originated overseas, developed the prototype of Japanese home cooking today.” (Ishige, 2009, p.308)

-“The popularity of these products throughout Japan means uniformity in taste, flavor, and preference, and the tastes and flavors unique to home cooking or the distinctive features of regional cooking are in danger of being lost.” (315)

\*1958 - Instant Ramen

-1960’s stereotypes existing around eating healthy

# Essences of Chado - Philosophies

-“To make tea is an act of increasing spiritual awareness. It is also a magnificent expression of courteous and compassionate behavior toward others, and other things.” (Carter, 2008, p.75)

-“the Shinto attention to purity and preference for pristine, natural materials ....” (Carter, 2008, p.76)

-“...the simpler, more tranquil, natural, and rustic meditative enjoyment of tea had become the standard” (Carter, 2008, p.77)

-Concepts of *wabi* and *mono no aware*



# Drinking Dynamics

- Different types of gatherings
- Favors simple materials
- Two simple ingredients
- Concept of “Shun”





# Sources

*Japanese Arts and Self-Cultivation*

*Food Culture in Japan*

*The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese  
Culture*