

REIMAGINING



in Asia and the Pacific

Twenty-six years ago Arjun Appadurai wrote a compelling account of an Indian national cuisine that was cooked, described, and consumed by metropolitan, multiethnic, and multicasite middle-class women with Western tastes. Since then, Appadurai has produced scholarly books and articles reexamining modernity, ethnicity, culture, and globalization that urge us “to think beyond the nation,” considering the forces of globalization and localism as well as difference and unevenness. This spring’s **Pacific Basin Institute** lecture series offers a reimagining of food in Asia and the Pacific that highlights the constructed and artificial nature of so-called national cuisines and the impact of globalizing and localizing forces as well as irregular terrains and seas.

Lectures will be held in room 108 or 101 of the Hahn Building, Pomona College. Each will start at 4:15 P.M. and be followed by a discussion and a reception.

Thursday, February 6, 2014

“Rescuing Taste from the Nation: Indian Ocean Cuisine”

Krishnendu Ray, *chair, Department of Nutrition, Food Studies & Public Health, New York University*

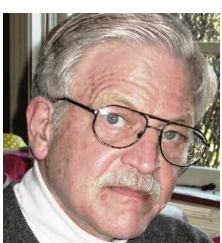


The basic tools of modern cultural history and demographics have become so nationalized that they have repressed the centrality of other connections and imaginings, for instance, between the neighboring territorial regions of Asia or among the port cities of the Indian Ocean linked through flows of knowledge, resources, and material culture. But if we examine the edges and intersections of continents and territories, we can see how narratives of cultural difference rub up against the reality of shared tastes, culinary ingredients, and technologies. Within and across Asia, a new history of oceans and the renewed visibility of transnational circulation are invigorating discussions of cultural domains beyond the nation-state. Instead of heartlands and nations, I propose a productive mapping of taste and place encapsulated in the Hindustani saying “Kosa kosa per pani badle, chara kosa per vani” (Every two miles the water changes, and every four, the language). This locates taste at the center of the ethnoscape that extends beyond the edges, borders, and boundaries of the four-color maps of modernity.

Thursday, March 6, 2014

“The Invention of ‘Chinese Food’ Within and Outside China”

Charles Hayford, *independent scholar*



Do people in China eat “Chinese food”? Most Chinese would say that they simply ate “food” or “Beijing” or “Sichuan” or “hometown” food, not “Chinese.” Even after 1949, when the government regularized Chinese cuisine to represent the Chinese nation, an earlier version of “Chinese cooking” could still be found outside China, especially in North America. That is, before World War II, Chinese American restaurants invented a “Chinese food” by selecting, reworking, and renaming various dishes, many of which did not exist in their ancestral homeland. An example is “chop suey,” which

became a food craze of the early twentieth century. Then during and after World War II, new Chinese immigrants, mostly educated women, wrote cookbooks and opened restaurants that invented another “authentic Chinese food,” and the cooking of earlier Chinese immigrants and restaurants was now labeled “Cantonese.” Finally, after President Richard Nixon went to Beijing in 1972, still another “authentic” set of dishes was invented: Mandarin cuisine, a concept also not found in China. In each of these cases, I will show that “Chinese” and “Chinese food” meant something different.

Thursday, March 27, 2014

“Korean Cuisine and the Forces of History”

Kataryzna Cwiertka, *Professor of Modern Japanese Studies, Leiden University*



Historians of modern Korea argue that in the last one hundred years of the world’s history, the country has played a disproportionately important role in relation to the size of its territory and its population. If we turn this statement around, we could say that world history has played a disproportionately important role in twentieth-century Korea. In this lecture, I demonstrate how the forces of history are revealed in Korean cuisine and how the unexpected and relatively unknown, yet quite pervasive, consequences of colonialism and war have affected the lives of both North and South Koreans today.

Thursday, April 10, 2014

“Cuisine and Empire in Asia and the Pacific”

Rachel Laudan, *visiting professor, University of Texas at Austin*



Between 1778 when Captain Cook landed in Hawaii and 1898 when the United States took over the Philippines, control of the Pacific passed from the Spanish to the Anglos. In this lecture I examine the complex interplay between imperial power and aspiring nationhood in Hawaii, Japan, the Philippines, and China.