

The Gustatory Gaze: The Representations of Taiwanese Food in
Japanese Travel Media
(research in progress)

Lillian TSAY

Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies,
The University of Tokyo
lilybestkitty@gmail.com

Keywords: travel media, food tourism, Japanese media, Taiwanese food, Chinese cuisine, tourist gaze

This research examines the discourses and representations of Taiwanese food in Japanese travel guidebooks, catalog magazines including *Chikyuu no Arukikata*, *Rurubu* as well as special issues of women's fashion magazines. It challenges the existing interpretations that food tourism is simply motivated by the taste rather than the visualized experiences. Although food tourism is becoming a fashionable leisure activity in Asia, few studies have addressed the role of the media and how they may embody a deeper significance in intercultural understanding which is largely visual.

In this research an interdisciplinary approach is applied to examining the representations of Taiwanese food in Japanese travel media from postwar to contemporary Japan. These print media sources are examined by discourse and semiotic analysis within the theoretical framework of Urry's concept of "the tourist's gaze" (1990) and Farrer's idea of "the culinary contact zone" (2015). The analysis establishes that Japanese tourists are not merely consuming the food itself but that they are realizing their imaginations from stimulus received from these travel media. In this "gustatory gaze" the food "images" embody a larger context of Japan's longings for the South in their imagination, Chinese culture, together with the affinity in Japan-Taiwan relationships.

Further research will be based on interviews to be conducted among Japanese tourists to assess the effects of media on their gaze.