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## German Influence on Japanese Food Culture

### 德国对日本饮食文化的影响

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#### ABSTRACT

Over the last 150 years, a wide variety of European food and cuisine has been introduced and popularized in Japan. French cuisine has become dominant at the ‘haute cuisine’ level. German food and cuisine has not enjoyed similar success; however, Vienna sausage and *Baumkuchen* have become household names in Japan. In this sense, German food culture has established a footing in contemporary Japan. This chapter introduces some cases that pertain to the spread of German food and cuisine and analyses the historical background of this process. German ‘soft power’, such as music, film, or sciences, is highly appreciated worldwide, whereas German food is consistently underestimated. This chapter aims to reassess German ‘soft power’ in the sphere of food culture. The term ‘soft power’ is defined in this chapter as cultural influences, including food culture, which are in contrast to ‘hard power’ such as military, political, or economic strength.

#### 摘要

在过去的150年里，日本引入和普及了种类繁多的欧洲食物和菜品。法国菜在“高级菜品”领域占据了统治地位。相比之下，德国的食物和菜品并没有那么成功；然而，维也纳香肠和年轮蛋糕已经成为日本家喻户晓的名字。从这个意义上来说，德国饮食文化已经在当代日本站住了脚。本文将介绍有关德国食物和菜品的传播情况，并分析这一传播过程的历史背景。德国的“软实力”在全世界都受到高度评价，比如音乐、电影及科技；然而，德国饮食却一直都被低估了。在这里，我将重新评估德国在饮食文化领域的“软实力”。

## INTRODUCTION

Since the Meiji era, everyday life in Japan has changed dramatically under the influence of Western culture. Clothing has been almost completely westernized, whereas housing has only been partly so; it is not possible to westernize houses any further due to the geographical features of the Japanese islands. Food, too, has been slowly but steadily westernized, and by the early Showa era, a large variety of European cuisine had already been received and popularized among the upper and middle classes in Japan (Ishige 2015: 174–186; Harada 2013: 145–174; Harada 2005: 144–164; Ehara 2012: 10–34). In this context, an interesting phenomenon arose: the invention of the *yoshoku*, a curious hybrid dish. The *yoshoku* blends European and Japanese food, such as *tonkatsu*, a thick pork cutlet, or *karee raisu*, a dish of curry and rice (Ishige 2015: 190–193; Harada 2005: 182–187).

As a historian specializing in modern German history, I would like to raise a question from the perspective of Germany's cultural influences upon Japan in the modern era. Did German food play any role in the evolution of Japanese cuisine? To answer this, we can compare French cuisine with German cuisine. Generally speaking, in the realm of food culture French culinary 'soft power' has had overwhelming influence. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, French haute cuisine was perfected as a culinary art and became a global standard among European upper and middle classes. The hegemony of French cuisine also extended beyond Europe, as Japan, too, was strongly influenced by French culinary soft power after the Meiji era. At official banquets, at private meals in restaurants, and in gourmet magazines, French cuisine was the dominant model of western cuisine (Laudan 2013: 280–290).

How does German soft power fare in comparison? Was German food accepted in Japan? Compared with the fields of medical science, classical music, or military technology, German culinary soft power seems to have had very little influence on modern Japan. In fact, German cuisine was not and is not highly rated as a form of haute cuisine. However, in the context of ordinary food, German cuisine fares much better. Some foods that originated in Germany have now become everyday meals in Japan.

Vienna sausage, *Wiener Würstchen* in German, is one of the most popular items in Japan and a part of school children's *bento*, or lunch box. In everyday conversation, the word *Wiener*, pronounced *winna* in Japanese, has come to mean 'sausage'. Ham, especially the so-called 'Roas ham', which is boiled in the Japanese style, is also a highly preferred item. Boxes of assorted high-grade Loin hams are often purchased as a mid-year or year-end gift. As for sweets, *Baumkuchen*, a traditional German cake, is one of the most typical *yogashi*, meaning westernized sweets. In contemporary Japan, various types of *Baumkuchen* can be bought at confectionaries, department stores, and convenience stores.

The popularity of German food has its own historical background. Some

Germans played an important role in popularizing these food items, which are incidentally related to modern Japanese history. This chapter sheds light on two figures, Karl Juchheim (1886–1945) and August Lohmeyer (1892–1962). The former introduced *Baumkuchen* to Japan, and the latter invented Loin ham.

### INTRODUCTION OF *BAUMKUCHEN*

Karl Juchheim was born in Kaup in 1886, the tenth child in a brewer's household. Kaup is a small town located along the Rhine near Lorelei. After Juchheim lost his father as a youth, he was trained as a confectioner. At the age of 20 he travelled to East Asia to break new ground, and in 1908 he opened his own confectionary in Quindao (Tsingtau), a German settlement in China located on the southern side of the Shandong Peninsula (Etajima 1973: 7–22; Juchheim Corporation 1991: 4–6). In 1914, when the First World War began and Japan declared war against Germany, the Quindao settlement was attacked and soon occupied by the Japanese army. Although Karl Juchheim was a civilian, he was taken prisoner and sent to Japan the following year, where he was compelled to live in a concentration camp, first in Osaka, then in Ninoshima, an island located in the Inland Sea near Hiroshima (Etajima 1973: 43–44, 64–66; Juchheim Corporation 1991: 7–8).

Everyday life in the concentration camp was not particularly oppressive, as the Japanese government adhered to international law concerning the treatment of prisoners of war. During his stay in the camp from 1915 to 1920, Karl Juchheim often baked German cakes, including *Baumkuchen*. His products were once displayed at an exhibition of prisoners' works, held in Hiroshima in March 1919. They were well-received among those in attendance and sold very quickly (Etajima 1973: 76–77). This experience might have encouraged him to remain in Japan as a confectioner.

In 1920, after his release from the concentration camp, he was employed as a confectioner by Café Europe in Ginza, Tokyo. In 1922, he opened his own confectionary in Yokohama with his wife, Elise Juchheim, who had married Karl in 1912 and travelled from Quindao to Tokyo in 1920 (Etajima 1973: 81–84; 114–118). In 1923, after the Great Kanto Earthquake, they moved to Kobe and opened Konditorei Juchheim in Sannomiya, one of the biggest downtown locations in Kobe (*Konditorei* means 'confectionary' in German). Karl's confectionary prospered and gained fame first in Kobe, then in Kansai district, for its authentic German cakes, especially *Baumkuchen* (Etajima 1973: 119–126; 134–150).

Despite its favourable growth, Konditorei Juchheim suffered damages during the Japan-China War and the Pacific War, which ended in Japan's defeat in 1945. Karl was also affected physically during the war, and his mental health suffered. He died in Kobe on 14 August 1945, the same day that the Japanese government officially accepted the Potsdam Declaration (Etajima 1973: 237–241; Juchheim Corporation 1991: 32–33). In 1947, Karl's widow, Elise, was repatriated to

Germany by the General Headquarters, which occupied Japan at that time (Juchheim Corporation 1991: 33–35).

Konditorei Juchheim survived nonetheless. In 1948, some pupils and employees of the late Karl Juchheim reopened the confectionary in Kobe, and in 1953, Elise Juchheim returned to Japan to take on the management of the new Konditorei Juchheim (Juchheim Corporation 1991: 38–43; 46–54; 88–95). She continued to manage the company until her death in 1971. Today, Juchheim Company is one of the largest confectionaries in Japan; it has five factories nationwide and numerous shops in department stores as well as overseas branches in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai (<http://www.juchheim.co.jp/company/info>, accessed: 16 August 2017).

## INTRODUCTION OF LOIN HAM

August Lohmeyer was also a prisoner during the First World War. He was born in 1892 in Varl, a small village in Westfalia, located in northwest Germany. His family was very poor, and in his youth, around 1906, he witnessed a family diaspora. He went to Bremen, where he was apprenticed at a butcher's shop. In January 1914, he joined the German Navy and was soon sent to China, eventually joining the German base in Quindao (Muraki 2009: 26–77).

After the fall of the Quindao settlement in November 1914, August was taken prisoner and sent to Japan. He was sent to the Kurume concentration camp located in Fukuoka Prefecture in north Kyushu. This camp was infamous for its harsh treatment of prisoners on account of the arbitrary administration of the director, Jinzaburo Masaki. Masaki would later become a leader of Kodo-Ha, a group of extremely right-wing army officers. However, prisoners were treated better at the Kurume camp after Masaki was replaced (Muraki 2009: 92–123).

After his release from the camp in 1920, August went to Tokyo for employment as a meat-processing artisan by the Imperial Hotel, one of the most authentically westernized hotels in Japan. In 1921, he resigned to open his own meat-processing factory and shop in Shinagawa, not far from the centre of Tokyo. During this period, he married a Japanese woman named Fusa (Muraki 2009: 124–134).

Despite the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, his business prospered due to the high quality of its meat products, which he devised to suit average Japanese people who were unaccustomed to eating meat. His invention of Loin ham deserves special mention. This is a kind of boiled ham processed with pork loin, pork shoulder, and other parts. It was relatively cheap to make, as the materials were easily available in the Yokohama Chinatown, where pork was widely utilized in many Chinese restaurants (Muraki 2009: 135–141). In 1925, August opened a small restaurant in Ginza, the heart of Tokyo, initially serving only light meals. He then remodelled it into the German Restaurant Lohmeyer, where he served authentic German cuisine. The restaurant soon acquired a high-class reputation

among the big names in Japan at the time (Muraki 2009: 162–163; 176–177).

August Lohmeyer was affected by the long war just like Karl Juchheim. However, both he and his restaurant survived the war. After his death in 1962, his two sons took over the business (Muraki 2009: 197–202; 212–215). In the decades that followed, their business faced several ups and downs. As a result, only the Lohmeyer name remains today, indicating a traditional brand of ham and sausage.

## CONCLUSION

Aside from Karl Juchheim and August Lohmeyer, some additional German pioneers popularized German food in Japan, a few of whom are mentioned below.

Heinrich Freundlieb (1884–1955) was another German prisoner who arrived in Japan from the Quindao settlement (Etajima 1973: 76, 81; <http://www.das-japanische-gedaechtnis.de/lebensbilder-a-z/freundlieb-heinrich-1884-1955-alias-burgmayer-heinrich-baeckermeister.html>, accessed: 18 August 2017). He popularized German bread in Kobe, where the custom of eating bread had taken root among citizens relatively early. Even today, the Freundlieb bakeries are very popular. It was no accident that both Karl Juchheim and Heinrich Freundlieb succeeded in their business in Kobe. Kobe was and is one of the most important cities in which foreign culinary culture is rooted among citizens.

Hermann Wolschke (1893–1963) was a prisoner as well. He first with August Lohmeyer before moving to Kobe and Karuizawa, where he established himself. He is known for making and merchandizing the *Frankfurter Würstchen* (Frankfurt sausage) (Etajima 1973: 81; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich\\_Hermann\\_Wolschke](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Hermann_Wolschke), accessed: 17 August 2017). Karl Weidl-Raymon (1894–1987), born in Bohemia, also played an important role in popularizing German sausage and ham in Japan. Unlike the others discussed here, he did not come to Japan as a prisoner of war but as a supporter of the Pan-European movement at the time (Muraki 2009: 160). In 1924, he founded a meat-processing factory in Hakodate, Hokkaido, which remains in business today. Naturally, in addition to these German pioneers, many Japanese co-operators and assistants contributed to popularizing German food in Japan.

Japanese food culture is hybridized, comprising plants originating on Japanese islands, many kinds of food from east Asian regions, and some relatively new elements from western countries. To a historian whose area of interest is modern Germany, the fact that German food also contributed to the evolution of Japanese food culture is worthy of attention. Interestingly, German prisoners of the First World War, such as Karl Juchheim and August Lohmeyer, played an important role in this process. This urges us to study the influence of wars on the history of food culture.

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