Homemaking through Food Practices amongst Japanese Migrants in Dublin

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Introduction

An identity among migrants is often discussed in relation to ethnicity. The social ascription to the collectivity of a specific group constitutes part of selfhood. New commodities and new economic markets have come into being through global human mobility in order for migrants to maintain ties with their homeland, particularly through food (Appadurai 1990: 302). In the flow of global commodities, ethnic food typically plays a vital role in linking individuals and their homeland in a transnational framework. Scholars have documented the linkage between individuals and homeland constructed through foodways (Vallianatos and Raine 2008; Sutton 2001; Xu 2008).[1)] As food consumption and eating habits play an important role in shaping an aspect of the self (Friedman 1990; Lupton 1996; Miller 2004), food and its attaining food practices are a window on interrogating how migrants renew and signify ethnic identity (Xu 2008).

In order to explore their continuing linkage with their homeland through food practices, this paper examines the construction of a Japanese ethnic identity through the lens of domestic food practices undertaken by Japanese migrants living in Dublin, Ireland. Especially with regard to Japanese women, given the fact that Japanese women's roles are primarily defined by their relation to the households, the reproduction of ethnic heritages in the domestic space becomes the utmost concern even for those living abroad. In family-building processes anchored in domestic practices, how do Japanese migrants construct Japanese home spaces and a Japanese ethnic identity within the transnational environments? This ethnographic paper is narrative-based, with a particular focus on the lived experiences of Japanese migrants in Dublin. The data that I will show in this paper was collected during my fieldwork between 2010 and 2011. Whilst this paper mainly looks at the lives of the category of my research participants, long-term migrants, I will also draw on several narratives of temporary migrants in order to present migrants' differing experience of being in Ireland. Hence, this paper focuses on the two cate-

gories of migrants: long-term and temporary migrants. People in the category of long-term migrants included two men and 13 women aged between 26 and 47, eight of whom had lived in Ireland for a short period of time as former temporary migrants with a student/working holiday visa but had married Irish men/women. My other 34 research participants, temporary migrants, were predominantly in their twenties and thirties, male and female who had moved from Japan to Ireland for reasons of their own. These people were language students, working holiday makers and university students. Whilst there was a demographic crossover in these groups of temporary migrants, noteworthy is the fact that there was some transition from the groups of temporary migrants to long-term migrants, which applied to seven women and one man. This transformation of legal status in their lives featured a potential shift in their Irish experiences. I will illustrate several narratives of long-term migrants, as well as of those who were experiencing such flexible life transitions below.

Hiroko

I met Hiroko in front of the Asian market on Druy Street. Hiroko at the age of 26 was a young mother with a two-year-old daughter. That day she, with her daughter sleeping peacefully in the pram, had been food shopping for dinner just like any other day. Daily food procurement was part of her routine as her flat was situated on the north side of the city centre and had easy access to the major Asian supermarkets in town. In parallel with my regular visits to the Japan-Ireland meetup nights and the language exchange sessions on Saturdays for recruiting my potential research participants, I posted a self-introduction message in the meetup forum with a view to inviting prospective research participants. Hiroko was one of the people who had responded to my message. At the time, she had introduced herself as a single mother, but that day I noticed a gold ring sitting on her ring finger.

The moment we three walked into the market, the mingling aromas of tropical fruits, herbs, spices and Chinese medicines informed us of our entrance into an East Asian ethnoscape. "All of my family love Japanese food," she said, while scrutinising the freshness of the Japanese pears placed near the entrance. 'Family' denoted not only her two-year-old daughter but also a Polish husband who had recently joined the family. There seemed to be no Japanese customers at that time in the supermarket. Words of Mandarin spoken by the staff were flying back and forth in the store. Wheeling the pram, Hiroko walked past food shelves categorised by ethnic group and stopped for a while at the Japanese import section. She picked up a few Japanese products such as instant curry roux, dried seaweed and chocolate snacks for her daughter. Putting these items in the shopping basket, she conversed in English with her Japanese daughter who was then awake in the pram.

Hiroko had come to Dublin with a temporary visa in order to escape from the family and *seken*'s eye that had seen her divorce experience as problematic, during which time she had met the Polish husband. In her first marriage with a Japanese man, her ample repertoire of Japanese home-cooked dishes, such as *nikujaga*(肉じゃが), *gyūdon*(牛丼), *kinpiragobou*(きんぴらごぼう), *oyakodon*(親子丼) and *korokke*(コロッケ), had been staple dishes of the family's diet. In Dublin she strictly followed the same food practices as she would in Japan. In particular, rice directly sent from her hometown Miyagi by her mother was the essential heart of a meal. During half a year of living in Dublin, efforts had been made to maintain the same dietary patterns as much as possible. "If I eat Western food for more than three days in a row, I feel sick." She spoke about her experience of discomfort such as the diarrhoea caused by the ingestion of Western food. Hence, her reluctance to incorporate local foods into her culinary repertoire was in part the result of her physical inability to partake of unfamiliar foods. For her, the consumption of Japanese food was what it took to sustain a healthy body. Simultaneously, her continued Japanese diet was an effort to respond to a request by her families in both countries; her mother in Japan, the new family in Ireland as well as her husband's brother and his partner with

whom she shared a home, all believed in a significant correlation between Japanese food and the maintenance of good health. Her Polish husband developed a particular liking for Japanese cuisine, derived from his experience of a trip to Japan where he had realised that Japanese food helped him regulate his weight and health. Hiroko's adherence to her traditional culinary practices was made possible by relying on a regular shipping of parcels from her mother to restock her Japanese staples as well as the daily purchase of familiar Japanese brand products from the Asian supermarkets in the city centre. With a preconception that Chinese food products were "dangerous," she never used any of the substitutes that could easily be found at any local supermarkets; all Japanese spices and ingredients necessary for everyday cooking, including even such common products as sesame oil and soy sauce that were abundantly available in a big supermarket like TESCO, were purchased from the Asian supermarkets if not sent from her mother.

Hiroko's suspicion about unfamiliar foods extended to Japanese foods served at the local restaurants:

> I heard from an expatriate's wife that none of the Japanese restaurants were run by Japanese so that their taste was not guaranteed. . . . She said that Japanese food cooked at home would most definitely be better.

Hiroko had not yet eaten at any Japanese restaurants since her arrival in the spring of 2010. Despite the curiosity that made her say "I feel like trying it at least once though," the word-of-mouth reputation about the inauthentic taste and high prices set for Japanese dishes in those restaurants made her reluctant to try 'national' food outside of her home. In her case, it is perhaps more pertinent to suggest that her self-sufficiency in Japanese home cooking did not engender the need to seek material ties with Japan elsewhere.

Hana

I paid my third visit to Hana's home on a January Sunday evening. The apartment block located close to Trinity College Dublin (TCD) was also the residence of the Irish prime minister at the time. Upon my arrival, I was greeted with a warm smile by her Irish husband, Kevin. "*Akemashite omedetou*" (New Year's greetings in Japanese), I said to him, assuming that he had already added this phrase to his Japanese vocabulary during the New Year. Giving me a bewildered look for a second, he turned to Hana to seek tips about what I had just uttered. Japanese was one of seven languages that Kevin was able to speak. Although Hana had a strong command of English, Japanese was of the same importance as English for their communication. Hana was a 26-year-old housewife. She had come to Ireland initially as a working holiday maker in 2008, during which time she had met Kevin. She was one of those research participants who had experienced a change in marital status during or after their stay in Dublin. After a year of a long-distance relationship, she once again travelled to Ireland in the summer of 2010, this time with a view to living in Ireland permanently. She was also a friend of Hiroko with whom she occasionally caught up at the meetup, at their houses or outside, sharing concerns about their lives in Dublin. To my best knowledge, Hiroko and Hana were the only female long-term residents in their twenties at the time of my fieldwork. They both occasionally attended meetup nights, hoping to interact with Japanese people of their age, even if a friendship with temporary migrants might not last long.

"These are nothing really special though." Hana glanced down at the food that she had prepared for dinner and reheated on the stove. Hana was dressed in a somewhat formal yet girly dress with a front bow. She had just come back from a career fair. After a while, she scooped rice from the rice cooker that she had bought in Ireland into a bowl, and topped it with chicken, onions and eggs to make

oyakodon（親子丼）. The *oyakodon*, miso soup and green salad were laid out the table. We three savoured the meal, together with conversation in which they switched back and forth between Japanese and English. During the interview with Hana after dinner, I asked her if she had served the Japanese meal in order to extend a warm welcome to me. Contrary to my expectations, she responded that Japanese dishes were a daily staple. Hana loved Japanese food, so did her husband. Kevin appeared to have no issues with the daily consumption of Japanese food. Hana stressed the importance of sharing dietary patterns with regards to the maintenance of their marriage:

> It would be difficult if you married a person who didn't share the same approach to food. I prefer light-flavoured dishes to greasy foods like barbecued pork. Vegetables are an indispensable component of my husband's diet... He is fond of Japanese food, and so am I. So I'm not making a special effort to adjust to his diet. I only cook what I want to eat. So for me, food sharing was very important when choosing a life partner.

From the early stages of their relationship, it had been Hana's role to prepare a meal. In her marriage, she prepared every meal for the two, including a packed lunch for Kevin, while he took charge of washing the dishes. "He is a terrible cook. He has absolutely no talent for cooking." She jokingly commented on his previous attempt at preparing a meal when he was still the 'boyfriend.' She used to spend a good few hours of the day preparing all the meals when she had just moved back to Ireland in 2010. Now, owing much to the Japanese recipe website 'Cookpad,'[2] the time and effort of preparing a meal were substantially reduced. Nonetheless, Hana cooked with care; one critical concern was her husband's weight. "Maybe Japanese food is too healthy." She looked slightly worked. Because of her husband's inability to partake of beef at night, which would cause stomach pain, chicken was their usual diet for dinner, occasionally with dishes accompanied by pork. She added: "I wouldn't buy meat if I lived by myself, but he is too thin for his height. So, I contrive ways to expand repertoires of the chicken menu, using chicken for instance in stew, teriyaki and curry rice."

Vegetables and chicken accompanied almost every dinner. Every day she cooked Japanese home-cooked dishes that she described as "the dishes my mother used to cook at home." She told me that Irish food and Chinese food were not to her liking because they were heavy and oily. To my question as to whether she had ever cooked Irish dishes at home, she responded: "What's Irish food in the first place?... I tried Guinness pie but it wasn't tasty at all." She, however, cooked a variety of *yōshoku* (Western-style food) as well as *chūka ryōri* (means dishes originated in China), such as 'cabbage roll' (meat-stuffed cabbage), cream stew with chicken and *ebi-chili* (chilli prawns). She further said: "Well, I cook *yōshoku* and *chūka ryōri* that we normally have in Japan." Despite the fact that these dishes were a syncretisation of foreign and Japanese cuisine, the heterogeneity immanent in *yōshoku* and *chūka ryōri* was overlooked in her interpretation of Western and Chinese foods.

Food and the Construction of a Spatial 'Home'

My ethnographic data reveals that food practices undertaken by my research participants are significantly associated with the idea of constructing a spatial 'home.' Given the Japanese concept of the spatial boundary between "*uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside), the notion of home bears a significant relationship with the concept of *uchi*. The Japanese term *uchi* can also connote 'family,' 'home' as well as 'inside'; it enunciates spatial intimacy and a familiarity established from shared experience and togetherness within a particular social space (Lebra 2004: 66). Contrastingly, the zone of *soto* (outside) broadly indicates "the vast category of otherness" (ibid.: 146), and its behaviour is "apathetic, discourteous, disdainful, hateful, and combative within the *soto* terrain" (ibid.: 145–146) (cf. Bachnik and Quinn 1994).

'Home' is thus the social space inhabited by the family and embellished with familiar objects within an *uchi* boundary, providing a primary context within which people develop a social and collective life. Although this the *uchi-soto* framework has drawn criticism for being an essentialized concept, I yet adopt it to best reflect the ways in which my research participants drew emotional boundaries inherent in their food practices.

Out of 15 long-term migrants whom I interviewed, eight had gone through a change in legal status from a student/working holiday maker to a long-term migrant. The majority of the long-term migrants were women, mostly *sengyō shufu* (full-time housewife) who were economically dependent on their husbands. For this category of migrants, the consumption of Japanese food was of utmost importance to their sense of being Japanese. Food was a communicative strategy to bridge their two homes across space. In the search for the physical, psychological and material ties with homeland, the notion of home becomes embodied through food practices. For instance, in her study of Japanese expatriates' wives living in three cities of the USA, Kurotani (2005) discusses the ways in which spatial homes are reconstructed through homemaking practices. Kurotani's study demonstrates that "regardless of age, family composition, or the place of origin," all her research participants gave priority to cooking Japanese cuisine in their households in order to construct Japanese cultural spaces (2005: 90). This was true of my female research participants.

As seen in the narratives, a reluctance to add new elements to the existing diet was commonly observed. Hiroko explained that it was due to a lack of knowledge of local food recipes. Likewise, those who stayed in Ireland for a relatively long period of time, including Hiroko and Hana, felt that Japanese cooking was a natural habit. However, the underlying explanation of their adherence to the same diet suggested that the migrants' psychological ties with their homeland were mediated through the continuing consumption of Japanese dishes. The process through which these research participants constructed home boundaries was carried out in an effort to reconfigure spaces where solidarities with their natal family were sustained. As seen in Hiroko's narrative, her family in Japan played as an important part in her daily diet as her new family in Ireland. A manifestation of their sense of a Japanese identity was therefore reflected in the making of an *uchi* boundary.

The consumption of Japanese food connects Japanese migrants and their homeland, leading to relocating them in an *uchi* spatial consciousness. In relation to this, there was an explicit indication that the approach to Japanese food consumption varied according to the length of one's stay in a foreign environment. Whilst the continuing need for Japanese food held a major significance for those who stayed on in Ireland, a reluctance to engage in consuming Japanese food was salient amongst temporary migrants who had come to Ireland in order to acquire experiences seen to colour every aspect of their new lives in Dublin. Asami, a 25-year-old working holiday maker, explained about her reluctance to consume Japanese foods in the public sphere. She said:

> On top of their [Japanese food in restaurants] being very pricy, I have no reason to eat Japanese food at a restaurant unless my friends ask me to accompany them. Learning about what the locals eat is more intriguing. So I don't bring myself to eat Japanese food here.

Asami, living in Dublin for seven months at the time of interview, expressed her yearning for a new experience gained through the local food culture. She further said: "I prefer eating what the locals eat to Japanese dishes because I want to benefit from living in a Western country. My [Irish] housemates introduced things like prosciutto and leeks, so I always use local ingredients for my cooking." She explained that even though she started to have an intense craving for dishes cooked with soy source as her stay in Dublin lengthened, she never found herself buying rice since her arrival in Dublin. Her craving for rice and Japanese classic dishes were satisfied by the complementary meals provided at

the Chinese buffet restaurant she had been working for.

It was typically the case that Japanese students and working holiday makers arrived in Ireland with suitcases stuffed with basic yet lightweight Japanese seasonings and dry foods. These food products were refilled from the local Asian supermarkets according to their needs. However, this does not suggest that Japanese cuisine played an essential role in their daily diets. As Asami's narrative demonstrates, the access to and the consumption of Japanese food were not a central concern among temporary migrants regardless of the difference in gender. Even rice, Japan's staple food, was rarely consumed both in and outside of home. Instead, pasta, bread, ready-to-eat pizza, soup and such fast-food meals as fish and chips constituted much of the temporary migrants' daily diet. Their reluctance to associate with Japanese food lay in the fact that students had limited financial resources. Their food practices largely hinged on their financial situation. More importantly, however, it was the quest for new, stimulating experiences similar in sense to those that tourism might offer that temporary migrants sought. Though temporary migrants sought occasionally emotional consolation in a foreign environment, for them, the association with Japanese food was perceived to limit their Irish experience and in their internalisation of the external world.

Food practices undertaken by temporary migrants contrasted with those of long-term migrants. Those who lived in a foreign country over the long run were faced with the situation of needing to maintain Japanese food consumption on a daily basis. For instance, Hiromi, a female student in her late thirties, described the shift in her food practices as her stay in Ireland became longer than planned. Although she initially had planned a one-year stay as a working holiday maker, her Irish boyfriend was the reason for her extended stay after the visa expired. She described:

> In the beginning of my life in Dublin, I never missed Japanese food. Potatoes and pasta were my staple foods. I didn't really care about what I ate when I was single. But now I cook Japanese dishes for my boyfriend [with whom she lived] more than before… maybe [in anticipation of marriage] Japan is becoming distant. I think even more so now.

In the beginning of her Irish experience, she proactively built her social network with other working holiday makers and non-Japanese people through holding home parties and participating in the meetup. However, as her friends of temporary residents returned home, she began to socialise with friends of her boyfriends and Japanese long-term residents. "My life has become settled since I started to live with him [her boyfriend]," said Hiromi. Not attending the meetup nights any more, her life-space gradually came to move away from that of temporary migrants. Half a year after the interview, she transformed her status from that of a student to that of a wife. The underlying explanation for the increased consumption of Japanese food was the need that she felt to forge emotional links with Japan at a time when a temporary relocation was becoming permanent. These examples suggest that the propensity for the consumption of Japanese food was proportional to an emotional distance from 'home.' In this way, as relationships to Ireland changed, the degree to which they desired to maintain the connectivity to Japan correspondingly altered. Contrary to temporary migrants who were reluctant consumers of Japanese food, long-term migrants consciously practised the connections with their homeland through continuing consumption.

Food Practices in the *Uchi* and *Soto* Spheres

The rhetoric of authenticity is a persistent issue that arises from an entangled climate woven from the local and global in transnational circumstances. Whilst the concept of Japanese ethnicity was employed in a way that would be identified with an ambiguous, distant image of home, the ways in which my

research participants conceptualised the ideas of Japanese food was fundamentally framed within the boundary of *uchi*. Their ascription to their homeland was acted within and through a day-to-day embodiment of what Japanese migrants conceived of as authentic Japanese food cooked at home. The procurement of Japanese ingredients was critical to reconfiguring such authentic Japanese cuisine. As seen in Hiroko's narrative, the practicality and high cost of procuring Japanese pantry staples was given priority over any substitutes. This tendency resonated with many Japanese wives whom I interviewed. For instance, Hana's kitchen pantry too was filled with a whole variety of Japanese products that were essential to her everyday cooking, ranging from sauces such as soy sauce, rice vinegar and cooking sake to seasonings such as *katakuriko* (potato starch), Japanese mayonnaise and *toubanjan* (Chinese chilli bean sauce). She purchased these Japanese products from the other two big Asian markets and refilled them on her temporal yet regular returns to Japan. The Korean supermarket was also one of the few venues that she frequented, especially when a specific ingredient such as sliced pork was necessary for a particular Japanese dish. As with these two research participants, the majority of long-term migrants demonstrated a static pattern when it came to food procurement: Japanese food products they were familiar with, even if they were priced higher than similar Chinese and Korean ones, were always found stocked in their kitchen pantry.

As with Hiroko, Hana studiously avoided using Chinese products for her cooking as much as she could. "Because of the image of frozen dumplings in news reports in 2007," she explained, "I can't bring myself to buy Chinese food products." Hana added:

> But, here you find a limited selection of Japanese food products. So, I have little choice but to get Chinese substitutes. I'm getting used to buying Chinese food products and vegetables like mushrooms from the Asian supermarkets. But if there were any Japanese vegetables being sold in the same supermarket, I would most definitely get Japanese ones even if they cost more than their Chinese counterparts. It's just a matter of the image of Chinese products. I'm concerned about what we eat as food is a day-to-day matter.

She was referring to the incident where ten people were taken to a hospital due to the intake of insecticide-laced frozen dumplings imported from China from December 2007 to January 2008 (Asahi Shinbun January 30th 2008). Chinese food products encapsulated popular images of being potentially toxic which significantly impacted on my research participants' propensity to incorporate Chinese food products into their diet. Growing concerns as to food security brought by this incident resulted in the reluctant consumption of Chinese food in Japan. Not only Hana but also many of my female research participants who had a habit of cooking while in Japan related that they had avoided Chinese-grown and processed food. And this propensity continued after their migration to Ireland. As echoed in Kurotani's (2005) research, my female research participants were inclined to provision their households with familiar Japanese brands products which were seen to be more reliable because of the "higher quality and safety standards" of production, even when the prices of imported Japanese food stuffs were more expensive than their substitutes from China, Korea, or the ones produced in the USA (2005: 91). Familiar Japanese food products retained their importance, or rather became even more important, in the production of their version of authentic cuisine.

Although Hiroko's example was admittedly extreme, the homemaking processes taken by my long-term migrants fundamentally involved the eschewal the embodiment of what they believed was not authentic Japanese food. Though this was practically subjected to the availability of proper ingredient in Asian supermarkets in their living environments, the pursuit of authenticity was crucial to their lives as Japanese living permanently in Dublin. Conventionally, the idea of authenticity, as Appadurai (1990) poignantly remarks, is laden with an exclusiveness that hampers the evolutionary mode of social

life. Particularly in diaspora and migration studies, this concept has been heavily employed by deterritorialized populations to advocate a legitimacy and maintenance of an ethnic identity in their settled places. Lu and Fine (1995: 538–539) argue that authentic food is equated as being "identical with the original model" that enables the self to be "connected to core cultural beliefs, and recognized a differentiated food pattern." I argue that authenticity should be approached in a more nuanced sense. In the conversation with long-term migrants, I often heard them saying: "I cook Japanese food because it is familiar to me," suggesting that a nostalgia for home was directly linked to the construction of home as an emotionally bounded space. From the narratives, the ways in which they dealt with heterogeneity in modern Japanese eating habits illuminate an ambiguous distinction between Japanese and foreign. Given that the custom of eating meat became more widespread particularly in the urban areas after the Meiji Restoration (1868) against the Buddhist normative doctrine that promoted vegetarianism (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993: 106), dishes of Western and Chinese origin that Hana and Hiroko regularly cooked represent the hybridisation of Japanese modern cuisine (cf. Ashkenazi 2004; Cwiertka 2006). Therefore, for long-term migrants, dishes that could be cooked with easily-available ingredients, such as *oyakodon* or *korokke*, were naturally perceived as Japanese dishes. Simultaneously, Chinese food products continued to be recognised as foreign. In this construction of cultural prosperity, their continuing consumption of familiar Japanese food products was a way of constructing an *uchi*. A home then became a social space in which my research participants found proximity and connectivity, thereby the self was able to embrace a sense of being *uchi*. This psychological and spatial boundary that measured "social nearness and distance" operated to differentiate between "inside and outside, domestic and public," and ultimately "Japanese and foreign" distinctions (Kuratani 2005: 94). It is within *uchi-soto* frameworks that an exclusion of unfamiliar otherness enabled their practices of constructing a body and space in a more authentic mode. Their food practices, built on the idea of authenticity, afforded them a cultural continuity with their homeland so that their ethnic heritage was rendered static.

The distinction between Japanese food and Others' food, Chinese in particular, reflected a spatial boundary in the public sphere. In every East Asian grocery store operating in Dublin, there was always an abundant range of Chinese food products dominating the store shelves but hardly any Japanese brand food products were accommodated. In Dublin, there were a handful of venues in the city centre in which Japanese migrants shopped. The Asian supermarket which Hiroko and I had visited that day was the foremost Asian market in Dublin, launched by the Hong Kongese owner Howard Pau three decades ago. It was likely the biggest East Asian food retailer in the entire island. Together with the use of this venue located on the south side of the River Liffey, another East Asian grocery store called Oriental Emporium was the primary venue to procure essential Japanese ingredients. These two grocery stores sold a relatively wide selection of Japanese food products as compared with other East Asian grocery stores located in the Chinese ethnoscape around Parnell Street and Capel Street. With their suspicion of Chinese food, this inevitably prevented my research participants from entering these areas while at the same time creating a certain degree of emotional as well as spatial segmentation between Japanese migrants and the Chinese.

Whilst these people retained the dietary pattern exclusive of Chinese food products in the post-migration phase, Chinese food was occasionally consumed in the public sphere. Although the processes of demarcating ethnic and cultural boundaries in the domestic sphere essentially involved the exclusion of Chinese food, many research participants were less concerned about the food that they partook of outside the home. This discrepancy in consumption behaviour further substantiated the importance of constructing and maintaining an *uchi* boundary in an authentic way. Hana remarked: "I do care about what I eat at home, but I cannot control the composition of a dish when dining out." In this regard, an extensive selection of her pantry staples was eminently indicative of her fear of embodying foreign-

ness.

Divergent dietary patterns between *uchi* and *soto* was also reflected in the consumption of Japanese food in the public sphere. In understanding food practices among long-term migrants, here it is important to briefly mention that representations of Japanese food in the *soto* sphere impacted on the migrants' domestic food practices. As seen in the remark of the anonymous housewife found in Hiroko' s narrative, there were various levels of reluctance demonstrated by my research participants with regard to access to and the embodiment of Japanese foods offered at Japanese restaurants. The Japanese food market in Dublin that began to develop in the early 1990s was occupied by fusion-style restaurants, and only three out of 13 eating venues explicitly proclaimed their serving 'authentic' food, hanging up signs declaring to be authentic Japanese restaurants. Given the small population of Japanese in Dublin, the locally-contextualised Japanese dishes were designed to pay more attention to local consumers than Japanese residents. Therefore, a local code was implemented into food menus and serving manners adjusting to the locals' needs to varying degrees. Japanese dishes served in the restaurants were often juxtaposed with Chinese, Korean and European-style dishes. Much of their reluctance to use Japanese restaurants was attributed to the absence of Japanese agents engaging in the reconfiguration of Japanese food. The reconfiguration of this particular aspect of Japanese culture was undertaken predominantly by non-Japanese populations such as the Irish, British, Filipinos, overseas Chinese, Spanish and South Asians. This was due to the mobility of Japanese people engaging in this industry as every restaurant found difficulty in securing Japanese workers, particularly chefs. Chefs often got headhunted by other restaurants within or outside the country, and the mobility amongst students engaging in a serving job was always in flux. The blame for the production of allegedly inauthentic food was laid on the involvement of foreign chefs who were seen as not possessing the 'tongue' to reconfigure the correct taste. For the foreign chefs, their sense of being responsible knowledge and skill holders of Japanese culture led to their adherence to their own construct of 'real' Japanese food. Their pride and sense of responsibility at taking part in the Japanese food industry resulted in giving aid to a student-orientated volunteer group in the aftermath of the 3.11 disaster in 2011, which played a significant part in building a temporal solidarity between Japanese residents and the Japanese food venues. Yet, for Japanese migrants, these Japanese restaurants played a symbolic role in providing a space for confirming a Japanese collective identity by dining together with other Japanese migrants. More importantly, however, as represented by Hiroko' narrative, their food practices mediated doubt about actual food experiences in Japanese restaurants created by the Other. The experience in the *soto* terrain that entailed heterogeneity often were directed to constructing their own version of authenticity in the private, domestic *uchi* space.

Rice as the Ethnic Symbol

In the construction of an emotionally bounded space of home, the consumption of a specific ethnic food functions to invoke a memory of home. In my research, among a variety of Japanese food, it was the Japanese short-grain rice that best evoked a sense of nostalgia and linked Japanese migrants with their homeland (cf. Lee 2000). Ohnuki-Tierney (1993: 4) views "the symbolism of rice" as helping create a Japanese collective sense of self in sharp contrast with 'the Other.' Indeed, rice has long been a preoccupation of Japanese socio-cultural-religious arenas such as being a form of tax payment during the early modern period, a sacred gift to Buddhas (ibid.: 67) and a symbol of wealth and power (ibid.: 74). Whilst barley was often eaten in place of or together with rice in pre-war Japan (Uehara 2013), domestic rice became limited to soldiers who worked for "Japan's victory" (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993: 107). During WWII under rationing (ibid.: 39), white, domestic rice became a "metaphor for the purity of the Japanese self" (ibid.: 106). As exemplified in the Japanese term *gohan* (rice), which also denotes 'meal,'

the public demand for rice in the post-war period established rice as a staple food in the Japanese diet (ibid.: 40). The symbolic meaning of rice — short-grain domestic rice — as opposed to long-grain foreign rice, and short-grain domestic rice in contrast to recent imported short-grain foreign origin (California) rice (ibid.: 128–129), deeply characterises Japanese ethnic identity.

The consumption of short-grain rice was critical to day-to-day experience of home for long-term migrants. Except for one case, all of my female research participants in this group possessed a rice cooker that was either purchased from a local shop or brought from Japan, and they had incorporated rice into their daily diet. It was common to consume rice at least twice a week amongst those who had lived in Ireland for over ten years, whereas those living in Ireland for less than three years consumed rice as frequently as six, seven times a week. Another research participant, Miyuki, used to purchase short-grain rice from the Asian supermarkets and brown rice from a health shop where a wide range of organic food products were available. Over ten years of living in Dublin, these kinds of rice were replaced by Italian organic brown rice that she was able to purchase from a wholesaler at a lower price. The organic brown rice became part of the staple diet of the family.

Indeed, due to the absence of a supply of domestic Japanese short-grain rice in Dublin, foreign short-grain rice imported from South Korea, Australia and Italy dominated store shelves in the Asian supermarkets. It was typically the case that these were favourably used as a substitute for Japanese short-grain rice among my research participants and that foreignness inherent in these varieties of short-grain rice was not seen as problematic. Yet, it always had to be short-grain rice to be served in the household so as to enjoy a taste similar to that of familiar Japanese rice. More commonly available long-grain rice did not bring a sense of satisfaction as compared with short-grain rice. Miyuki continued:

> In a week, we have rice twice and then we have Western food for the rest of the week. My son compulsively eats brown rice if I cook it, but obviously he prefers chips, saying chips are the best. My [Irish] husband loves any kind of Japanese food, except *umeboshi* (梅干し) and *nattō* (納豆) … The reason why I cook Japanese food is because it's very healthy. Japanese cuisine, comprised of a variety of seaweeds, beans and fish, is far healthier than chips, sausages or bacon… I feel the need to provide many kinds of side dishes and a balanced diet for my family. And another reason for Japanese dish cooking is that I want to pass on the tastes I grew up with to my son.

Although she did not speak a lot about the Western food that made up more than half of the family's diet, she became eloquent in describing her culinary practices when it came to Japanese food. Apparently, her daily preparation of rice and Japanese dishes chiefly derived from health concerns for her family. However, to partake of Japanese food mattered the most to herself. For Miyuki, rice particularly conjured up a nostalgia for Japan to the extent that rice made her "feel at home." She showed me the silver coloured pressure cooker placed on the cooker, with which she usually cooked rice. It was one of the pieces of equipment that her sister had bought for Miyuki in anticipation that she would be living outside of Japan on a long-term basis. "This pressure cooker gives rice a soft and elastic texture better than a rice cooker does," explained Miyuki. The moment she opened the lid of the pressure cooker, the tantalisingly fragrant smell of freshly cooked brown rice filled the kitchen. With the evocative smell of 'home,' the consumption of rice brought spiritual gratification. For her, rice embodied the symbolic interpretation of her homeland where nostalgia and emotions towards her family were attached.

A sense of unity with her family in Japan and a nostalgia for home embedded in short-grain rice was mediated by the persistently consuming it. This interplay between eating habits and sensory memory was in part explained by the concept of 'habitus' as elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu. The concept of

habitus encompasses systems of "regulated improvisations" of practices and representations (Bourdieu 1977: 72–78). For Bourdieu, the body is not merely a physical object but is also a transmitter of information, actively performing the embedded values and notions within, because the immanent structure of habitus is "bi-directional, both affected by external stimuli in the performance of bodily practice and informing the ideology and social values generating human behaviour" (Lee 2000: 205). Borrowing this concept, iterative practices reproduce habitus in conjunction with bodily memory. In the circumstances where Miyuki needed to adjust her diet and culinary practices to her family's needs, a renewal of habitus indexed the embodiment of new practices.

Indeed, a constant renewal of habitus as to food practices involves relational processes. As seen in the narratives, evident in the dietary patterns amongst long-term migrants was that they developed their food practices around concerns about the well-being of their family. Regardless of the difference in the nationality of my research participants' partners, in most cases, Japanese dishes cooked by my research participants were shared with their husband and children on a daily basis. This dietary pattern is similarly observed in Kurotani's case study. For her research participants, the daily preparation of Japanese foods derives from health concerns about family members from the perspective that Japanese foods are "really healthy" (Kurotani 2005: 93). For them, the embodiment of the American diet contains the possibility of developing "an unhealthy (American) body" (ibid.: 95) so that an intake of Japanese food is indispensable to the maintenance of a "Japanese (healthy) body." In this regard, the body stands for Americanness or Japaneseness. In line with this case study, my research participants ritualized practices of becoming a Japanese body in Dublin.

However, as seen in the case of Miyuki who lamented that her six-year-old son preferred Irish food to Japanese, most of my long-term migrants were faced with the situation of needing to alter food preparation patterns. As opposed to the case with wives of Japanese partners, who had the privilege of having better access to regular purchase of Japanese food products through the companies that their husband worked for, my long-term migrants who had a non-Japanese partner felt that preparing traditional cuisine for all meals was highly unrealistic. Especially for their children who had more opportunity to be exposed to the local food culture outside their homes, they either compromised their diet completely in order to adjust to the family members' preference or incorporated local ingredients into the dishes to meet all family members' needs. They developed strategies for adjusting to a life in the transnational environments.

In line with Hana's remark on the importance of dietary accordance in the household, Maki, a 35-year-old wife of an Irishman, stressed the efficacy of sharing a taste in food with the husband one will have. "Listen," she said half in jest, "you had better find a man with whom you can share meals. I'm too late in this respect." Her daily diet consisted of a variety of orthodox Japanese dishes, including *soba* (buckwheat noodles) and rice that were seen as healthy. She was partial to Japanese foods, to the extent that Maki referred to the experience of having had dreams about them. Whereas central to Maki's diet was Japanese cuisine, her Irish husband had a fixed set list of dishes that he was able to eat, such as Thai curry, lasagna, beef steak and spaghetti carbonara. The dissonant approach to dietary patterns within the household compelled Maki to prepare two separate meals every day; one to cater for her husband's food tastes and the other for herself. Although Maki's case demonstrates domestic food practices in a way that would suggest that food preferences are an individual matter, the vast majority of long-term migrants who had a non-Japanese partner and biracial children shared the same meals with the family. This process involved constant negotiations with family members' needs and preferences, while simultaneously underscoring the Japanese wives' commitment to creating a more familiar, comfortable *uchi* space. Thus, it is suggested that domestic food practices were rather a collective act, whereby Japanese ethnicity was collectively experienced and their food experience was elevated to a symbolic embodiment of Japaneseness.

More noteworthy was the fact that all of the long-term migrants, regardless of employment status and gender, were in charge of cooking. Two male research participants in this category too were engaged in cooking as much as, or even more than their wives. Yusuke, the 25-year-old husband who went through a change in status from a working holiday maker to a resident of Ireland, told me that he was more than willing to take up the cooking chores. "I find cooking quite enjoyable," said Yusuke. While his Irish wife looked after their daughter, cooking was his task in the household. Yet, as Japanese food was expensive to purchase and consume both in and outside the home, potatoes and pasta were the staple food in the family's diet. Serving potato-oriented meals was instrumental in lowering the costs in the kitchen. He remarked on how he related to Japanese food:

> I have an impression that Japanese restaurants serve strange food and charge high prices for it. So I don't eat Japanese food at restaurants, and even at home. But when my daughter reaches the appropriate age for eating solid foods [as she was being weaned at the time of interview], I want to introduce Japanese food to her… Japanese cuisine is rich in variety.

In contrast to the Japanese wives, both male research participants stated that Japanese cuisine was mostly absent from their diet, due in part to their concern for the practicality of food expenses. Expressing little need to link themselves with Japan via food, they seemed rather indifferent to what they cooked. However, the implication of Yusuke's comment postulated food as part of an ethnic heritage that he would want to pass on to the next generation. As Miyuki too accentuated her desire to retain emotional and material links to her homeland for her son, for those who had children in particular, Japanese dishes were served with the intention of reinforcing Japanese ethnic heritages.

Such conscious effort to construct Japanese home spaces within the transnational environments was carried out by female research participants. The distinctive difference relating to the consumption of Japanese food was underlined by gender, which acknowledged the roles that Japanese women played in the household. Conventional gendered expectations about the production and maintenance of a home continue to shape women's responsibility towards *uchi* – home and family. In family-building processes anchored in domestic practices, much of the responsibility of constructing, protecting and inheriting the *uchi* fell on women's shoulders. Lebra (1984: 156) argues for the role of a woman as caretakers of their husbands and family. She claims that Japanese patriarchy is intertwined with, or rather upheld by a woman's monopoly of domesticity, thereby creating the husband's dependency on the wife. Regardless of the location of 'home,' Japanese women's roles are primarily defined by their relation to the households so that the reproduction of ethnic heritages in the domestic space become the utmost concern even for Japanese wives living abroad (cf. Befu and Stalker 1996: 112). As the narratives demonstrated, this was true of my research participants. Evident was that my women's role in persistently underpinning the processes of the social and biological reproduction of family. Given a gendered division of social roles which assign women primarily an *uchi* social space, it came as no surprise that it was my female research participants, though they were foreign wives, who were entrusted with the maintenance of the *uchi* space. As seen in the case of Hiroko, despite her resistance to the social expectations of women, she never questioned performing these roles in her second marriage. This suggests that my female research participants embodied these expectations to the extent that they naturally delivered women's roles even when their temporary stay might be replaced by a long-term one.

Conclusion

Foodways unfolds intricate constructions of cultural and ethnic boundaries. Their being in a foreign

country for the long-term conferred a compelling sense of necessity to maintain and transmit their ethnic heritage through various media, and food was one of the most significant aspects of the lives of long-term migrants. The pursuit of home was reflected in the construction of a Japanese *uchi* boundary within transnational domestic spaces. They were concerned with proper Japanese ingredients to authenticate Japanese cultural prosperity. This *uchi* boundary was interpreted as a social space where they preserved Japanese ethnic identity by partaking of their construct of 'authentic' food. What it took to claim their authentic reconfiguration of food was a degree of familiar Japanese food. In this sense, home was a space that allowed them to retain effective control of their food practices as characterised by the exclusion of foreign food, particularly Chinese food products. A sense of nostalgia for the homeland was encapsulated within an *uchi* boundary wherein the framing of Japanese ethnic distinctions constantly took place through food practices. Such a practice was best understood as their efforts at maintaining a sense of being *uchi* within the family they married into. This in turn highlighted the status of being the Stranger in Dublin. As foreign wives, they created opportunities for themselves and their families in which a Japanese ethnic identity was possible to be experienced and maintained at a collective level within the *uchi* zone. By doing so, they felt that they remained in close contact with their homeland.

The lives of long-term migrants contrast with temporary residents who were more enthusiastic to mingle with the locals and try out new experiences. Whilst Japanese youths on temporary visas desired to live away from connectivity with Japan so as to develop cultural capital, long-term migrants became aware of their belonging to Japan, the local society and groups of Japanese long-term residents like themselves: they continued to be Japanese and simultaneously developed new identities. This shows a multiplicity of identities and roles as well as social relationships my research participants engaged in. Thus, their practice of eating Japanese food represented the pursuit of home, the degree of which was likely to be subject to legal status and their sense of identity. Therein were observed the differences in motivations for traveling to Dublin and connectivity with Japan between temporary and long-term research participants.

1) Food practices are interlinked with various aspects of a society. For instance, the embodiment of eating and food preferences, stratify the complexities of inhabited social structure in accord with class (Bourdieu 1986), gender, religion, power structure (Mintz 1986), life-cycle, self-regulation (Bruch 1997), region and culture (Lupton 1996: 1; Xu 2008: 14).
2) 'Cookpad' is a Japanese social network for cooks, where users share cooking experience through user-created recipes.

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