Shichimi: The Spice, its Trade, and Centuries of Food Business Survival in Japan

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Abstract: Shichimi is the spice blend added to many noodle, meat, fish, rice, and vegetable dishes in Japan, and is the most prominent among the relatively few spices that feature in Japanese cuisine. Also called *shichimi tōgarashi*, shichimi is generally made with seven ingredients (*shichi*=seven; *mi*=taste), with ground red chilli pepper (*tōgarashi*) as the main component mixed with any six of the following: roasted chilli pepper, *sanshō* (Japanese prickly-ash), hemp seeds, black sesame seeds, white sesame seeds, *chimpi* (dried tangerine peel), green *shiso* (perilla), purple *shiso*, poppy seeds, nori seaweed, rapeseeds, and ginger. Recent variations incorporate yuzu peel and powdered wasabi, as well as non-traditional ingredients such as garlic, basil, oregano, cloves, cumin, etc.

Shichimi has been produced and marketed domestically for several centuries in Japan, with three main producers in Tokyo (Yagenbori, established 1625), Kyoto (Shichimiya Honpo, c. 1655), and Nagano (Yawataya Isogoro, 1736) engaged solely in the shichimi trade, all surviving and still doing brisk business into the present. The three are among the oldest businesses in the country, which boasts more than 1,400 companies aged at least two hundred years, majority of them producing food, including condiments and confectionery, and drinks like sake.

This paper is a brief inquiry into the history and commerce of shichimi. It provides a background on the origins of chilli in Japan that led to the use of shichimi in Japanese cuisine today. The paper also discusses the shichimi trade mainly through the three producers mentioned above, particularly on the ways these businesses have remained despite, and due to, selling one single food product throughout the past three to four centuries. Through the lens of the shichimi spice trade, the paper will look into the ways food businesses can, and do, survive for centuries.

Japanese cuisine is not known for its spiciness, and its flavour descriptions are often confined to 'subtle', 'mild', and 'natural', sometimes 'bland', but never approaching 'hot and spicy'. Spices, however, have been in use in Japan from its early history: The *Kojiki* ('Records of Ancient Matters') from 712, the country's oldest extant literary and historical text, includes several references to *sanshō* (Japanese pepper or prickly-ash), which is indigenous to Japan, and ginger. Similar texts from the same and later eras mention other spices and condiments such as black pepper, sesame, and wasabi. And the Shosoin Repository, the treasure house in

the ancient capital of Nara that stores valuable arts and crafts of the ancient imperial court from the eighth century, includes actual spices like cloves, cinnamon, and black pepper in its vast collection; these would have been brought into the country from Southeast Asia through mainland China.[1]

Most of these ancient spices and condiments, however, were used for purposes other than cooking, as in the treatment of various ailments, as aphrodisiacs, or as incense for burning in shrines and temples. Only much later, during the Edo period (1603-1868) did spices regularly appear in food preparation, as seen in various cookbooks from the period that recommend the use of spices in a number of dishes. *Shirōtobōchō*, for example, one of the more frequently referenced cooking manuals from the eighteenth century, lists scallions and red chilli pepper among the main ingredients for *taimeshi* (sea bream rice), a dish that is still eaten today but is generally prepared without chilli.

Spices' late entry into the culinary repertoire may account for their relative obscurity in Japanese cuisine today, even as many so-called 'traditional' Japanese dishes do call for the addition of certain spices to 'complete' their preparation, such as the sprinkle of *sanshō* over grilled eel and the dab of wasabi between the raw fish and rice in sushi. Several spices feature regularly in Japanese cuisine, if one just knows where to look. Among these different spices, the most widely used and, thus, prominent would be *shichimi tōgarashi*, or simply, *shichimi*.

Shichimi is actually a spice blend that is made with seven ingredients (*shichi*=seven; *mi*=taste). Its main component is coarsely ground red chilli pepper (*tōgarashi*), into which are added any six of the following: roasted chilli pepper, *sanshō*, hemp seeds, black sesame seeds, white sesame seeds, *chimpi* (dried tangerine peel), green *shiso* (perilla), purple *shiso*, poppy seeds, nori seaweed, rapeseeds, and ginger. Recent blend variations incorporate dried yuzu peel and powdered wasabi, as well as 'non-traditional' ingredients such as garlic, basil, oregano, cloves, and cumin, among others.

Like *sanshō* for eel and wasabi for sushi, shichimi is usually added as a final touch to the food, especially since its complex but delicate flavours can get lost during the cooking process. In many cases, it is sprinkled on food just before it is consumed, by the person eating the dish, and not by its cook. And there are many such dishes shichimi is sprinkled onto: *udon* or soba noodles in soup, ramen, *oyakodon* (chicken and eggs over rice in a bowl), *gyūdon* (beef over rice in a bowl), *yakitori* (grilled chicken on skewers), grilled fish and seafood, various soups and hotpot dishes, *tsukemono* pickles, and all kinds of boiled vegetable dishes. With shichimi, one would say that Japanese food *can* indeed be hot and spicy.

The recent global boom in Japanese food, especially ramen and other noodle dishes, has resulted in the growing popularity of shichimi worldwide. In early 2019, Bloomberg devoted one news report solely on shichimi, calling it 'the Japanese spice blend slowly taking over America'. The article described American chefs' fascination with the spice and the novel ways they use it in their restaurants and bars all over the country, such as in

salads, on eggs Benedict, in Mexican-inspired dishes, over fried chicken, and in cocktails (shichimi-spiced Bloody Mary, anyone?).[2]

While new to American food culture, shichimi significantly predates the United States, having been produced and marketed in its country of origin since the early seventeenth century. There are three main producers of shichimi in Japan today: Yagenbori, established 1625 in Tokyo; Shichimiya Honpo, c. 1655, in Kyoto; and Yawataya Isogoro, the youngest from 1736, in Nagano. All three engage solely in the shichimi trade and continue to do brisk business in the present. They are also among the oldest businesses in Japan, which currently boasts more than 1400 companies aged at least two hundred years, majority of them producing food, including condiments and confectionery, and drinks like sake.[3]

This paper considers the shichimi and uses its trade by major purveyors as a lens for looking into the issues that surround and explain the reasons for the longevity of food business enterprises in Japan. Before the main discussion, a brief history of shichimi is offered below, as gleaned from the few sources available.

Shichimi: a short history

The story of shichimi must begin with the story of its chief ingredient, the red chilli pepper, and its arrival in Japan. While historical sources on the chilli pepper in Japan are much easier to find than those that concern only shichimi, these have not settled the debate concerning the route by which the red chilli pepper came to the country. Historians generally subscribe to one of three narratives, as follows.

One: shichimi first arrived in Japan through a Portuguese Jesuit mission led by one Balthazar Gago that landed in Bungo Province (most of Oita Prefecture today) in the southern island of Kyushu in 1552. They had brought pumpkin and chilli pepper seeds among their gifts for the *daimyō* (provincial lord), Ōtomo Sōrin.[4] Regarding this story, there are not a few web and print articles, including scholarly literature, that place the year 1542 as the date the chilli pepper – or at least its seeds – was first brought by the Portuguese. This date is erroneous, as will be explained immediately below, but it is widely cited since it comes from the *Sōmoku rikubu kōshuhō*, a thirty-volume encyclopedia from 1829 published by famed Edo-period farmer-philosopher (and physician) Satō Nobuhiro (1769-1850). This highly-regarded work explains the cultivation of nearly 300 useful plants – including chilli pepper – in scientific detail that was unprecedented in its time. In this work, Satō explicitly mentions that Portuguese visitors first brought chilli seeds to Japan from Brazil (then already occupied for several decades by Portugal), emphasizing the date 1542 as the year they paid their respects to Sōrin.[5]

While there is little doubt today about the Brazilian connection – the chilli pepper is after all indigenous to Central and South America – the date could only be a typographical error, especially since other diaries and travel logs from the era expressly indicate the first

visits to Bungo by the Portuguese as occurring in the 1550s, with a few expressly dating Gago's visit in 1552.[6] In any case, Sōrin would have only been twelve years old in 1542, a fact that is curiously neglected in some accounts on the chilli pepper's history in Japan. At this time Sōrin was yet to succeed his father as *daimyō*, which he did eight years later in 1550. He could not have received the Portuguese mission in the manner detailed by Satō in his treatise. As for the actual journey of the chilli pepper from South America to Japan, the consensus is that it followed a circuitous route, from Brazil to Portugal, then Goa in the Indian subcontinent through to Southeast Asia and Macao, perhaps southern China, too, and finally southern Japan.[7]

Two: the second route concerns the famous and powerful ruler, Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Not a few histories credit Hideyoshi as the actual person to have brought chilli pepper to Japan in 1592, which was during the first of his two invasions of the Korean peninsula. The source for this origin story is, again, another famed writer, the botanist-philosopher Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714). While Ekiken today is better known for his teachings on etiquette and moral behaviour, he had also published *Yamato Honzō* (1709), a sixteen-volume masterwork on medicinal plants – including references to a few other useful animals and minerals – that is considered the first botanical and agricultural science text in Japan. In this work, Ekiken explicitly states that 'Japan did not have chilli pepper, but when Hideyoshi struck that country [Korea], he brought back the seeds of what we now call Koryo [Korean] pepper'.[8]

This thesis is plausible, especially when one considers the looming presence of chilli in kimchi and other distinctive dishes in Korean cuisine today. However, Korean culinary historian and scientist Chong Dae-song asserts the reverse, declaring the chilli pepper as having been imported into the Korean Peninsula from Japan. He cites Yi Sugwang's *Jibong Yuseol* from 1614, considered the earliest Korean encyclopedia, which also contains the oldest reference to chilli pepper in Korean literature. The *Jibong Yuseol*, says Chong, calls the chilli pepper 'Japan mustard/pepper' from its place of origin. (In this case, then, granting that Hideyoshi did bring chilli into Japan from Korea, he could have merely and inadvertently re-imported it back into the country.[9]) As for the chilli pepper's indispensability to kimchi, Chong also states this was to come much later: None of the Korean cookbooks written before the late seventeenth century included it in any of the recipes for what is now the Korean national dish, he notes.[10]

Historians who engage in the Japan-or-Korea debate generally maintain that the chilli pepper came to either country by the Pacific route: through Mexico to the Philippines and other islands of Southeast Asia, then on to the Asian continent and/or Japan. It bears mentioning that neither Ekiken in Japan nor Yi in Korea describes the culinary uses of the chilli pepper. The former refers to it as an ornamental plant that could be used to cure headaches and chills, while Yi determines it to be poisonous.[11]

Three: still another historical encyclopedia, the *Wakan sansai zue* (literally, 'Japan-China Illustrated Encyclopedia') compiled by Terajima Ryōan and published in 1712, forms the source for the third professed route taken by the chilli pepper to Japan. Ryōan's work is even more voluminous than the two multiple-volume anthologies mentioned above, comprising 105 volumes of facts about daily life in Japan and China, including the constellations and weather, daily life and activities, flora and fauna, etc. The *Wakan sansai zue* includes a brief description of the chilli pepper as a plant normally grown in Southeast Asia that was then brought to Japan by Portuguese traders together with tobacco at the end of the 16th century, specifically in the Keicho era (1596-1614).[12] Whether or not the chilli pepper came from elsewhere before Southeast Asia is not explained in the work.

Whichever of the three versions of history one accepts, the general conclusion is that the chilli pepper was already in Japan by the turn of the seventeenth century, having arrived by way of the Asian mainland or through Southeast Asia, and most likely brought in by Portuguese traders or missionaries. After its introduction to the country, it did not take long for it to evolve into shichimi. And concerning the origins of shichimi, we can but only turn to yet another encyclopedia, *Morisada mankō*.

FIGURE 1. Shichimi seller (Kinsei akinai zukushi kyō utaawase, 1852), National Diet Library collection.

Morisada mankō was written during a thirty-year span from 1837 by historian Kitagawa Morisada (pseudonym) (1810-unknown). The collection is composed of 35 comprehensive volumes that describe the history and development of daily life, including manners, customs, and material culture, in Japan's three major cities of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka. For the purposes of this paper, it is also the earliest work in the literature that indicates

the origin of the shichimi. Morisada states that it was one Nakajima Tokuemon who was the first person to produce and sell shichimi, in his shop in the downtown district of Ryogoku in Edo, in 1625. The shop's name was Yagenbori, which has since moved to the Asakusa temple district in present-day Tokyo and now in its tenth generation of ownership.

Yagenbori was originally opened as an herbalist's shop: The term *yagen* in its name refers to the chemist's mortar. According to the shop's official history, the first owner conceived of shichimi through advice from 'many herbalists and apothecaries who plied their trade in the area, [whereby] he created a new blend of spices that was not only tasty, but also healthful. Tokuemon called his blend shichimi-togarashi (seven-flavoured capsicum), and it gained such popularity with the citizens of Edo that the Yagenbori name became synonymous with the seven-flavored spice itself'.[13] *Morisada mankō* states that from its early beginnings, the shichimi produced by Yagenbori was used as a flavouring for many kinds of food by the people of Edo. It was sold in bamboo tube containers not only in Tokuemon's shop, but also by a few other shops and itinerant street vendors.[14]

There is one existing illustration with accompanying text from the late Edo period, reproduced from earlier sources, that depicts an itinerant shichimi seller and his merchandise in very clear visual and textual detail (see Figure 1). The illustration is from an 1852 publication named *Kinsei akinai zukushi kyō utaawase* (literally, 'Modern merchants' poetry collection'); its text, read from right to left, top to bottom, is translated as follows.[15]

Come, let us talk of the
Very useful Yatsufusa chilli[16], the famous product from Naito in Yotsuya [in Edo]
Next we have black sesame
to reinvigorate the spirit and give luster to your hair
Then chimpi that is made from mikan tangerine peel
Its fruit is poisonous, but its skin is potent enough to cure colds
Poppy seeds
are [health] supplements to help increase your body heat
Hemp seeds
are good for curing sexually transmitted diseases
Sanshō
is a pungent medicine
Roasted chilli pepper
is pungent, fragrant, and delicious
Watch me fill up this bag, adding extra from all the bits that fall out
More, more, more, more

He says more; this is a short version[17]

[Brief note at the end] Finally, you add shiso and nori seaweed.

The seven ingredients of shichimi described in the text – red chilli pepper, black sesame, *chimpi*, poppy seeds, hemp seeds, *sanshō*, roasted chilli pepper – are the exact same ingredients that compose the shichimi sold by Yagenbori in Tokyo until today.

As mentioned above, Yagenbori is one of three major producers of traditional shichimi in Japan today. All three have different and distinct recipes for their flagship products, all of which have also remained unchanged since their establishment three centuries and more earlier. For Shichimiya Honpo in Kyoto, the blend includes: dried chilli pepper, nori seaweed, *sanshō*, black sesame, white sesame, *shiso*, and hemp seeds. In the case of Yawataya Isogoro, it is composed of: dried chilli pepper, ginger, *sanshō*, black sesame, *chimpi*, green *shiso*, and hemp seeds.

The Shichimi Trade and Company Longevity in Japan

As this paper also aims to investigate company longevity utilizing the shichimi food business as its lens, detailed descriptions of each of the three major producers would be ideal, if not imperative. Space constraints prevent a discussion of all three, however. Moreover, the author had initially planned to conduct a pilot ethnographic study of Yagenbori, because of it being the originator of shichimi and the main shop's easily accessible location in Tokyo. The current (early 2020) pandemic and resulting restrictions in movement prevented any such ethnographic study to even be initiated. In lieu of absent ethnographic information, this paper will instead use data from an oral history on the shichimi business of Shichimiya Honpo in Kyoto that was recounted by its current head. This oral history was composed from an interview conducted under the auspices of Kyoto Hyakumikai, an association of traditional businesses based in Kyoto.[18] Selected passages from the oral history will be used to describe relevant aspects of the traditional shichimi trade; these passages will be interspersed with research information and brief discussion, as follows.

> Shichimiya Honpo (SH): Our shop was established 350 years ago in the Meireki years [1655-1658] of the early Edo period…Initially, we opened as a tea shop along the main road that leads to the Kiyomizu Temple, where travelling worshippers and the faithful could stop for tea and rest their legs on their way to the temple.

Like Yagenbori, which is found near the gates of Asakusa Temple, and Yawataya Isogoro, which is within striking distance of the main gate to Zenkōji Temple in Nagano, all three shops are located near Japan's biggest and most famous Buddhist temples. The shops' prime location assures them of a constant stream of customers, in addition to their usual clients (restaurants, food service establishments, individual customers, etc.). Their proximity to major religious institutions also accord their products a certain level of prestige and enhanced desirability that may not be procured elsewhere.

> SH: From the time red chilli pepper came to Japan during the Azuchi Momoyama period [1573-1603], people have known that chilli warms the body…In our tea shop, we used to serve karashi-yu, hot water that contained a pinch of chilli, for worshippers to warm their bodies with. Our shop always stocked up on chilli for our customers. Before we knew it, karashi-yu became our best-seller, and in 1818, we changed our name to Shichimiya ['Shichimi Shop'] and sold shichimi exclusively.

A great majority of Japan's longest-lived companies are famous for a single product, many that are tradition-oriented and possessing historical and cultural cachet. Kyoto and Tokyo especially are home to many companies providing such culturally important products; these companies have been referred to by one author as 'living heritage industries'.[19] By tenaciously sticking to a single but top-of-its-class product, that is, its 'core competency', these heritage industries survive through generations, and throughout social and technological change.[20]

> SH: We refer to our product using only one word, shichimi tōgarashi, but each of the seven ingredients put into it is different from the others because of the characteristics of the land and place it came from, its history, and other reasons…Still, shichimi is just a blend of seven ingredients, so that the blending process becomes very critical…
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> All seven ingredients are organic products. They change according to the weather, whether there is rain or sunshine, and to changes in the temperature; all seven are influenced by that day's conditions. So even if you use the same composition from the previous day, the colour could be different, the spiciness, too, and you would not be able to make the same blend. For consistency in taste, you must blend the ingredients using all the senses of your body, noticing the changes with your eyes, nose, mouth, and adjust the recipe according to the day's conditions…

The Japanese term for traditional shops or companies is *shinise* (literally, 'old shop'), majority of which are establishments engaged in food production or service. In his proclamations above, the head of Shichimiya Honpo expresses his shop's dedication and commitment to quality, a characteristic that is automatically ascribed to *shinise* by its customers and the general public. In Japan, the term *shinise* connotes sophisticated taste and premium quality, which consequently grants the establishment high social standing and prestige. And this image of the *shinise* as a provider of quality and luxury often translates into fierce brand loyalty from its clients. As one academic explains: 'Japan has its love for luxury-brand shoes and bags, which exists in the West as well, but in Japan it extends to food – a desire to eat famous things. As a result, there are lots more companies considered *shinise* in Japan'.[21]

This image of the *shinise* coupled with fervent client loyalty can sometimes act as insurance to protect the company and ensure its long-term survival, even during times when it is seen to have transgressed its commitment to quality. The 2007 scandal surrounding Akafuku, a confectionery founded in 1707, tells of this special and selective protection that is afforded especially to *shinise* food establishments.

Akafuku's flagship product is the Akafuku mochi, a simple glutinous rice ball (mochi) that is covered in red bean paste made in the shape of water ripples, which the company explains was originally designed in the image of water lapping at the banks of the Isuzu River. The Isuzu River is the body of water that flows in Mie Prefecture and, more significantly, through the Ise Grand Shrine, Japan's most important shrine bar none. Akafuku's main store is on the main road to the Inner Shrine of Ise, where worshippers and tourists throughout the past several centuries have frequently stopped by before or after their visit to the shrine; here, they may enjoy Akafuku mochi with tea in the shop's premises or buy these as gifts to take home. Akafuku's shop has been a landmark associated with the Ise Grand Shrine from its establishment in same location in the early eighteenth century, and the Akafuku mochi, whose recipe and appearance have remained largely unmodified, has sold in the millions all these years.

However, a government investigation in what would have been the company's 300th year anniversary in 2007 revealed that Akafuku had been tampering with its expiration-date labels for years, perhaps for a few decades. Among several irregularities, it was discovered that the company consistently reused unsold and sometimes expired products by freezing and later selling these as freshly made sweets, with new expiration dates, after they had been thawed. (Mochi keeps long when frozen.) In some cases, unsold sweets were refashioned into other confections and sold to other shops and unsuspecting customers.

This scandal roped in officials from the highest levels of the government. The then Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries – the ministry in charge of looking after the nation's food production and supply – revealed to news reporters that he himself recently had Akafuku mochi at home two weeks before news of the anomalies broke, and found the sweets to be delicious as always. He did end his confession with a warning to Akafuku, at the same time expressing his disappointment by saying that he 'never imagined a *shinise* of this level to be involved in label-tampering illegalities. As they [Akafuku] are a highly-trusted *shinise* manufacturer, this is a very serious problem'.[22]

The government promptly ordered Akafuku to cease operations in mid-October (2007), and at the end of the month, its chairman, the tenth-generation head, resigned from his post. At the height of the scandal, several quarters in media thought that it spelled the end of Akafuku. A report in the New York Times that compared Akafuku's troubles with other famous confectioners also involved in scandals of their own declared that '[s]taging a comeback may be more difficult for Akafuku, whose transgressions are far more serious.'[23]

Akafuku, however, ostensibly cleaned up its act, reforming its manufacturing and sales systems and establishing a 'Corporate Social Responsibility' panel to oversee its overall operations. Although it remained closed in the 2008 new year season, when sales would have been at their highest, the government lifted its closure orders at the end of January 2008, and Akafuku resumed operations soon after, from the beginning of February. The chairman was also reinstated. Today in 2020, it is business as usual at its main shop near the Ise Grand Shrine, and Akafuku mochi continues to be sold – freshly made, it is quietly claimed and assumed – in great quantities in department stores, train stations, souvenir shops, and other establishments in and around Mie Prefecture and beyond.

> I think it is impossible to put our blending techniques into writing. The [unwritten] recipe for our shichimi is handed down as a family secret, and the blending process is passed on according to isshi sōden [literally, 'one child, all inheritance'].

This is perhaps the most essential characteristic of long-lived companies in Japan, that is, that they have been from the beginning family-owned and -run businesses assiduously guarding secrets that are selectively passed across generations. *Isshi sōden*, as mentioned in the above comment, is the practice found in many art and cultural traditions that refers to the 'transmission of all learning by one teacher to only one disciple or heir'.[24] The practice is commonly followed in Japan's art traditions to preserve their 'true' teachings and, consequently, ensure their legitimacy and reputation across generations. *Shinise* engage in the same practice, as their 'emphasis [is] on sustainability, rather than quick maximisation of profit' in order for the business to last as long as is possible. 'In Japan, it's more: how can we move [the company] on to our descendants, our children, our grandchildren?' and by all means keep it in the family. At the same time, 'closing a company or selling it is also considered something of a failure and shame in Japan, and this feeling goes back centuries. So these cultural issues also seem to encourage families to keep firms going.'[25]

Shichimiya Honpo is currently headed by the 15th-generation 'spice master', while Yawataya Isogoro, eight decades younger, is still on its ninth generation of doing business. Astonishingly, Yagenbori, the oldest of them all, has had only ten generation changes in its history. Its provenance and historical continuity are emphasized in the names taken by or granted to each generation head, beginning with its founder Nakajima Tokuemon, to wit:

> Tokugawa Iemitsu, the third Tokugawa Shogun, was so enamored of [Yagenbori's] spice that he granted all succeeding generations of Yagenbori spice masters permission to use the character 徳 (toku) in their name, a tradition that lives on with the current tenth-generation spice master, Tokuaki.[26]

Business theorist Arie de Geus in his book, *The Living Company*, investigated several long-lived companies in a few countries worldwide, including a significant number in Japan. He offered several theories for their longevity, and summarized his findings thus: 'Companies die

because their managers focus on the economic activity of producing goods and services, and they forget that their organizations' true nature is that of a community of humans.'[27] It may be said that the shichimi shops described in this paper, as well as many of their counterpart *shinise* all over Japan, have never shed this 'true nature' throughout their existence.

Notes

1. Kazuhiko Kojima, '*Nihon no shokubunka: kōshinryō to shokubunka* (Japanese Food Culture: Spices and Food Culture)', *Vacuum and Surface Science*, 2019: 62/8, 522-524.
2. Larissa Zimberoff, 'The Japanese Spice Blend Taking Over America', *Bloomberg: Food*: www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-19/shichimi-togarashi-spice-takes-over-america-what-is-it-recipes. Accessed 15 May 2020.
3. '*Zenkoku shinise kigyō chōsa* (Nationwide Survey of Traditional Companies)', Tokyo Shoko Research, 2016: www.tsr-net.co.jp/news/analysis/20161202_01.html. Accessed 15 May 2020.
4. Japanese names in the main text appear in the conventional order, that is, surname (Ōtomo) first, followed by the first name (Sōrin). Ōtomo Sōrin was a powerful Christian *daimyō* who established control over a large swathe of Kyushu.
5. In Volume 17 (*'Kagaku Zenshū)* of *Sōmoku rikubu kōshuhō*. See Hitomi Enokido, '*Edo jidai no tōgarashi* (The Chilli Pepper in the Edo period)*', International Japanese Studies Research (Hosei University)*, 2010.
6. See Rui Manuel Loureiro, 'Jesuit Textual Strategies in Japan Between 1549 and 1582', *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies*, 2004: 8, 39-63.
7. Chihiro Kato, *Ra no michi* (Spice Journey), Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014.
8. Ekiken Kaibara, *Yamato Honzō*, Tokyo: Ariake Shobo, 1975, p. 158.
9. Toshio Asakura, *Sekai no shokubunka: Kankoku* (World Food Culture: South Korea), Tokyo: Nosangyoson Bunkakyokai, 2005.
10. See Chong Dae-song, '*Kimchi no chōrigaku* (Kimchi Cookery)', *Science of Cookery*, 1994: 27/4, p. 302-307.
11. Ibid.
12. Ryōan Terajima (ed.), *Wakan sansai zue*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990.
13. Yagenbori: yagenbori.jp/about/english/
14. Morisada Kitagawa, *Morisada mankō*, Tokyo: Iwanami Bunko, 1996.
15. Translation by this author.
16. The Yatsufusa ('eight-cluster'), *Capsicum annuum* variety of chilli pepper was developed in Japan and is also known as 'chile(s) Japones'. The Japanese name is from the appearance of the fruit, which grow upright in bright-red clusters of usually five or six. Yatsufusa are also grown as ornamental plants today.
17. Translated as written in the original text
18. Kyoto Hyakumikai published some of the oral histories, including Shichimiya Honpo's, in a book named *Kyoto shinise: hyakunen no kodawari* (Kyoto's traditional shops: centuries of commitment), Kyoto: Gentosha, 2004.
19. Murayama Yuzo, Heritage Culture and Business, Kyoto Style (trans. Juliet Winters Carpenter) (Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2019), p. 10.
20. Bryan Lufkin, 'Why so many of the world's oldest companies are in Japan BBC?', BBC Worklife, 13 February 2020: www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200211-why-are-so-many-old-companies-in-japan. Accessed 15 May 2020.
21. Yuri Kageyama, 'Why Japan has the most old companies in the world', Associated Press, 27 April 2015: www.businessinsider.com/how-japan-has-more-old-businesses-than-any-other-developed-nation-2015-4. Accessed 15 May 2020.
22. http://iori3.cocolog-nifty.com/tenkannichijo/2007/10/30_99e9.html
23. Norimitsu Onishi, 'Wait, don't eat that: candy scandal stuns Japan', New York Times, 30 October 2007: www.nytimes.com/2007/10/31/world/asia/31iht-31japan.8123604.html. Accessed 10 May 2020.
24. Voltaire Cang, 'Preserving Intangible Heritage in Japan: The Role of the Iemoto Systerm', International Journal of Intangible Heritage, 2008: 3, pp. 71-81, 79.
25. Lufkin, 'Why so many'.
26. Yagenbori: yagenbori.jp/about/english/
27. Arie de Geus, *The Living Company,* Boston: Harvard Business School, 1997.