

Introduction

Food Studies in the last twenty years have fortunately been increasingly widespread and reflected in important academic and business institutions, as well as closely connected to popular media. They offer multidisciplinary perspectives of the relationship between food and the different components of the societies to which they are linked, in particular; science, culture, communication, economics, finance, and environmental sustainability. The approach to the subject, precisely because it has a broad-spectrum, allows a wide range of scholars and experts from different sectors to study the relationship with their respective disciplines in increasingly dynamic and transversal ways.

As a demonstration of the growing interest in the field, the opportunities of research and discussion have multiplied through *symposia*, Masters courses, specialised magazines and monographs. On each occasion it becomes increasingly evident that the entire sphere of disciplinary connections to food has not yet been defined: if historians, anthropologists, philosophers and sociologists have been dedicating specific studies to this field for a long time, more recently communication, journalism, political science and psychology experts have been added, suggesting new interpretations that intersect with the existing ones. A great contribution also comes from the spheres more traditionally linked to economics and finance, areas in which the concept of production and investment in food increasingly acquires a sustainable value of social interest, the function of food itself intended

as a set of values that it is capable of transmitting. In close connection with the competent communication bodies, the theoretical and methodological approaches are now based on a more attentive and conscious social sharing, trying to map the existing market conditions to rewrite new future strategies that envisage the centrality of welfare rather than the more clearly consumerist approach.

The *Food+ Symposium*, organised by the Ca' Foscari University of Venice in collaboration with the Consulate General of Japan in Milan, hosted some of the most prestigious names in the different fields, with particular reference to the specificities of two of the countries where food has traditionally had greater symbolic value: Italy and Japan. These are two culinary realities now exported all over the world, for a long time representative of lifestyles, social and economic dynamics in many cases similar in the course of their respective histories. This volume therefore presents the result of the contributions offered by the main exponents of the Italian-Japanese economic-cultural scene, intended as a starting point for further investigations that we hope for the future.

Thanks to the participation of authorities and guests, managers, experts, journalists and scholars from Japan and Italy, during the Symposium we have achieved a deep insight into this important topic. Our guests have presented, from varying perspectives, the many implications of the cultural representations of Food Culture, underlying the value of food and cuisine in Japan and Italy in the past and nowadays, in the transition between tradition and modernity.

We would like to thank the Consulate General of Japan in Milan, His Excellency the Consul General of Japan in Milan, Amamiya Yūji, and Yoshimura Yuko, Deputy Consul General of Japan in Milan, our Ambassador of Italy to Japan His Excellency Giorgio Starace, and the Rector Tiziana Lippiello and the Vice-Rector Fabrizio Marrella of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Toneri Naoki, President of Kazepro Communication Agency Tokyo, Consuelo Puricelli and Martina Collauto from the Fondazione Ca' Foscari, and Francesca Prato from the Consulate General of Japan. We would also like to thank all our guests and panelists: Shimada Masahiko (writer and professor at the Hosei University in Tokyo), Koga Eiko (President & CEO of Mitsubishi Italia) and Natalia Sinatra (Mitsubishi Italia Spa, Food & Beverage export Manager), Ide Kentaro (JETRO, Milan - General Secretary of Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Italy), Obata Taketoshi (MUFG Bank, Milan-Ex-President of Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Italy), Davide Fantoni (General Manager of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan), Stefania Viti (Journalist and Writer), Nicolò Geri (Teacher, Writer and Food Expert), Yamamori Nanako (Journalist, The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan), Michele Bianco (President of Ubercom District Treviso, Professor of Marketing & Strategy), Francesco Biciato

(Secretary General of Italian Sustainable Investment Forum), Chieko Nakabasami (Professor at the Toyo University Tokyo), Fumi Michihata (Representative Foodbiz-net.com), Emiko Kumano (Advertisement & PR Nihonshu Oendan), George Amano (President & CEO George Creative Company), Paola Scrolavezza (Professor at the University of Bologna), Eugenio De Angelis (researcher at Ca' Foscari University), and Giovanni Bulian (Professor at Ca' Foscari University).

We would also like to sincerely thank Marcella Mariotti, delegate for relations with Japanese companies, for her organisational support, and H.E. Ambassador Nishibayashi Masuo, director of the Japanese Cultural Institute in Rome for his always kind and active participation.

Special thanks go to Stefania Cantele and Giorgia Serpani for the excellent coordination of the Symposium.

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