

仮訳

Proposal for Japanese Restaurant Recommendation Program (Draft)

16th March, 2007

Council of Advisors for the Recommendation of Japanese Restaurants Outside Japan

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1. Introduction

Japanese cuisine is blessed with a rich and diverse range of fresh seasonal produce and has been created by incorporating the sense of beauty and the seasons of Japan, while also including other aspects of foreign cuisine and culture. Japanese cuisine is an asset to our nation that is revered around the world and has been forged throughout the course of Japan's long history. Sharing Japanese cuisine with the rest of the world will serve not only to improve the image of Japan, but will also allow Japan to contribute to the food cultures and lifestyles of countries around the world.

Japanese cuisine is currently attracting attention from across the globe as a healthy alternative and an ideal dietary lifestyle, and the number of Japanese restaurants around the world is rapidly increasing. These Japanese restaurants are providing people overseas with an opportunity to come into contact with Japanese cuisine and traditional ingredients and also a range of Japanese culture.

Japanese restaurants are also a showroom to present Japanese cuisine to the outside world. At present, Japanese agricultural and marine industries and the food industry of Japan are trying to increase exports and increase their presence in overseas markets in order to expand beyond the well developed and saturated market at home. Japanese restaurants are the first place for foreign people to meet Japanese food and agricultural and marine products. It can be said that it is inevitable to start with restaurants if you intend to penetrate the market abroad with food from Japan.

We are excited at the prospect of more people coming to enjoy Japanese cuisine and the spread of traditional Japanese ingredients around the world as the number of Japanese restaurants increases, and this is the time to accelerate and to evolve this movement.

However at present the number of restaurants is rapidly increasing despite a lack of information concerning Japanese food and without the provision of ingredients that not only characterize, but are essential to Japanese cuisine. As a result, there is a concern that the good reputation of Japanese cuisine could be damaged.

In consideration of this global trend in Japanese restaurants, a range of measures are currently in place including the start of a recommendation program for Japanese restaurants in Paris and the formation of Japanese food-related organizations in countries around the world.

The Advisory Council, answering the call of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, commenced discussions in November of 2006 concerning what approaches are required in connection with Japanese restaurants in order to contribute expanding the Japanese food market and to assist in conveying the attraction of Japanese food to the world.

Countries such as Thailand and Italy, already have accreditation systems in place for

restaurants serving homegrown cuisine. In Paris an independent body, “Le comité d'évaluation de la cuisine japonaise” is implementing a system on a trial basis for the recommendation of restaurants serving Japanese food and from these we have been able to garner a wide range of knowledge.

This proposal has, since the commencement of discussions, attracted a lot of interest both inside and outside Japan and has provoked widespread debate, including the true state of Japanese cuisine outside Japan, and questions as to the identity of Japanese cuisine and Japan food culture, from which we have been able to garner a wide range of opinions and suggestions for this program.

Until now the Advisory Council has met three times to listen to and discuss the opinions of relevant bodies and parties.

As a result, the Advisory Council has proposed the following plan for a Japanese Restaurant Recommendation Program. This project forms only the first step in approaches towards Japanese restaurants outside Japan and we expect this program to form a base for yet further activities.

2. Japanese Restaurant Recommendation Program

The Advisory Council has proposed that the Japanese Restaurant Recommendation Program (hereinafter referred to as “Recommendation Program”) be implemented in accordance with the following framework.

(1) Current situation that will form the premise of the Recommendation Program

- It is estimated that there are between 20,000-25,000 Japanese restaurants operating around the world and this figure has rapidly increased within the last 10 years.
- Japanese cuisine is regarded highly overseas as being healthy, exquisite, safe, up-market and of high quality. The rapidly increasing number of Japanese restaurants provides an opportunity to come into contact with Japanese cuisine and culture.
- Owing to local tastes and the creative talents of overseas chefs, Japanese cuisine is undergoing a diverse and flexible transformation which is also contributing to the rapid increase in the number of Japanese restaurants.
- Among these Japanese restaurants, although the menu and other aspects vary from restaurant to restaurant, there are some that operate under the guise of a Japanese restaurant just because of the up-market image that is associated with Japanese food.
- There are restaurants that are using ingredients that are not suited to Japanese cuisine, or there is simply not enough range or quantity of ingredients suited to Japanese food being provided to cope with the rapidly increasing number of restaurants.
- Fish and shellfish are often eaten raw in Japanese restaurants, but in places where

it is not customary to eat raw fish, the knowledge or skills required for handling, processing and consuming fresh fish are often lacking. The possibility of an incident as a result of such shortcomings has the potential to damage the image of Japanese food.

- The rapid increase of Japanese restaurants has led to a shortage of professionals who are skilled in and have a detailed knowledge of Japanese food, particularly in overseas countries. It has also been strongly suggested that it is necessary to spread these skills and knowledge.
- In addition to the above points, there is a lack of information concerning Japanese cuisine being transmitted overseas. For this reason, it is necessary to provide such information through Japanese restaurants and provide Japanese restaurants outside Japan with information in order to make this possible.

(2) Basic idea behind the implementation of the Recommendation Program

- The purpose of the Recommendation Program is to further accelerate the Japanese cuisine boom currently sweeping across the world.
- The Recommendation Program will primarily be targeted at people residing overseas that dine at Japanese restaurants. The main purpose of the Recommendation Program is to have people outside of Japan enjoy safe and delicious Japanese food in a Japanese restaurant outside Japan.
- The Recommendation Program shall be an initiative primarily managed by private bodies and relevant parties. The Government of Japan will support the program by providing necessary information etc.
- It is desirable that the Recommendation Program is run independently and continuously. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish a framework operated by the relevant bodies abroad, with funding of the necessary expenses by member bodies themselves.
- The Recommendation Program will take into consideration the fact that a diverse range of Japanese food fused with cuisine from the local area is being provided.
- The Recommendation Program aims to be helpful to people preparing good Japanese cuisine, the restaurant in which it is provided, and the people who enjoy it, irrespective of nationality. In this regard, the Recommendation Program should not be discriminatory or exclusive in any sense.
- The Recommendation Program will be implemented in a number of test stages in various parts of the world in order to establish a specific program to suit the local circumstances.

(3) Framework for the implementation of the Recommendation Program

The Recommendation Program is expected to be implemented in unison by an organization established in Japan and an organization set up in the country or city in which the program is to be adopted.

- The organization established in Japan will be responsible for the establishment and management of the overall program framework, and while supporting the

establishment and activities of the local organization will also promote cooperation and negotiations between local organizations. The organization in Japan will also be responsible for management of the recommendation logo.

- The local organizations will be comprised of members that have knowledge of and a vested interest in the development of Japanese restaurants.
- The local organizations will devise an evaluation method for recommendation standards and recommendations based on national municipal systems, foodstuff distribution and the circumstances surrounding individual restaurants. Recommendations will be based on this system. They will also be responsible for issuing restaurants with the recommendation logo, promoting the logo within their area or region, and promoting restaurants that have received the logo, as well as providing restaurants with information pertaining to Japanese cuisine.

(4) Details of the Recommendation Program

(a) Restaurants subject to the Recommendation Program

- Restaurants subject to the Recommendation Program will be self-proclaimed Japanese restaurants, and in principle will be commercial restaurants that voluntarily wish to participate in the program. As a prerequisite, restaurants subject to the Recommendation Program must meet the necessary local sanitary management and other standards.
- Although in principle Japanese restaurants will be required to apply for recommendation, it is also possible for the local organizations established in each country or city to select candidates for recommendation.
- Owing to the diverse nature of Japanese cuisine, local circumstances will be taken into consideration and the recommendation of restaurants based on categories such as “Fusion” and “Traditional” is also a possibility.
- Restaurants approved for recommendation will receive the recommendation logo such for a predetermined period after which it will need to be renewed.

(b) Recommendation standards

Recommendations will be based on collective assessment of the following;

- Primary ingredients including rice, sauces/spices etc. as well as Japanese sake and other beverages.
- Japanese culinary skills and knowledge of sanitary management of the owner and chefs etc.
- Restaurant atmosphere, customer service, food service, tableware and menu
- Preparation, flavor and presentation
- Conveying of information on Japanese food preparation, ingredients and food culture to guests

(c) Raising awareness of the Recommendation Program

- In order to make it possible for diners to identify recommended restaurants, restaurants will be issued with a recommendation logo specified by a Japanese committee.
- Local organizations will be responsible for listing recommended restaurants on a homepage or the creation of a guidebook to promote and advertise recommended Japanese restaurants.
- Local organizations will provide recommended Japanese restaurants with information on Japanese cuisine and ingredients.
- Local organizations will also coordinate with and support relevant institutions in the provision of workshops on Japanese culinary skills and sanitary management, etc.

3. Supplementary Matters

While discussing the implementation of the program, the Advisory Council came to the opinion that addressing the following matters would ensure the smooth progression of the program and would be effective in achieving the overall program objectives. It is anticipated that the relevant institutions will investigate these matters and consider possible solutions.

- Further enhancement of policies to promote agricultural and marine produce exports and the coordination of policies to promote exports with the Recommendation Program in order to address issues such as system-related obstacles to importing Japanese food products even though they are in demand such as quarantine procedures and the high price of Japanese food products.
- Through the coordination of export policies with the Recommendation Program, undertake measures to ascertain the spread of Japanese Cuisine and the various needs in overseas countries and tie up with the local media etc., to enhance the transmission of information on Japanese food.
- The opportunities for overseas chefs, particularly non-Japanese chefs, to study Japanese cuisine are limited. It is necessary to implement workshops covering all varieties of Japanese food preparation, dispatch the necessary instructors from Japan, establish Japanese food cooking courses in overseas' cooking schools and place Japanese chefs to act as instructors and establish a training system in Japan for foreign chefs.
- Preparation and collection of education materials in order to teach culinary skills for Japanese food preparation.
- Improvement of systems such as working holiday visas to allow overseas chefs to master the art of Japanese food preparation. i.e. a working holiday system for chefs to work in Japanese restaurants in Japan.
- Measures to improve systems to allow Japanese chefs to acquire working visas and residency status for them to work abroad.
- Although establishments subject to the Recommendation Program are commercial restaurants outside of Japan, measures will also be implemented to increase the quality of Japanese cuisine served in other diplomatic offices abroad, the Japan Club and on airlines.

- The enhancement of award systems for parties who have long contributed to the popularization of Japanese cuisine outside Japan and the development of Japanese restaurants.
- Together with the effort to spread Japanese food culture to other countries, an effort to maintain and improve the tradition of Japanese food culture within Japan is needed.

In line with the above proposal, the Advisory Council anticipates that national and other related institutions will take actions as promptly as possible. The necessary domestic framework will be established within the public sector as soon as possible in order to progress to full implementation of the Recommendation Program, it maybe desirable to set up local committees with the cooperation of diplomatic offices abroad, local Japanese clubs or relevant local institutions. It is anticipated that trial implementation of the Recommendation Program will get underway in fiscal year 2007.

We sincerely hope that this Recommendation Program can contribute to a further understanding of Japan and Japanese cuisine around the world.

(Reference 1) Council Members

Michikazu Aoi	Professor Keio University, Graduate School of Business Administration Chairman Japan Foodservice Academic Association [Vice-Chairperson]
Takashi Ohshima	Executive Director Café Agri Farm Inc. (Formerly an Executive Hotel Chef)
Yukiko Omori	Researcher of French confectionary and cuisine
Reiko Okutani	President The R Co., Ltd.
Kazuo Ogura	Director The Japan Foundation (Formerly Ambassador to France and Korea) [Chairperson]
Ichiro Kitasato	Chief Corporate Advisor Meiji Seika Kaisha, LTD.
Seiichiro Kubo	President Gourmet Navigator Inc.
Takashi Sasaki	President Japan Travel Bureau
Rikifusa Satake	President Minokichi Foods Co., Ltd.
Jeanie Fuji	Proprietress Ginzan Hot Spring Fujiya Inn
Kazuhide Yonehama	Chairman Japan Foodservice Association Ringer Hut Co., Ltd.

(Reference 2) Meetings of Council Members

27th November, 2006 1st Meeting of the Council of Advisors

- Overlying concept of a certification system for Japanese restaurants outside Japan
- Future plans

1st February, 2007 2nd Meeting of the Council of Advisors

- Collection of opinions from relevant parties
- Organization of points of discussion

16th March, 2007 3rd Meeting of the Council of Advisors

- Summarization of recommendations for the certification system

Number of opinions from professional associations,
companies and foreign organizations etc.

63

Number of comments given through the project web site

<http://www.maff.go.jp/gaisyoku/kaigai/>

299