

Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen - Japan's Favorite Noodle Soup

Barak Kushner, University of Cambridge



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Ramen, Japan's noodle soup, is a microcosm of Japan and its historical relations with China. The long evolution of ramen helps us enter the history of cuisine in Japan, charting how food and politics combined as a force within Sino-Japan relations. Cuisine in East Asia plays a significant political role, at times also philosophical, economic, and social. Ramen is a symbol of the relationship between the two major forces in East Asia – what started as a Chinese food product ended up almost 1,000 years later as the emblem of modern Japanese cuisine. This book explains that history – from myths about food in ancient East Asia to the

transfer of medieval food technology to Japan, to today's ramen “popular culture.”

Readership: All those interested in food history, Japan, East Asian culinary history, ramen, popular culture, the history of Sino-Japan relations, China, East Asian history, and noodles.

Barak Kushner, PhD (2002), teaches Japanese history at the University of Cambridge. *The Thought War*, his first book, delves into the history of wartime Japanese propaganda. He is finishing a third book on Japanese war crimes in China. For more: (www.barakkushner.net).

Praise for *Slurp!*

Winner of the 2013 Sophie Coe Prize for Writing on Food History.

“[...] *In delving into the history of ramen, Kushner throws light on many interesting aspects of Japanese social and political history as well as on Japan's lengthy and complex relationship with China [...]*”

– Hugh Cortazzi, *The Japan Times*.

“[...] *A new book, Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen by Dr Barak Kushner, who teaches modern Japanese history at Cambridge, both contextualises the soup and hints at some of the reasons behind its global spread. Kushner explains how noodles entered Japan from China and how they evolved in Japanese cuisine in a way that reflected the prevailing feelings of Japan towards its neighbour [...]*”

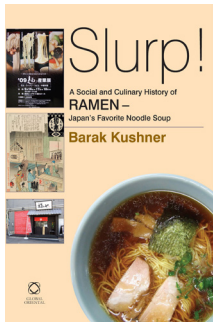
– Tim Hayward, *Financial Times*.



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More praise for *Slurp!*

"Those long nights when sleep evades you and the mind runs along less tranquil corridors [...] one room repeatedly visited is full of books I should have published. This is one of them [...] Mr Kushner writes clearly, thankfully with no jargon, and entertainingly. His illustrations are intriguing, his reading is wide. The book has footnotes. Emphatic recommendation."

- Tom Jaine, editor of *Petits Propos Culinaires*.

"[...] Kushner's book is a welcome addition to the bookshelves of those interested in Japan, food, and pop culture. Summing Up: Highly recommended [...]"

- Christine Yano, Professor of Anthropology, University of Hawai'i.

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