



IKIGAI DIET

THE SECRET OF JAPANESE DIET
TO HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

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Chapter 1: Who Are the Healthiest People in the Country with the Longest Life Expectancy?

It is said that the Japanese People have the lowest mortality rate in the world and it is a lot to do with our diet. Meantime Washoku which has the worldwide reputation of being healthy and delicious has been registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Sushi bars and Tempura restaurants are drawing crowds in streets of London, New York, and Paris. Yes, Japanese food is becoming the icon of healthy diet.

While I agree on half of this trend, I must say not all Japanese cuisines are good and not all Japanese people are role models of longevity and well-being.

A lot of foods in Japan such as sukiyaki, ramen, or even sushi aren't healthy in my opinion: Both sukiyaki and ramen contain meat, and the traceability of fish used in sushi isn't clear, especially in conveyor belt sushi. The foods served at most restaurants and sold at most supermarkets include food additives, and the vegetables are not organically grown.

Young generations have lost in touch with traditional Japanese diet which is often referred to as the cause of our long life, and therefore they can't be the role model anymore. They eat at MacDonalDs, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Yoshinoya which is a Japanese fast food restaurant chain serving beef bowls.

Having said that, the way average Japanese people eat is still relatively healthier compared to the way average people eat in countries in the West, in terms of the

amount of food we eat and proportion of carbohydrate-based food, vitamin based food, and protein-based food. We eat much less compared to American people for example, and that is seen in the amount of each serving at fast food restaurants, when we compare the two countries. Most meals in Japan whether they are breakfast, lunch, or dinner contain some vegetables, and we don't have the custom to have food with sugar such as muffins or pancakes as breakfast, nor do we have the tradition to have dessert after dinner.

Even so, they are no match for health-conscious people in Europe and North America, and you are better off learning from these people in your own country.

Satoyama Living

If there is anyone you can learn from, you want to look into old generations, since the centenarians who often appear in the longevity books belong to this category. Most of them hardly ever eat fast food I mentioned earlier, they usually eat traditional foods such as rice, miso soup, pickles, boiled or seasoned vegetables, fish, and soybean-based foods like tofu or Natto.

This traditional diet is still common among senior citizens in the countryside all over Japan whether they live in Okinawa Prefecture, which was featured in Ikigai: The Japanese secret to a long and happy life, or Shiga Prefecture which was ranked number one in the national longevity ranking in 2017, or Nagano Prefecture which is often ranked high in the same ranking.

When I looked at the lifestyle of the centenarians in Okinawa, it looked similar to that of the old people in Shiga Prefecture where I live, and we have 692

centenarians. As a matter of fact, there are quite a few prefectures which are ranked higher than Okinawa in this national ranking. So, I don't think this low mortality rate is only relevant to Okinawa; it is seen throughout Japanese countrysides.

I think it is to do with our traditional Japanese lifestyle which I call Satoyama living, where we led a self-sufficient life growing rice and vegetables, and cutting trees in the mountains for firewood or building houses. In this lifestyle, we worked vigorously in the rice field, the vegetable field, and in the mountains, we ate organically and locally grown rice and vegetables, we made fermented foods at home and surrounded ourselves with effective bacteria, we belonged to a neighborhood community to support one another, and we lived with a sense of life purpose as being a Shintoist and Buddhist.

These elements are similar to the factors contributing to longevity among the centenarians in Okinawa described in the book *Ikigai: The Japanese secret to a long and happy life*. The only difference I can think of is the fact that people in Okinawa enjoy dancing and they are more joyful people in general, which probably added to the factors of their long life. But other than that, Satoyama life seems to be the key and many of the old people in Japanese countrysides still retain this lifestyle for a certain degree regardless of their prefectures. I have lived in Shiga Prefecture, Nagano Prefecture, and Tochigi Prefecture and witnessed the Satoyama lifestyle among senior citizens there.

Therefore, if you want to model someone, elderly people in Japanese rural areas are the people you are looking for.

Nevertheless, they don't necessarily have healthier diet than natural food eaters

in your countries because they eat white rice instead of brown rice, they eat regular vegetables instead of organic vegetables. Yes, they retain Satoyama lifestyle to a certain degree, but a lot of the good essence has been lost, unfortunately. They had organic diet when they were younger, but they can no longer have access to foods with pure natural ingredients since our way of food production has changed. And yet they don't try to do anything about it. They are not health conscious people. They happened to be well because they just followed their tradition and the tradition was good, but when the social norm changed to be using agricultural chemicals or composts of cattle eating genetically modified corns, or fertilizers contaminated by radiation, they also changed by continuing to follow it without questioning.

So who should we look up to?

There is a growing population of people who are conscious of their health in Japan, and those people have studied the traditional diet as well as having up to date scientific information about wellness. They eat radiation free organic food, macrobiotic food, fermented food, and many of them live in the countryside to lead sustainable ways of living. They grow rice and vegetables using organic farming, natural farming, and permaculture. They inherited the tradition of Japanese natural way of living which is central to most Japanese martial arts; healing arts such as Shiatsu, Reiki or acupuncture; Zen; and the macrobiotic diet. Moreover, they are young people who are flexible enough to break away from the rigid structure of the tradition and to incorporate modern approaches into their practice. In my opinion, they are the healthiest people in Japan.

I am a founder of Zen and a Way of Sustainable Prosperity which is a philosophy to help you become sustainably prosperous, healthy, and happy. In

ZENWSP, we practice what is called modeling: If you want to gain some skill, the most effective way is to model the best of the best in the field. Therefore, if you want to achieve longevity and wellness, the optimal way is to learn from the most balanced people in the healthiest country in the world. Ikigai Diet I am going to introduce here is the diet of these naturally conscious people in Japan. You will feel Ikigai when you follow this diet because you become healthy and happy as well as making society happy. What do I mean by that? Why does diet have anything to do with making society happy and why is it related to your Ikigai?

Chapter 2 Ikigai and Sanpo-Yoshi

Ikigai means worth living, rewarding, or fulfilling. You can find Ikigai in almost anything as long as you feel joy and meaning in that activity.: You can feel Ikigai when you jog in the morning, you can feel Ikigai when you play with your children, and you can feel Ikigai when you are immersed in a work you love.

However, if we look into Ikigai deeper, to interpret it to be a meaning in our life or a purpose in our life, we need to go beyond our subjective feeling of enjoyment or fulfillment. We need to understand the structure of society, and expand our consciousness to feel what happiness really is. Can it be Ikigai if your company makes profits by exploiting others even though your job is so satisfying for you? Can it be Ikigai when you enjoy your hobby so much that you prioritize it over your family? What really is happiness for us? What is our purpose in life? Ikigai I am talking about here isn't just rewarding to you, but it is also satisfying to your family and people around you, and gratifying to society. Another word for Ikigai to give justice to its true meaning, it needs to have the element of Sanpo-Yoshi.

What is Sanpo-Yoshi?

Sanpo-Yoshi is a philosophy of Omi-merchants who were considered to be the most successful merchants in Japan from the medieval period to 18th century. This philosophy stated that every business the Omi merchants conducted needed to be beneficial to the seller, the buyer, and society in general. In short, a business must result in a three-way satisfaction.

Sanpo means three directions and Yoshi means good or happy and Sanpo-Yoshi contains three Yoshi.

Urite-Yoshi: This means the seller is happy **Kaite-Yoshi:** This means the buyer is happy **Seken-Yoshi:** This means society is happy.

This is a concept in business, but we can apply it in other fields, too. For example, in ZENWSP, we apply it in pursuit of happiness.

Jibun-Yoshi: I am happy

Aite-Yoshi: You are happy

Seken-Yoshi: Society is happy.

You, in this case, means people around you such as your family. When you feel Ikigai, it is better to feel it in an activity which doesn't just make you happy, but also makes your family happy. For example, instead of feeling your Ikigai in playing golf, which either you do alone or with your co-workers, you can feel your Ikigai in going for walks with your family. In this way you can feel happy and so can your family. It also makes society happy since it is environmentally friendlier than playing golf on a golf course, which was probably built by destroying a forest.

Another example is that instead of finding your Ikigai in your work and giving 100% of your time and energy into it, which is often described in the context of Ikigai as in Japanese craftsmanship, you can find your Ikigai in the work-style that includes time for your family. Instead of finding your Ikigai in achieving perfection as a craft, and not paying attention to other elements such as the

ingredients, you can shift your focus to your ingredients being environmentally friendly or not.

It applies to diet, too. By eating delicious food, you can make you happy so that it can be Jibun-Yoshi, but it may not make others happy. Therefore it may not be Aite-Yoshi. On the other hand, if you eat natural food, it makes you healthy, and it will make you happy. Usually, it makes people around you healthy and happy, as well, because what you eat influences your family and friends. If you cook a healthy meal and invite your friends over, your friends can become interested in your cooking style. By eating well, you will be mentally and physically integrated, and be a positive person to hang around with. Therefore it can be Aite-Yoshi, too.

How about Seken-Yoshi, then? Can eating natural food be society friendly? The food we eat is related to the way we produce food, and the way we grow food influences the environment and our social structure. So, what we eat affects society. By eating organically grown food or naturally grown food, you can support organic farming or natural farming which are much better for our environment. Therefore eating natural food can be Seken-Yoshi, as well. Another thing you want to pay attention to is to eat locally grown food. By eating locally, you are helping to reduce our energy consumption to transport food.

Thus, eating locally grown natural food can be Sanpo-Yoshi diet. Nonetheless, natural food is a vague term; there are different kinds of natural food: Vegetarian cheeseburgers and quiches are categorized as natural food, and so are pickled daikon and miso soup. I said that old people in Japan didn't necessarily have healthier diet than natural food eaters in the West, but I didn't say that Western

natural food eaters had better diet either. What do I mean by that? In the next chapters, let me illustrate more in detail about what you can eat and how you can eat based on the diet of Japanese naturalists.

Chapter 3 What is the Difference Between Organically Grown Vegetables and Naturally Grown Vegetables?

Whether you eat Washoku, the Japanese food or Western food, ingredients you use count. Japanese naturalists cook Washoku using natural ingredients which makes their Washoku different from regular Washoku. Washoku served at most restaurants in Japan don't use organically grown ingredients. In fact, if you ask waiters or waitresses at restaurants whether they use organic ingredients or not, they are most likely not able to answer your questions right away; they don't even know. Japan is the least conscious country within the advanced countries regarding the food traceability.

Therefore, when you come to Japan, it is better to eat home cooked meals at people's houses or natural food restaurants. There aren't as many natural food restaurants as there are in the West, but the number is increasing as the number of naturally conscious people is increasing.

Now let me talk about what you can do in your home country, since most of you are reading it in different parts of the world. There is so much you can do in your own food culture by choosing the right ingredients. The first step is using organically grown ingredients or naturally grown ingredients as much as possible, which include grains such as rice and wheat, vegetables, beans, oil, seasonings like miso, salt, and soy sauce.

What are Naturally Grown Ingredients?

When I say naturally grown ingredients, I am talking about food grown using what is called Natural Farming. Natural Farming is a method of farming that was developed by Masanobu Fukuoka, the author of *The One-Straw Revolution*, or Yoshikazu Kawaguchi, where you don't till the land, you don't use fertilizers including organic ones, and you do the weeding only the limited amount. The reason why you don't till the ground is that the tilling will destroy the microorganisms inside the soil which can help vegetables grow. So, by not tilling, you let the microorganism take care of vegetables, and you won't need to add fertilizers. You don't cut every weed, because by having some weeds left, insects don't concentrate on the vegetables. In the same idea, you don't kill every bug, because some bugs are natural predators of other insects and they can protect the vegetables from them. You don't water the plants, you let the rain take care of it.

Organic farming sometimes uses too much fertilizer, and it creates oversized vegetables. By intervening in the natural process too much, you weaken the plants, making them susceptible to disease. In Natural Farming, however, the vegetables are more balanced, absorbing only what was available in nature at the time.

Having said that, Natural Farming is more difficult to put into practice for commercial farmers; it is more suitable for people leading self-sufficient lifestyles. Therefore, you don't see many naturally grown products on the market. If you want to obtain them, you may have to grow your own.

Growing your own food is actually better for your health: It is the most local

food you can get: By working in the soil, you can contact all kinds of bacteria which benefit your overall well-being: You become more aligned with natural rhythms such as seasons and weather: The fact that most centenarians live in the countryside and work in the field might suggest that the natural living in the countryside is the key. When we talk about diet, we need to look at it holistically, and changing your diet means changing your whole lifestyle, not just what you eat.

To find out more about Natural Farming, you can read the link below.

Japanese Natural Farming Guru Kawaguchi Yoshikazu

<https://www.nippon.com/en/people/e00120/>

Chapter 4 The Secret of the Traditional Japanese Diet Part 1 Why Is Fermented Food Good For You?

The reason why I didn't say that the Western natural food eaters had better diet than the old people in Japan, is that the traditional Japanese diet has a lot to offer. If we use naturally grown ingredients or organically grown ingredients to cook traditional Japanese dishes, they will probably become the most excellent foods regarding health and longevity. And yet, you don't need to copy the recipes; you can grasp the essence of them and apply it to your own dishes.

One of the essence is using a lot of fermented food: We use miso; soy sauce; Mirin, sweet sake; in everyday cooking. We have Natto; fermented soybeans; and many different kinds of pickles regularly.

Fermented foods are considered to be good for our health; they benefit intestinal bacteria. Even some Western doctors such as Justin and Erica Sonnenburg recently recognize the effects of microbiotas and intestines for our well being and longevity.

The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your Long-term Health

<https://www.amazon.com/Good-Gut-Taking-Control-Long-term-ebook/dp/B00OZ0TOV2>

In oriental medicine, your organs are critical. They relate to certain emotions that

can be adjusted to improve your mental state. In Japanese traditional medicine, intestines are principally essential and are regarded as the second brain. The intestines are located in the belly area that the Japanese people know as “hara.” The place is so significant that it is central to all martial arts like karate and Aikido.

I recommend that you eat fermented foods as much as possible. A lot of them can be made at home. Most pickles are easy to make. Pickled daikon and pickled Chinese cabbage are famous in Japan but you don't need to buy them at Japanese food stores or macrobiotic stores, you can make them at home and you can make pickles from almost any vegetable. Use whatever you have at home and whatever you can grow in your garden. We have a saying in Japanese called Shindofuji which means it is best to eat what you can grow locally and what you can harvest in season.

You can find tons of YouTube videos on how to make pickles.

I also recommend that you make miso. It is paste made from fermented soya beans and barley or rice malt. If you have miso, you can make miso soup every day, and it is a good way of consuming fermented food regularly. You can put any kind of vegetables in miso soup so that you can make a wide variety of soup each day.

Another thing I highly recommend is Natto, fermented soybeans. Natto is perfect for you because you can use it as a meat substitute; it is usually a good source of protein. It is beneficial for your intestines as well as helpful for your muscles. Many people complain that they can't stand eating it because it is sticky. Well, I

can confidently promise you that, at first it will taste strange, but after eating it 10 times, the stickiness will get you hooked. Natto germ whose official name is *Bacillus subtilis* is considered to be the strongest germ, and it does sound good to eat it every day, doesn't it?

There is a variety of ways to eat Natto, if you don't like the regular way of eating it, which is to eat it with spring onions, mustard, and soy source: You can put Natto in your pasta dish, you can put it in curry, and you can put it in Pizza, as well.

One good thing about Natto is that it isn't difficult to make. To make miso, it takes 8 to 10 months, but it takes only 48 hours to make Natto. Well, 58 hours if you include the time to soak the beans. You just need to boil or steam soaked soybeans until they become soft. Then you put them in a yogurt maker with straw sticks. If you can get hold of rice straw, it is better, but you can make it with wheat straw, too. Straw contains Natto germ. You set your yogurt maker at 45 degrees Celsius, and let the beans ferment for 24 hours. When the beans are fermented and become sticky, you can put them in a container and put it in the refrigerator for another 24 hours. Again, it is better if you find Youtube videos on it and follow the instructions step by step.

It is good to ferment food at home so that you can release good bacteria in your house. What was significant about Japanese people in the past is that they didn't just eat fermented food on a regular basis, they made fermented food at home and they were constantly surrounded by these effective bacteria. Unfortunately, those helpful bacteria have vanished from our home now, due to decreasing number of households making fermented foods and spread of germicides.

Japanese people used to be vigorous. It was common for women to carry 60 kilograms of rice; I once saw a picture of a woman carrying 3 bags of rice weighing 180 kilograms at a rice carrying competition. Young Japanese naturalists are bringing back this tradition, and it is becoming a new trend to make miso, pickles, and Natto at home.

One advantage of making fermented food at home is you can use local bacteria. It is better to use bacteria in the land you live in; they are the most suitable for your body. For example, if you make Natto with rice straw from a local farm, preferably organic, you will be absorbing your regional Natto germs, and it is better than commercially produced Natto with bacilli of unknown places.

Chapter 5 The Secret of the Traditional Japanese Diet Part 2 What Is the Ideal Menu for Health?

Now you know that Japanese naturalists eat organically and naturally grown food and fermented food, what else do we do when we eat?

Ichibutsu Zentai Shoku

We have a saying called Ichibutsu Zentai Shoku, which means to eat food as a whole. When you eat rice, it is better to eat brown rice because it is in its original form and is in the most balanced state. When you eat bread, it is better to eat whole wheat bread than white bread. When you eat fish, it is better to eat small fish because you can eat the whole thing instead of eating a part of big fish. When you eat vegetables, it is better to eat the skins and roots, as well. Many people peel the skin when we eat carrots or radishes, but the skin contains more dietary fiber, and it is a waste to throw it away.

Ma Go Wa Ya Sa Shi I

Another word we have for healthy eating is Ma Go Wa Ya Sa Shi I, which means your grandchildren are kind. Ma stands for Mame which means beans, Go stands for Goma which means Sesame seeds, Wa stands for Wakame seaweeds, Ya stands for Yasai which means vegetables, Sa stands for Sakana which means fish, Shi stands for Shitake mushrooms, and I stands for Imo which means

potatoes including sweet potatoes and taros. Ma Go Wa Ya Sa Shi I is what we are supposed to eat for our well-being.

If I were to translate it into English, it would be something like BSSVFMP.

B: beans

S: Seeds such as sesame seeds, nuts such as almonds S: Seaweeds such as Wakame, Hijiki, Konbu, and Nori V: Vegetables

F: Fish

M: Mushrooms

P: Potatoes, sweet potatoes, taros

Dietary Fiber

Dietary fiber is another element you want to look into when you want to be healthy. It is also considered to be good for your intestines. Foods which contain dietary fiber are brown rice; beans, such as soybeans and Natto; carrots; daikon radishes; burdocks; sweet potatoes; taros; seaweeds such as wakame and hijiki; sesame seeds; squashes; corns; and broccoli.

Ichijiru Sansai: One Soup Three Dishes

How should we eat them in each meal? The standard way of eating Washoku is Ichijiru Sansai which means rice, soup, pickles and 3 small dishes. Here is what I recommend as an ideal dinner

Rice: Brown rice

Soup: Miso soup with seaweeds, vegetables, and tofu.

Pickles: Pickled seasonal vegetables Dish 1: Natto

Dish 2: Boiled or steamed leafy vegetables with sesame seeds or nuts Dish 3:
Boiled or steamed or cooked root vegetables

You don't always have to have three dishes; two is okay, and sometimes one is enough. For lunch, you can have brown rice, miso soup, and pickles: No side dishes. For breakfast, either you skip it or have just brown rice and miso soup.

Shindofuji

I talked about Shindofuji, didn't I? Eating what is grown locally and what is harvested in season. When you eat, you can eat according to Shindofuji. Locally grown vegetables were helped by bacteria living in your land and local bacteria are the most suitable to your body as I said in the section of fermenting at home. When you grow your own food, which I highly recommend, you start eating what you can harvest each season, so you naturally start eating according to Shindofuji. Choosing what vegetables to put into your miso soup and vegetable dishes will be easy: Use what you can harvest that day.

Chapter 6 Did You Know There Was Something Better Than Brown Rice Which Was Considered To Be the Most Balanced Food?

Brown rice is the key component of the macrobiotic diet, and you must have heard about its benefits if you are a health conscious person. As I covered it in the previous chapter, brown rice is a must eat whole food for your well-being and longevity. It is better than bread or pasta because you need to mill wheat to make flour to make them: Rice is one of the few grains which you can eat close to in its original form.

Brown rice is popular among Japanese naturalists, too, but there is something even better, and a lot of my friends eat it.

That is fermented brown rice.

By fermenting brown rice, you have the benefits of whole food and fermented food. If you choose rice to be the staple food and to eat it every day, by absorbing it in its best state, it can have the most desirable effect on your diet.

To make fermented brown rice, you can cook rice with azuki beans or black soybeans in a rice cooker, and then you leave it in the cooker on the warm setting and let it ferment for about three days. Some people add salt when they cook rice, but it isn't always necessary.

Chapter 7 Kyodo Ryori Is the Authentic Washoku

Kyodo Ryori means local cuisines in Japanese, and there is a whole variety of them in every region. When you say Washoku, you might think of sushi, tempura, or sukiyaki, but they are just a small part of Japanese cuisines. When you travel in Japan, I highly recommend that you try the local cuisines of the area you are visiting because they are the authentic Washoku. They are better for your health, too since they usually use ingredients available in the region and the traditional cooking method suitable to the area, making them Shindofuji.

Have you ever heard of the Slow Food Movement? It is a movement led by an organization called Slow Food that promotes local food and traditional cooking. It began in Italy in 1986 and has since spread worldwide. As an alternative to fast food, it strives to preserve traditional and regional cuisines and encourages farming of plants, seeds, and livestock characteristic of the local ecosystem.

From Slow Food's point of view, eating Kyodo Ryori is Seken-Yoshi, socially friendly, by protecting the local farming and the local economy. It is also good for your health from the viewpoint of Shindofuji, eating local and seasonal food.

In your region, too, there must be some local cuisines which have been passed down from generation to generation, and they are ingrained in your land and culture. They are the most suitable food in the climate of your area. The best thing for you is to find organic ingredients and cook them at home. You can also arrange the recipes a little to use ingredients that include BSSVFMP or food filled with dietary fiber, such as brown rice, beans, carrots, daikon radishes,

burdocks, sweet potatoes, taros, seaweeds, sesame seeds, squashes, corns, and broccoli.

Chapter 8 What Not to Eat

I have been talking about what to eat so far. How about food that we should avoid?

First, stay away from processed food as much as possible because it contains all kinds of additives. Think about it. If you mass produce food and sell it at supermarkets, you have to make sure that the food remains fresh for a long time and to do it, you need to use artificial preservatives. It is always better to cook everything yourself.

It also means it is better to eat at home than eating out, unless you find good natural food restaurants. In this way, you can choose the ingredients carefully; not only the main ingredients but also the type of oil and seasonings.

Avoid sugar as much as possible. If you want to eat something sweet, use brown sugar, honey, or natural syrups such as maple syrup instead of white sugar.

Avoid meat as much as possible. I am sure you have heard of so many reasons to be vegetarians, so I won't go into details here. I can just add one thing: It is more strenuous for your stomach and intestines to digest meat. Therefore, to protect your intestines, it is better to stay away from meat. In fact, we didn't eat meat in Japan for a long time. Meat came into our diet only about 150 years ago, and most people started eating meat on a regular basis in the 1960s when Japan

entered the high economic growth period. That means many of the centenarians who are referred to as role models of longevity must have spent their childhood and early adulthood without eating meat.

Avoid milk and dairy products as much as possible. Dairy products weren't part of our diet until recently either. Again, there are many websites giving reasons to stop consuming dairy products, so I won't go into details here, but for one milk contains a lot of chemicals.

Chapter 9 The Secret of Japanese Longevity Was Not in What We Ate, But How We Ate

Let me sum up with what I have covered so far.

- 1, Use organically or naturally grown ingredients
- 2, Use locally grown ingredients
- 3, Eat and make fermented food
- 4, Eat whole food, BSSVFMP, dietary fiber, and One Soup Three Dishes
- 5, Eat fermented brown rice
- 6, Eat local cuisines
- 7, Avoid eating processed food, sugar, meat, and dairy products.

Now you know what to eat and not to eat, in this chapter, I am going to discuss how to eat, since how you eat plays a significant role in our diet to stay healthy.

A lot of people are conscious of what you eat in the West, and I feel very positive about the way organic food culture is expanding. If there is one thing I feel lacking in the natural food movement in the West, however, is the way you eat. Generally speaking, people still tend to eat too much. In spite of the fact that you eat great food, if you put too much food in your stomach, the stomach cannot digest it well enough before passing it to intestines which will give more work to intestines.

Hara Hachibunme

We have a saying called Hara Hachibunme which means eating till 80% full.

Another word, stop eating when your stomach is 80% full, not completely full. You feel a little hungry, and you could eat a bit more, but that is the time to put your fork down.

Always think of your stomach and intestines. Will it give more work to them? Can they handle this amount of food?

How Many Times Should You Chew?

Chewing is another thing that can help your stomach digest food. It is the first stage of your digestion, and if you can break down food as much as possible in your mouth, it will be easier for the stomach to digest it, and it can pass the work to the intestines in a good state.

One reason why many people have damaged intestines is that they don't chew enough, which means their food isn't properly broken down as it goes into the intestines. This forces your intestines to work harder than they should as they try to break down the food.

So how many times should you chew?

According to the macrobiotic diet, to have healthy intestines, you ought to chew 100 times. However, I have heard a theory that chewing 25-30 times was enough for your intestines. You just need to figure out yourself which way is comfortable for you; comfortable for your stomach and intestines. It also depends on how much food you put in your mouth each time.

Is It Bad to Munch Between Meals?

You don't want to eat between meals either. This is because you want to give your gut a break. If you have lunch around noon, and you have some cookies during your tea break around 3 o'clock, your stomach can rest only for 2 and a half hours. If you can wait until 6 o'clock to eat something, on the other hand, the stomach can rest for over 5 hours. If you want to eat your dessert, it is better to eat it with your lunch.

Occasional Fasting

Time to time you can skip lunch to give the gut a longer break. You can do it once a week. You can also try one day fasting once a month or so.

Drinking Water

It is good to drink a lot of water, too. It increases our saliva and saliva aids digestion. You can drink 1.5 liters-2 liters a day, depending on your body size. I always drink a glass of water the first thing in the morning since it cleanses our gut first.

Chapter 10 By Adding Hygge to Ikigai Diet, It Will Become More Sustainable

Do you know any people who practice things I have been recommending, and yet, for some reasons, they often get sick?

If so, how could that be?

Well, one possibility is that these people were often sick before starting this diet and haven't regained their healthy condition yet. It is often the case that people who have health problems look into this kind of diet.

Placebo Effect

Another possibility is the placebo effect. When we become health conscious, we tend to be more sensitive to what we eat. Let's say you decided to eat only organic vegetables, but you can't always eat organic vegetables because they are not available all the time. When you eat non-organic vegetables, you feel bad, and that makes you sick. However, if you don't care about what you eat, you can feel good about anything you eat.

In Japan, we have a saying, A Fool Never Catches a Cold.

The mind is powerful. We do need to take our psychological aspect into consideration.

Don't Become Too Dogmatic

Therefore, I wouldn't worry too much about what you should eat and shouldn't eat. A lot of us become too strict with what we eat to the point that our food stops being fun. To live a truly healthy life, you want to enjoy eating.

You don't want to hang up on one single issue, either. Some people make it a strong rule to be a vegetarian, for instance. If you ate meat, you committed a crime or something. While I understand and respect their point of view, I also know that by not eating meat at all itself doesn't solve the problem. In order to stop the meat production, the majority of the world population needs to stop consuming meat, not only a small percentage of the people, which is what is happening now. We need to get more people to stop eating meat or to eat less meat. Since we are all different, not everybody can follow a strict diet. If we make it easier, on the other hand, more people may be able to practice it, and it will reduce the overall meat consumption.

It is better to be vegetarian in many ways, but if you find it difficult to completely stop eating meat, you may want to apply this method instead. Avoid eating animals close to you the most. It means animals with 4 legs. If you have to, it is better to eat chicken, and fish is even better because it is further away from us.

You also want to consider how meat is produced. Avoid eating meat which was produced through factory farming. If you want to eat meat, find meat that is produced in more animal-friendly manner.

Or you can eat less. It is much better to eat meat once a week than every day. If

you had been eating meat every day, by reducing it to once a week, you have reduced your meat consumption a great deal, and if stopping meat entirely was too much of a task, and this once a week policy was doable, having this option will make a lot of difference.

Hare and Ke

We have a concept called Hare and Ke in Japan. Hare means not usual, and it is a time for festivals, celebrations or ceremonies. Ke means usual, and it is our everyday life. We have feasts on days of Hare but other days which are days of Ke we eat simple dishes like rice, miso soup, and some pickles. In that sense, one-soup-three-dish-meal is more for Hare. We dress differently and use different kinds of bowls and plates, as well on the days of Hare. By making a distinction between the two, we can appreciate the time of feasts more.

You can apply this custom to make a distinction between vegetarian days and meat eating days. You can make your weekdays to be Ke and have simple vegetarian dishes and weekends to be Hare and eat richer food including meat.

In this way, you can appreciate meat a lot more and your pleasure increases. On the other hand, if you eat meat every day, it becomes mundane, and you probably don't enjoy the taste that much. If that is the case what is the point of eating meat? So it is a win-win for you: You are reducing your meat consumption while increasing the pleasure of eating.

Bringing Hygge into Ikigai Diet

I am very much for enjoying your life. The problem of traditional Japanese methods is that they can be rather serious, and everything becomes like a martial art training. You can probably be healthy and even enlightened by following them, but they aren't fun.

I would, therefore, like to bring a Danish element of hygge into Ikigai Diet. After all, Danes are the role model for happiness. We can be a role model of longevity, but not happiness. Eating is hygge, and you want to be cozy and comfortable when you eat. On your day of Hare, you can put a beautiful tablecloth, light candles, and play enchanting music. Don't forget to have a good bottle of wine or sake, either.

Vegetarian Gourmet

Mind you; you don't need to always include meat in your feasts. Vegetarian dishes can be delicious, and you have a lot of hygge moments with them. Beans can replace meat in most recipes; you can make splendid pasta with soybeans, kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils, tofu, and Natto; you can make magnificent curry with most beans; and you can make mouth-watering dumpling with azuki beans. Again you can find tons of recipes on the Internet.

Zen and the Art of Miso Soup Eating

In my novel *Miso Soup Romance*, the main character Akira Takaoka practices what he calls Zen and the Art of Miso Soup Eating. While he eats miso soup; he

observes the vivid color of carrots and broccoli in the brown liquid; he smells the soup as he inhales the steam; then he slowly picks the bowl and drinks the soup, feeling the liquid going down his gut, releasing the neutral energy of fermented soybean curd to his entire organs, balancing Yin and Yang in them; finally he begins chewing the vegetables, absorbing the dietary fiber in them. The whole act is a meditation for him. He also lights candles and plays classical music in the background.

Unfortunately, the novel is only available in Japanese, but you can practice Zen and the Art of Miso Soup Eating when you eat miso soup. You can do it with any dishes actually. Eating can be a form of meditation.

Miso Soup Romance

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01JUW6MJG/>

Contemplation and Appreciation

When you go on a particular diet, often you encounter moments when you can't follow your diet: For example, when you go to visit someone and served a meal not adherent to your diet. What do you do then? Well, here is good news. I have heard that 70% of what you eat affects your health, not 100%. That's one of the reasons I am rather easy going about eating. It isn't the end of the world if you eat regular food time to time. You can relax a bit when you socialize with others.

When served something you usually don't eat, you can think positively and appreciate the efforts of the person who cooked the meal, the farmers who produced the products, and the person who served you. Spiritually speaking that

can change the vibration of the food. Another word you can detoxicate the food by appreciating it.

As a matter of fact, it is always good to appreciate your food whatever you eat and wherever you eat. You can be thankful to the farmer, the cook, the server, as well as thanking the sun, water, soil, and microorganisms that helped to produce the food.

As I said before, the mind is powerful. How you feel affects your eating. While eating, you can visualize how the food is cleansing and energizing your body. Feel the nourishment spreading to all organs, bloodstreams, bones, muscles, and the brain.

I suggest that you concentrate on eating when you eat anyway. A lot of us open our smartphones to check Facebook or watch YouTube videos while eating: It is bad. It isn't productive either. Some of us say that we are too busy to have lunch and continue working while eating, but it slows down your productivity, it turns out that it is more efficient to have a lunch break and focus on your work after returning to your desk.

Conclusion

Anyway, balance is crucial. Make yourself aware of what you eat and how you eat but enjoy eating, as well.

Now, let me sum up with what I have covered in this book.

- 1, Use organically or naturally grown ingredients

- 2, Use locally grown ingredients
- 3, Eat and make fermented food
- 4, Eat whole food, BSSVFMP, dietary fiber, and One Soup Three Dishes 5, Eat fermented brown rice
- 6, Eat local cuisines
- 7, Avoid eating processed food, sugar, meat, and dairy products.
- 8, Stop eating when you are 80% full, chew a lot, and don't eat between meals to give your gut plenty of breaks.
- 9, Drink a lot of water
- 10, Don't become too strict about your diet and enjoy eating 11, Use Hare and Ke to balance your diet
- 12, Bring hygge and Zen into your dinner and make your eating a cozy and sacred experience

Well, thank you very much for reading this book. I hope you eat well and lead a healthy and happy life.

Diet is just one aspect of your life toward happiness and well-being. If you want to find more about it, I suggest you read *Zen and a Way of Sustainable Prosperity: A Teaching of Omi Merchants Who Thrived In 18th Century Japan*. This is a book to help you become sustainably prosperous, but in many ways, it contains clues to lead a happy life.

Chapter 1: A Fatal Flaw I Discovered In Motivational Success Philosophies

Chapter 2: Why Did I Get A Mansion From An Omi Merchant For Almost Free?

Chapter 3: The Secret of Omi-Merchants Business Success

Chapter 4: Business Model of Making Society Happy

Chapter 5: The 7 Elements of Sustainable Prosperity

Chapter 6: Choosing a Business That Has the Element of Three-Way

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Chapter 8: How to Plan Your Success with the Method of Natural Farming

Chapter 9: Unleashing the Magic Number 33 to Align Yourself with Success

Chapter 10: The Key to Success Is Measuring Your Progress and Customizing

Your Method Chapter 11: The Right and Wrong Way of Using the Law of

Attraction Chapter 12: The Key to Manifestation Is Successfully Dealing With

Your Past Experiences Chapter 13: How to Have a Positive Relationship with

Money

Chapter 14: Zen Meditation Can Set You In The Right Mood To Start Your Day

Chapter 15: Healthy Intestines Are the New Symbols of Success

Chapter 16: Enlightenment is the Ultimate Key to Prosperity

Zen and a Way of Sustainable Prosperity: A Teaching of Omi Merchants Who Thrived In 18th Century Japan <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B072LBFFYS/>

If you are interested in shifting your lifestyle and changing your job, you might find it useful to read IKIGAI BUSINESS: The Secret of Japanese Omi Merchants to Find a Profitable, Meaningful, and Socially friendly Business.

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IKIGAI BUSINESS: The Secret of Japanese Omi Merchants to Find a Profitable, Meaningful, and Socially friendly Business

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B079Z24B1Z>

Well, thank you very much for reading this book, and I would love to have some feedback from you. I will appreciate it very much if you leave a review on the Amazon book page. I look forward to hearing from you.

About the Author

Sachiaki Takamiya is a writer and a sustainable prosperity coach. As a writer, he has written many books. His best-known work is a spiritual adventure novel called Tenjo-no-Symphony which was published in Japanese from Kodansha in 2006. In English, he has written Zen and a Way of Sustainable Prosperity, and IKIGAI BUSINESS.

As a sustainable prosperity coach, he has helped many people to lead a happy, healthy, and sustainable lifestyle. He lives in a small rural town called Hino town in Shiga Prefecture Japan, which is the birthplace of Omi-Hino-merchants. He forms a local network there, which is like a transition initiative, with many families to make the town sustainable.

Blog: Omi-merchant's way of Sustainable Prosperity
<https://zenmerchantblog.wordpress.com/>

Newsletter of Omi-merchant's way of sustainable prosperity
<https://landing.mailerlite.com/webforms/landing/v7g8u0>

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IKIGAI DIET

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