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# KYOTO LECTURES

Friday, November 24th, 18:00h

Timothy Y. Tsu SPEAKER

## Who Cooked for Consul-General Townsend Harris?

### Chinese and the Introduction of Western Cooking to Japan

This talk will start by asking what would appear at first sight to be a trivial question, i.e., who cooked for America's first diplomat in Japan, Townsend Harris? In attempting to answer to this question as well as reconstructing the broader foodscape of Bakumatsu and early-Meiji treaty ports such as Yokohama and Kobe, the role that Chinese cooks played in the early phase of the introduction of Western cuisine to Japan will come to light. As a catalyst in a chemical reaction, they helped to bring Western cuisine to late-19th century Japan, although they left no appreciable traces in the country's Western cuisine today, and that their contribution is almost entirely unacknowledged by modern historians. To remedy this historical oversight, the talk will propose that we see Chinese cooks and other skilled Chinese workers in Japan's treaty ports as "secondary agents of modernity" in recognition of their role in bringing into the country mundane but essential skills of Western-style living. Furthermore, it will be pointed out that Chinese artisans in Japan were part of a larger migration trend in which Chinese people skilled in Western trades spread across the world in the wake of Western imperial and colonial expansion.

**Timothy Yun Hui Tsu** is a professor at the School of International Studies, Kwansei Gakuin University. Educated in Japanese and American universities, he has worked in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Australia before returning to teach in Japan. His academic interests include the Chinese in Japan, the Japanese in colonial Southeast Asia, Chinese food in Japan, Japan environmental and consumer culture, and world heritage in East Asia. His most recent publications are *Japanese and Chinese Films on the Second World War* (co-editor, Routledge, 2014) and *World Heritage in China, Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong* (co-editor, Chung Hwa, 2014, in Chinese). He is co-organizer with Hong Kong Shue Yan University of an upcoming international conference on "Heritage and Hybridity in Contemporary East Asian Foodways".

**Please note that this lecture will be held at the Kyoto centre of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient**

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