

Food Cultures in Southeast Asia, vol. 1

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Summary

I think that it has been less than a quarter century since food cultures of Southeast Asia came into the limelight. Located between the greatest civilizations in the world, namely India and China, the area was turned into a place where the countries of Europe were colonizing in the sixteenth century. As a result, most of the Southeast Asian countries were made colonies of these Western nations. It seems to me that naturally their food cultures have been considered as imitations of India, China, or the counties that ruled them. Recent phenomena such as Thai cuisine popularity and Vietnam cuisine becoming a boom in France, however, attracted our fresh attention to food cultures in Southeast Asia. What became clear to us then is that they have established unique and attractive food cultures characteristic of their respective countries. They make good use of plants full of a variety in tastes and flavors, which are totally different from herbs used in Europe. As well, they have combined food cultures, both Chinese and Indian, and at the same time absorbed food cultures from their respective European rulers.

Here I will present a report on the actual situation above, to the extent that I have found it out so far.