

# Japan's Gross National Cool

FC 84, February 6, 2006

# Changing context of Japanese cultural production on the world stage

- “traditional Japan”
- prewar, cheap manufactured goods
- early postwar, cheap manufactured goods with Japanese image improving
- mass marketing of high-tech
- popular culture

# Japan's new exports (“content industries”)

- Karaoke
- TV dramas
- Animation
- Manga
- Video games
- “character goods” (Hello Kitty)
- Sushi
- Fashion
- Architecture
- Consumer electronics

# Gross National Cool

- Influence in US and Europe
- HUGE influence throughout East and Southeast Asia

# Gross National Cool

- Popular concept in Japan
- Morale boosting after long recession
- Real economic impact of “culture industry”

# Hard Power: Soft Power

*Joseph Nye, Harvard political scientist*

- Hard power = military, diplomatic, economic domination
- Soft power = cultural influence, popular media, consumer preferences

19<sup>th</sup> c.  
fast food:  
sushi

広重のすし

*Detail from “Waiting  
for the Moon at  
Takanawa on the  
Twenty-sixth Night,”  
by  
Hiroshige, ca. 1835*



Hanaya Yohei  
両国の華屋与兵衛

Crowded together, weary with waiting  
Customers squeeze their hands  
As Yohei squeezes sushi

19<sup>th</sup> c. verse



Yohei's sushi

与兵衛のすし





# *Sushi Bar Song* *by Shōnen Knife*



*“Sushi, sushi, sushi bar!  
I wanna go to a sushi bar!  
I wanna go with you!  
Hamachi, ika, ebi, tako, maguro, kaibashira.  
How about this Friday night!  
Ooo, let’s eat a healthy menu.  
It’s a famous Japanese meal.”*

Original English lyrics by Shōnen Knife

Shōta no Sushi,  
vol. 1

Kōdansha



Shōta takes a visitor to Tsukiji





*Color of plates indicates price per serving*

# Kaiten-zushi



Kaitenzushi

*totaling the bill  
by scanning the  
plates*





## *Flows of culinary influence*

- The Raj model – colonial power brings back new tastes
- The Union Pacific model – immigrant labor brings new cuisine to distant place
- The Most Favored nation model – high status of country translates into culinary interest

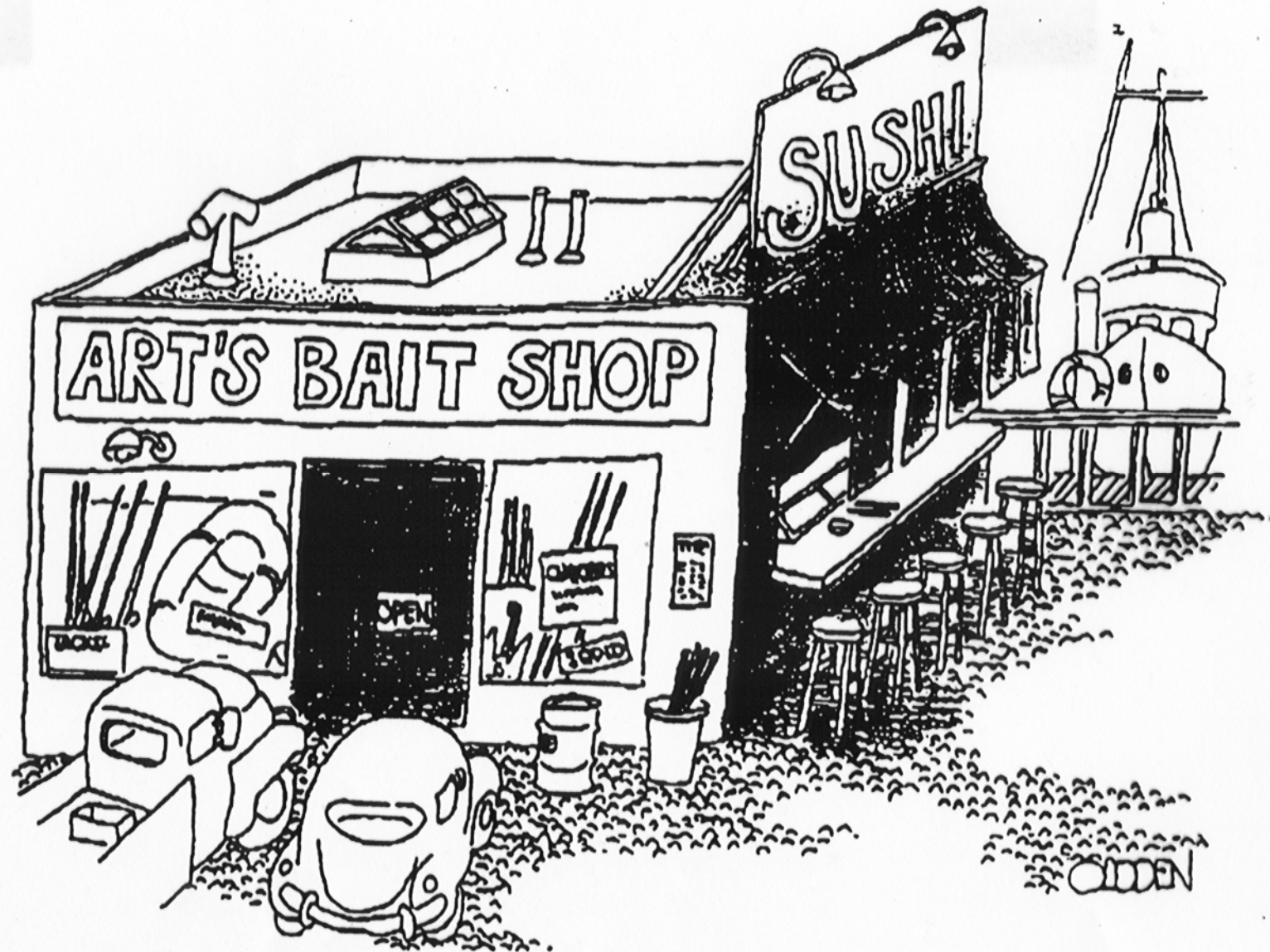
# Isabella Bird on the “food question”

*“the fishy and vegetable abominations known as ‘Japanese food’ can only be swallowed and digested by a few, and that after long practice”*

Bird, Unbeaten Tracks in Japan, 1878, pg. 19

*“nothing short of actual starvation  
would induce a European to face  
the forbidding native food”*

Major Henry Knollys, visitor to Japan in the  
1880s, quoted by Cortazzi, Victorians in Japan



# Squeamish about sushi

*and other food adventures in Japan*

*by Betty Reynolds*



*Good Thing He Can't Read My Mind*  
*by Christine Lavin*

*I am eating sushi  
When I do not like sushi,  
But he loves sushi  
And I love him!*

*Some say eating sushi  
Is like chewing on your own cheek,  
Or sucking down a bucketful  
Of tentacled slime.*

*I do not like sushi  
But, look, I'm eating sushi!  
It's a good thing  
He can't read my mind.*

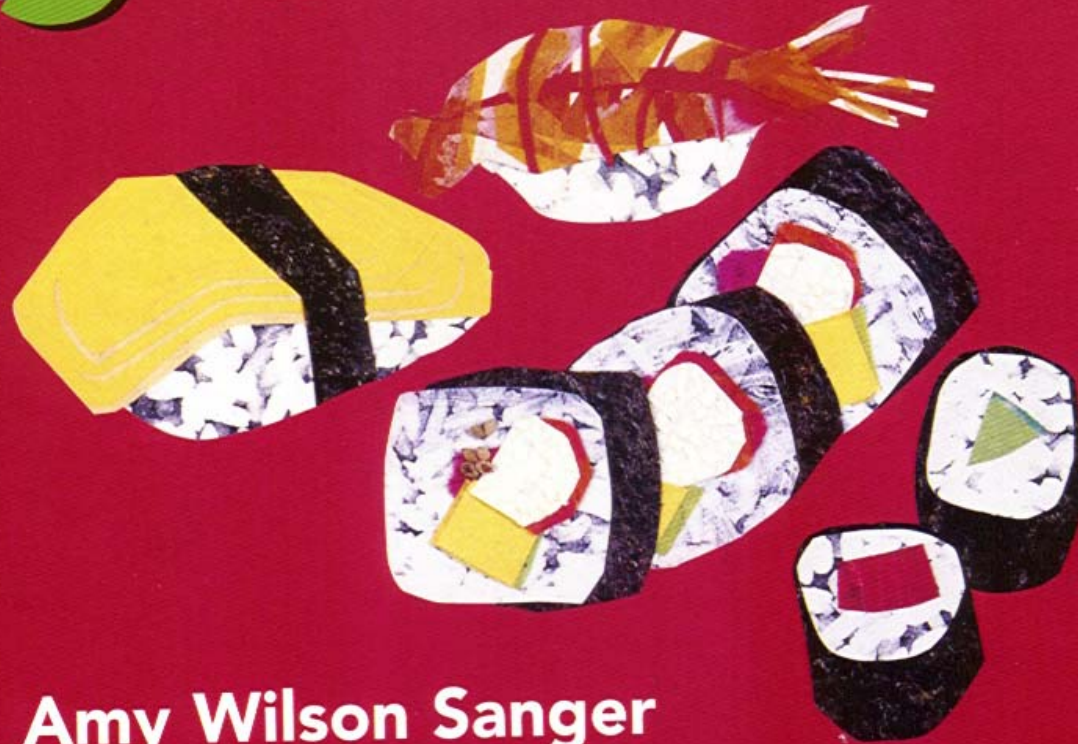
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<http://www.cartoonbank.com>



*"From right to left, you have your tekkamaki, your futomaki, and then your yamaimo roll. The little pile of pink stuff is ginger, the green one's wasabi. And, of course, you already recognize your vodka martini."*

First  
Book  
of

# SUSHI



Amy Wilson Sanger



**First Book of Sushi**  
by Amy Wilson Sanger

*I see take-out tekka maki,  
kappa maki packed to go  
Temaki-style hand roll  
with uni urchin roe.*

*Miso in my sippy cup,  
tofu in my bowl  
Crab and avocado  
fill my California roll.*

WebSphere. software

# INTEGRATION PLAY

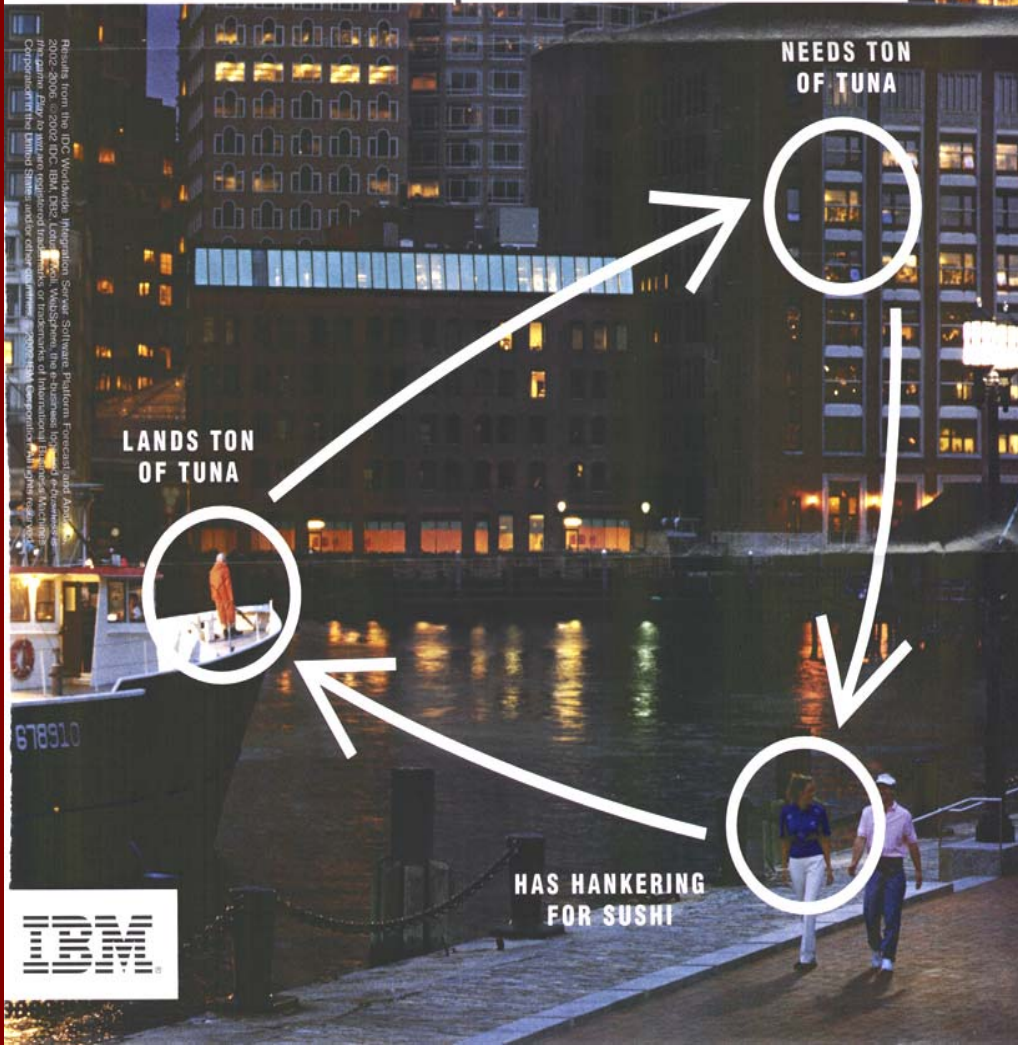
- 1) WIN WITH INTEGRATION: Nothing fishy about it. For an e-business to thrive, all your business processes, from supplier to customer, must work together seamlessly. It's the key to a profitable infrastructure.
- 2) WIN WITH WEBSHERE: As the world's #1 integration software, WebSphere is the leading software platform for integrating business processes, applications, platforms and people, WebSphere. Part of our software portfolio including DB2®, Lotus® and Tivoli®.
- 3) MAKE THE PLAY: Visit [ibm.com/websphere/integrate](http://ibm.com/websphere/integrate) and see a Webcast on how WebSphere can help cut integration costs.

@business is the game. Play to win.™

Tuna as metaphor for  
global integration via  
business

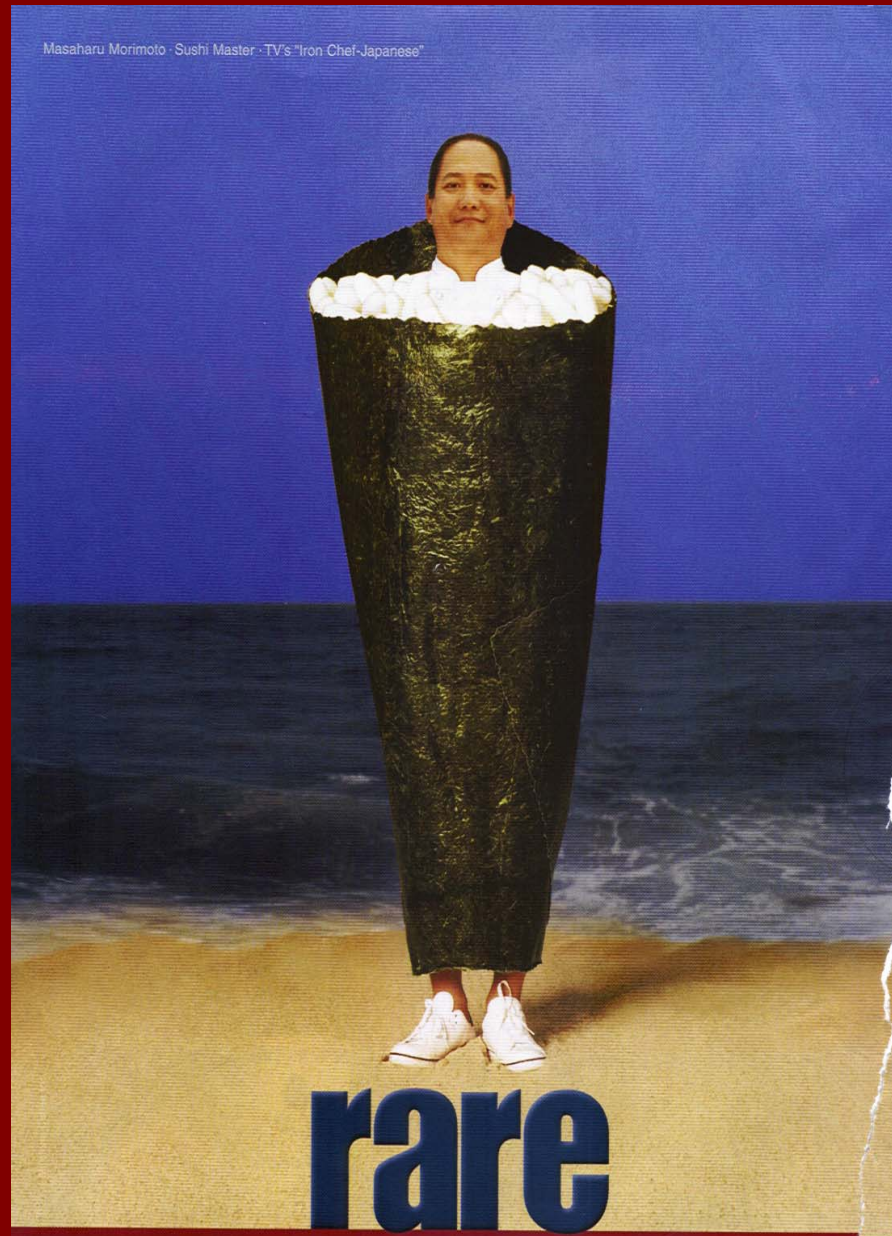
(IBM advertisement)

- 1) Lands ton of tuna
- 2) Needs ton of tuna
- 3) Has hankering for sushi



Masaharu Morimoto - Sushi Master - TV's "Iron Chef-Japanese"

# Iron Chef Morimoto for Millstone coffee



Masaharu Morimoto  
is as passionate about the distinctive character of Kona as he is about Tekka Maki.

Millstone. Varietals and blends for every passion and palate. [www.millstone.com](http://www.millstone.com)

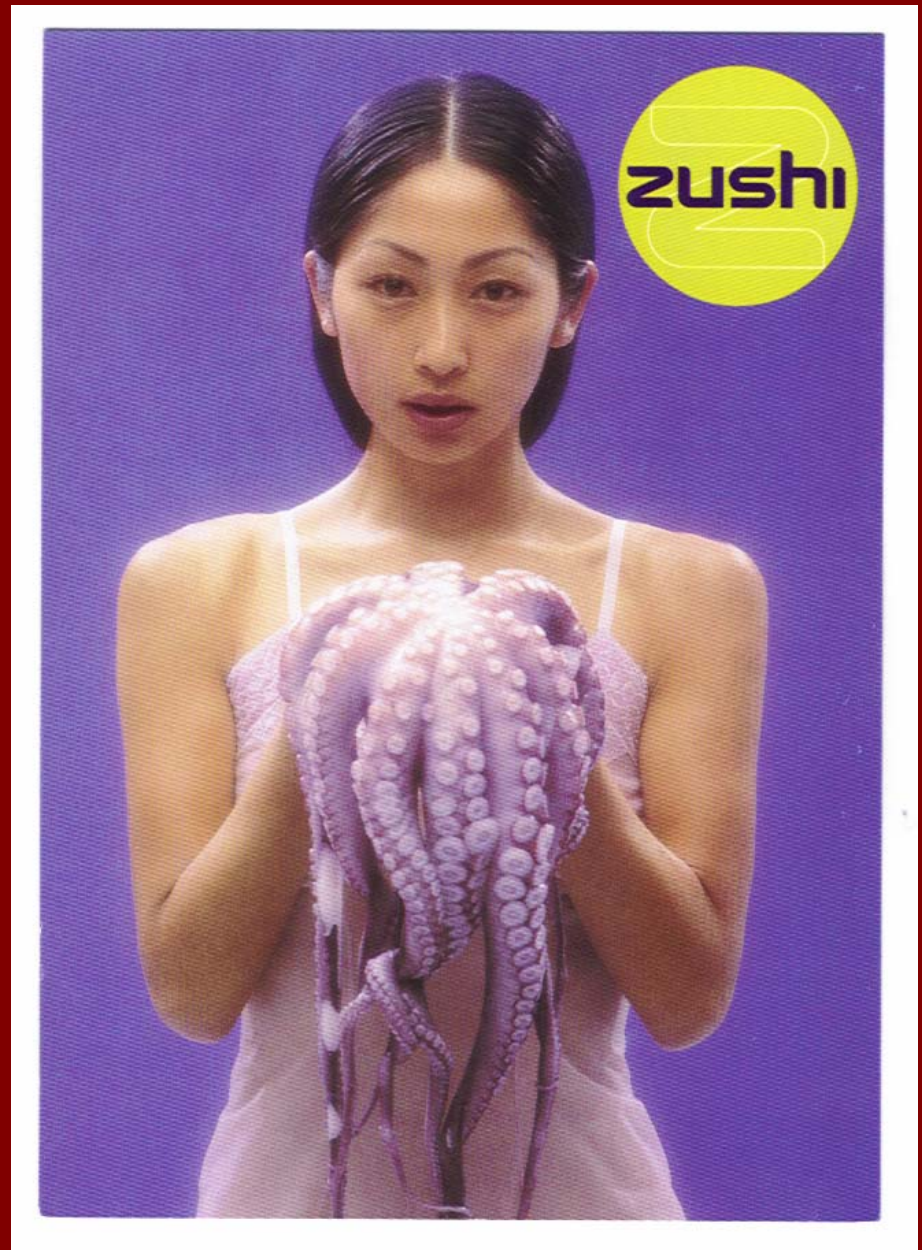
PREMIUM ARABICA COFFEES

**MILLSTONE**  
*Taste what's out there.*



# Japan's Gross National Cool

Poster from an  
Amsterdam kaitenzushi  
restaurant, ca. 1999



# Soft power



Finding Nemo on your plate

# FC 84 – electronic sourcebook – required readings available on-line

- Doug McGray, Japan's Gross National Cool, Foreign Policy  
<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~ikalmar/illustrations/japfpmcgray.htm>
- Theodore C. Bestor, How Sushi Went Global, Foreign Policy