

Tania McDonald

BUF 4300

Dr. Adomaitis

February 26,2023

### International Palette Paper: Ramen Danbo



Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

- a. How were you addressed when you entered into the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated? How was this experience different due to COVID? Did you have to show your vaccinations card?

On February 23 Tania McDonald decided to try out a Japanese ramen-based restaurant, the restaurant is called Ramen Danbo which is located at 52 7th Ave in downtown Brooklyn.

Upon arrival, Tania noticed that there was no wait time so there was no need for previous

reservations. On busy days, the restaurant offers a digital list where customers can input their name & party size to be seated as soon as a table is available. Customer service was stellar, not only did they greet her quickly. They were also extremely kind and explained the menu items to her promptly & also provided great suggestions. Due to covid, she was able to dine outside as well. As far as vaccination goes it's not required to dine there.

b. What are the cultural differences you notice? *(Use class notes and cite in APA 8th ed)*

Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurant or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not be limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five senses in this cultural experience. Be sure to write in third person...one will or would see, smell, etc....

The restaurant had a very peculiar aroma, it smelled of sautéed onions & savory grilled pork meat. One would see a dining table with a big space in the middle of it. Next to that big table are booths on each side of the restaurant. There are also hooks on the bricked wall in case customers want to hang up their belongings. As one proceeds to look up, there are about 4 red lanterns with a Japanese symbol on them hanging from the ceilings (Sternquist, B.1998). One would hear classical music playing in the background. The restaurant isn't the biggest therefore, they keep the music low for customers to be able to engage with one another. One would touch the wooded seats and their chopped sticks. This restaurant also had a little storage inside some

booths. One would have to lift the seating area to find it. Some differences in culture have to be the chopped sticks, Japanese writing on each bowl, and the food options.

c. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items?

Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu.

What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu? How does this relate to cultural geography? Be sure to use and cite lecture notes appropriately in APA 8th ed.

As one would view the menu, one will come across a variety of ramen flavors and combinations. Fun fact they have every food item on the menu written in Japanese. Only a few items have translations next to them. Some flavors such as “Rekka Ramen and Curry ramen”. Their menus also have bright and vibrant pictures on them of each food item. They even give you the opportunity to create your own ramen to your liking, it starts with picking your preferred broth, the size of your noodles, the spice level (mild to extra spicy), & a list of different toppings you can also add. Some toppings were; eggs, *chashu* known as sliced pork, *nori* known as seaweed & even a soft-boiled egg. Despite, having toppings for the ramen they also have appetizers. They call their appetizers “side dishes”. Some side dishes include *gyoza*, *Mentaiko rice*, and white rice. Gyoza is a Japanese dumpling and Mentaiko rice is a spicy cod roe. Their ramen is mostly pork based but, they do have vegan options. Tania proceeded to order the vegan Miso Rekka Ramen with a vegan gyoza. This restaurant relates back to cultural geography because they have their Japanese symbols all over the bowls. (Sternquist, B. 1998).

- d. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like? Describe the ingredients as well.

Unfortunately, they do not offer a traditional salad. They don't offer a complimentary dish at all. Anything ordered has to be paid for, the only free item is the water. They do however offer one dessert option named Mochi. "Mochi is made by pounding steamed short-grain Japanese sticky rice, called *mochigome* (Sinha, 2021). After the rice is steamed they place the ice cream inside and that is what makes the dessert. Their mochi comes in different flavors such as strawberry, green tea, mango, and black sesame.

- e. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant? Be sure to address what is different in the menu.

Ramen Danbo has a small drink menu. Their nonalcoholic drinks are canned coke, sprite, ginger ale, and diet coke. Their alcohol menu only consists of *sake* which is a Japanese drink and typical beer. Sake is already an alcoholic beverage that you won't find in an American chain restaurant. Another different drink is their *Genmaicha* tea. "Genmaicha tea is a type of green tea infusion commonly consumed in Japan"(Kubala,2022). This tea is also made out of brown rice.

- f. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography (*Use class lecture notes*)? (i.e., spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish

(sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country this culture's food is best known. Be sure to relate the geography with the country's food. Include a map. Be very detailed.

The food reflected the cultural geography of Japan by everything on the menu being in the Japanese language. Ramen Dambo is a uni-cultural restaurant (Sternquist, B.1998). One would feel like they stepped into Japan after walking into this restaurant. This restaurant gives their customers chopped sticks, everything is in Japanese and their food options are in their language. Ramen is also from a G8 country Japan.(Sternquist, B.1998). According to Travel Earth, Japanese ramen is most popular in the Hokkaido region of Japan.(Travel Earth, n.d).

- g. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses – you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing? *Please use Eicher-Roacher-Higgins (1992) article to define dress and answer appropriately. Be sure to use all five senses in each description.*

When Tania entered the restaurant, as she was greeted by her waiter she noticed the waiter's dress. The hostess and waiters wore all black and a red apron. They wore a black t-shirt or dress shirt. They also paired the shirt with black bottoms such as jeans or dress pants. The apron was *wrapped* around their waist. As she looked around she noticed the different forms of dress in the room. She decided to visit the restaurant around 1:00 pm and the crowd was mixed. There were people who seemed to be on their lunch breaks. There was a man wearing a blazer that was *pre-shaped* to fit his body and accompanied it with a tie *clipped* to the collar of his dress shirt. He was also wearing a gold watch that was *pre-shaped* to fit his wrist. He was having lunch

with a lady that was dressed the complete opposite of him. She had her *hair* in a ponytail and *wrapped* it around in a messy bun and was wearing a navy blue yoga set that was *pre-shaped* to her body. Despite the people around me the smell of the food masked all of the possible perfume scents. Tania walked in with her *skin* moisturized in Hempt's Vanilla lotion. Before leaving the house she brushed her *teeth* to make sure that her *breath* smelled fresh before the ramen. After brushing her teeth, she proceeded to add a little makeup to her face. She wore her Pandora bracelet that is *clipped* together on her wrist. She also wore her everyday gold Nefertiti necklace with gold small hoops. Her outfit consisted of a brown juicy couture velour set that *wrapped* around her waist perfectly. On her feet, she wore the chestnut original Uggs and rocked her Coach brown crossbody purse to go with it. Her scent of the day was Zara's "Go Fruity". One doesn't have to dress up to come into this restaurant.

- h. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the *LA Times* or *Houston Chronicle*). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality and price and should range from A-F ("A" being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.

Tania is from the Caribbean and is used to only eating food from her culture, which is the Jamaican culture. She would give this restaurant a B-. She would give this restaurant a B- because let's start with the scenery walking in and seeing the bright lanterns were nice. It felt like one was greeted immediately at the door. This restaurant was definitely clean after every customer the waiter cleaned the table. There were no garbage on the floor and even the bathroom was spotless. The bathroom also smelled like lavender because they had a plug in that was really

unexpected. The authenticity was a 10 out of 10 because from the chopped sticks to the menu being in mostly Japanese. One would be forced to assimilate to the Japanese culture during the time there. One would be able to say that they learned something new while experiencing their delicious food. The quality of the food was good but, remember it is the customers choice. Remember they give the option of how each step in the ramen process could go. The pricing is moderate, not too cheap but also not too expensive. Their lunch special is the best part between 11 am to 5 pm there is a deal on ramen prices. The service was quick and attentive. The waiters would refill your water before its empty. They asked in detail about her order and even repeated the order to ensure that everything was correct. She only gave this restaurant a B- because of the lack of drink choices and how small the restaurant is.

- i. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?

I learned that I should'nt be afraid of trying something new. I could contribute to a multi-cultural experience by showing that I know how to eat with chopped sticks now. I understand some japanese words due to reading the menu. I also learned about different food choices that I never knew before. I learned that food could literally be cooked so many different ways. I also asked a lot of questions about the ingredients that went into the food that I was

ordering. All in all this experience caused me to watch my surroundings and when I go out enjoy the moment. I really had to learn to slow down and pay attention to small details.



References:

Kubala, J. (2022, March 23). The emerging health benefits of Genmaicha Tea. Healthline.

Retrieved February 26, 2023, from <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/genmaicha-tea-benefits>

Sinha, A. (2021, December 13). *What is Mochi? for starters, perfect.* Bon Appétit. Retrieved

February 26, 2023, from <https://www.bonappetit.com/story/what-is-mochi>

Sternquist, B. (2007). *International Retailing: 2nd Edition.* Fairchild Publications; New York, NY.

*Different regional ramen in Japan that you have to try! - travel.Earth.* (n.d.). Retrieved February

26, 2023, from <https://travel.earth/different-regional-ramen-in-japan-that-you-must-try/>