



文、圖 | 駱吉婷，香港中文大學人類學系研究助理  
Text & Photography | Luo Jiting, Research Assistant, Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

不論是「鮑參翅肚」或是「鮑參肚翅」，鮑魚在四大海味珍品中都是列居其首，實至名歸，無可置疑。俗語有云，「一口鮑魚一口金」。在中菜的世界裡，鮑魚歷來都被認為是珍味中的極品，其價格更一直居高不下。尤其是九十年代中國經濟騰飛之後，鮑魚的需求量有增無減，消費鮑魚的群體越來越廣。目前，鮑魚的貿易主要集中在東南亞，產地遍佈世界各地。在這全球化貿易的競技場中，香港憑藉其獨特的地理優勢和金融地位，成為鮑魚交易裡最為重要的樞紐，承擔了絕大多數的轉口貿易。上環海味街是香港海味貨品集散的中心地，恰處於這場經濟變革的風口浪尖，敏銳地經歷著資訊交換和價格浮動，如同一個萬花筒。透過它，可窺探到大千世界經濟變遷的眾生相。

**“Abalones, sea cucumbers, shark fins, fish maws” - no matter how we sequence the “4 luxurious sea products” in Chinese cuisine, abalones always come first, as saying goes, “a bite of abalone is a bite of gold”.** Crowned the finest delicacy in Chinese food culture for centuries, abalones are sold at hard prices. The economic boom of China since 1990s had increased the demand for abalones and brought a much wider consumer spectrum. Southeast Asia is currently a vibrant abalone trading network, selling abalones caught from all over the world. In this sophisticated trading network, Hong Kong has the geographical and financial advantage to become the most important abalone trading hub of the world, taking charge of most of the re-exports. At “Dried Seafood (Hoi-mei) Street” in Sheung Wan, you get the most updated news and price flow of all kinds of dried seafood. The street scene here reveals world’s economic changes.

# 鮑魚的故事

## Abalones through the centuries

事實上，素有「海味之冠」讚譽的鮑魚，自古以來就是名貴的食材。鮑魚在中國古代典籍裡面作「鮑魚」。據傳，西漢的終結者、新朝開國皇帝王莽就酷愛鮑魚，一日不食則夜不能寐。據《漢書·王莽傳》記載，在赤眉綠林起義軍兵臨城下，即將推翻新朝之時，王莽「憂懣不能食」，但仍然要「壹飲酒，啗鮑魚」。明清時期，鮑魚被列為海產八珍（鮑魚、海參、魚翅、魚肚、淡菜、乾貝、魚唇、魷魚）之一，是御膳上品，僅為帝王將相食用。據記載，清朝宮廷已經出現全鮑宴。當時沿海官員朝見時大都帶乾鮑進貢，官位越大，進貢的鮑魚品質越好。相傳一品官吏進貢一頭鮑，七品官員進貢七頭鮑，如此類推。一頭鮑意味著一斤有一隻鮑魚，七頭鮑意味著一斤有七隻鮑魚，前者價格比後者高出十多倍。

集萬千寵愛於一身的鮑魚，為何受到人們如此的推崇呢？究其營養價值，中、西醫的觀念存在巨大的差異。西方營養學家認為鮑魚所含的蛋白質與雞蛋無異，其他營養成分亦無特殊之處。而中醫的看法則大相徑庭。他們以形態區分四大海味的功效：海參、魚翅象徵男性，有壯陽之功效；鮑魚、燕窩則喻女性，滋陰補養。長期以來，鮑魚在中國飲食文化裡面都被認為是珍貴的補品。除此之外，它還象徵著權力和富貴。常言道「民以食為天」，吃對於中國人而言不僅僅為果腹，還承載了文化和象徵的意義。因此在重要宴席中，總能見到鮑魚的身影。而一般家庭難以將鮑魚作為日常消費品，只有到了盛大的節慶，才把它擺上餐桌。鮑魚作為名貴的食材，其烹調功夫非常講究，有時甚至需要花費幾天的準備時間。它有各種各樣的吃法，可生吃、燉湯、清蒸，還可炸、炒。由於烹飪過程繁複，不少海味店都把鮑魚的製作方法寫在宣傳小冊子上，供顧客參考。可是現在自己烹調鮑魚的家庭逐漸減少，人們普遍選擇即食的罐頭鮑魚，或者到酒店享用專業廚師製作的美食。

Abalones was a noble food since the ancient times. One of its admirers was Wang Mang, a courtier in Western Han dynasty (206BC-AD25) who usurped the throne. In the Book of Han, when his was besieged by the restoration troops, he was too distressed to eat but still craved for wine and abalones. In Ming and Qing dynasties, abalone was one of the "eight treasures from the sea" (others being sea cucumbers, shark fins, fish maws, mussels, dried scallops, fish lips and squids) - the top-graded imperial food unshared by people other than emperors and high-ranked officials. "All-abalone banquets" were held at the Qing palace. Officials from coastal cities paid tribute to the emperor by presenting dried abalones along with other treasures. Higher officials would present larger abalones. For instance, first-rank officials would present "1-headed" abalones, while the seventh-ranked presented "7-headed" abalones. (The size of abalones is counted by "heads per catty", while "1-headed" means that one catty contains one abalone, "7-headed" is thus 7 times smaller. The former could be more than ten times pricier.)

Why is abalone widely treasured, despite the great disparity in Western and Chinese medicine? Western medicine regards an abalone as protein-rich as an egg with no exceptional nutrition or beneficial element. Chinese practitioners think quite the contrary. They highlight the morphology of the four highly-priced seafood: sea cucumbers and shark fins symbolize male, which strengthen the aphrodisiac organs; abalones and bird's nests are feminine and may nourish the womb. In Chinese food culture, abalones have long been praised as a precious food supplement, and an icon of authority and prosperity. "Food is the god of life," says the Chinese. Eating is not just for filling the stomach, but holds quite a lot of cultural and symbolic meanings. That is why abalones are seldom absent from important Chinese banquets. Ordinary families cannot afford to consume abalones daily, but when it comes to major feasts, abalones are served on the table. Abalones are cooked in exquisite ways which may involve a few days of preparation. They can be eaten raw, stewed in soups, steamed, deep fried or sautéed. Many hoi-mei shops give out booklets with cooking instructions for consumers' reference. However, fewer families nowadays cook abalones by themselves. Instead, they consume canned abalones or simply enjoy the chefs' culinary art at hotel restaurants.



# 鮑魚的生產

## From sea to shop

踏進上環海味街，貨架上的各種鮑魚鱗次櫛比，漫步其中，還能聞到海味乾貨的混雜味道。目前市場上較為常見的種類有日本鮑魚、南非鮑魚、澳洲鮑魚、紐西蘭鮑魚、韓國鮑魚和大陸鮑魚。日本吉品鮑和網鮑的價格一馬當先，批發價介於一萬至三萬元一斤；跟隨其後的是南非野生鮑，三千元左右；接下來是澳洲鮑魚，二千二百元至二千五百元；價格最低的是大陸鮑魚，一千元上下。

In the shops of Hoi-mei Street in Sheung Wan, abalones are closely jostled on the shelves, and you may sniff out a blended aroma of assorted hoi-meis and other dried foodstuffs. Abalones are mainly gathered from Japan, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Korea and China. Yoshihama "Deluxe" abalones and Amidori "Net" abalones from Japan top the wholesale price list by HK\$10,000 to HK\$30,000 per catty (~600gm), followed by wild abalones from South Africa at HK\$3,000 per catty. Australian abalones come third at HK\$2,200 to HK\$2,500, and the Chinese ones cost only around HK\$1,000.

日本吉品鮑，特點是前後穿洞，中間有豎線。  
Yoshihama "Deluxe" abalone with pierce holes at front and at the back. One vertical line is also clearly seen in the middle.



南非鮑魚，體積比一般鮑魚更大。  
South African abalone which is larger than common abalones.



韓國鮑魚，特點是枕高。  
Korean abalone with distinctively lifted shell muscle.

海味街的乾鮑主要分為野生鮑魚和養殖鮑魚。野生鮑魚主要由澳洲和南非進口，因罕有而特別受到市場的寵愛。鮑魚對自然環境要求比較高，生長在海深三十米處，附著於背流的岩礁，靠啃食海底的海藻為生。澳洲野生鮑魚生長緩慢，大致需要八年時間才能長到一公斤大小。正因如此，澳洲政府對鮑魚捕撈施行管制，與相關行業人員共同推動可持續發展的理念。目前澳洲野生鮑魚的產量基本穩定，維持在每年五千噸左右，大部分供應給香港和中國大陸。然而，澳洲僅僅是一個特例，在鮑魚貿易暴利的驅使之下，許多國家過量捕撈，使得近年來野生鮑魚的產量持續下降。生態破壞已經成為鮑魚行業中不得不面對的嚴峻問題。

Both natural and farmed abalones are sold at Hoi-mei Street. Abalones caught in the wild are mainly from Australia and South Africa. Wild abalones grow in 30-metre deep sea, on bedrocks behind sea currents and fed on underwater algae. Their rarity and quality are reflected on the price. Wild Australian abalones are slow-growing - it takes 8 years for an Australian abalone to grow to the size of 1 kg. The Australian government is very concerned with their sustainability, and hence lines up with stakeholders and imposes limits on catch volume. The yield of Australian wild abalones are now stable at 5,000 tonnes per year, most of which are exported to Hong Kong and China. Yet in many other countries abalones are overfished driven by lucrative profits. As a result wild abalones are falling in numbers in recent years. Ecological disruption forges the toughest challenge to the whole abalone industry.

鮑魚的高利潤吸引了越來越多的生產商和經銷商投身其中，他們在經營野生鮑魚買賣的同時，也大力開發人工養殖。如今，在進口香港的養殖鮑魚中，份額最大的是大陸鮑魚。改革開放之後，中國大陸重新開始發展鮑魚產業。一九八七年，中國大陸首次成功養殖鮑魚，自此之後鮑魚產量迅速增長。中國主要的鮑魚產地在福建和大連，而福建更是憑藉其蜿蜒曲折的海岸線、良好的海水環境和創新的養殖技術，成為出產鮑魚的後起之秀。它的創新之處在於雜交，通過不停地試驗配種，提升鮑魚存活率。目前，福建養殖鮑魚的年產量已經達到四萬噸。上環海味街一位專營鮑魚批發的店主感歎道：「大陸鮑魚在這條街興起是近期的事，五年前還是澳洲鮑和紐西蘭鮑主導，但現在我店一半以上的鮑魚是大陸鮑。」根據香港政府統計處資料，在二零零一至二零一零年十年之間，進口香港的大陸鮑魚增長了十倍。

The lucrateness of abalones has attracted more and more investors and traders. Apart from buying and selling wild abalones, they also tap vigorously on rearing. Most of the imported farmed abalones in Hong Kong are from China, where abalone rearing industry began after the economic reform. Abalone aquaculture first succeeded in 1987 in Dalian, China. Since then, the abalone yield multiplied instantly. The major abalone breeding grounds lie within Fujian and Dalian. With winding coastline, healthy sea and technological innovation,



貨架上琳琅滿目的各種乾鮑。  
Attractive display of various dried abalones.



擺下貨架的各種鮑魚。  
Abalones off the shelves are sold directly on the floor.



鮑魚批發店裡待售的乾鮑和海味行業傳統的密底算盤。  
Dried abalones ready for sale in a wholesale shop; on top is a traditional bottom-tight abacus used in the Hoi-mei industry.

Fujian is a promising abalone producing capital. Innovative and experimental hybridization improve the survival rate. 40,000 tonnes

of cultured abalones are now output by Fujian annually. "Five years ago, it was Australian and New Zealand abalones which rule the street. Chinese abalones only raised its flag in the last few years. Now more than half of the abalones in my shop are from China," an abalone wholesaler in the Sheung Wan Dried Seafood Street told me. According to Hong Kong's Census and Statistics Department, amount of Chinese abalones entering Hong Kong have increased 10 fold during the decade of 2001 to 2010.

# 海味街的變遷

## Changing hues

不同種鮑魚浮沉的背後，隱藏著整個海味行業的變遷。上環海味街店主們常常掛在嘴邊的是：「市場在變，你不變怎麼行？」回溯五十年前的上環，商人的角色分明，並且比較專一，進口商、批發商、零售商各自經營一項業務。現在的店鋪幾乎都兼營多種形式的業務，多數是零售店，大門敞開，商品被整齊劃一地擺在貨架上招攬顧客。僅有幾間大店鋪維持著傳統的經營模式。

上世紀七十年代，代理商在海味街有相當大的影響力。他們掌控了貨品來源，收購大批貨物以後再分銷給各個批發商。如今各國貿易往來愈加頻繁，再加上資訊發達，使得進口商、批發商有越來越多的管道接觸商品來源，他們與生產商直接建立關係，甚至在當地建廠。一位鮑魚店主告訴我，「這條街上稍微有實力的店鋪都在大陸開廠，做鮑魚飼養，然後運回香港加工。」隨著市場需求的增加，鮑魚行業的競爭也越來越大。經營者經常需要到鮑魚生產地進行考察，熟悉當地市場，發掘好的生產商，或者監督鮑魚生產過程。海味街上的老闆幾乎都是資深研究者，講起自己的行業來頭頭是道、頗有洞見。除了經營模式有所轉變以外，鮑魚的食用方式也越來越多樣化，經營者要做更多的研究和試驗，不斷開發新產品，如罐頭的密封和抗壓設計、袋裝鮑魚的保鮮等等。

The popularity and prices of different kinds of abalone changes over time, so does the entire dried seafood industry. "Change" is the catchphrase of hoi-mei shop owners in Sheung Wan. Fifty years ago in the same place, hoi-mei traders play more well-defined roles of importers, wholesalers and retailers. Now almost all shops operate multiple business modes. Most of them are retail shops, with doors wide open and goods tidily displayed to attract customers. Only a few large shops still attach to the old operation style.

Agents were the great commanders on the Dried Seafood Street in the 1970s. They had control of the product source, so they could stock up huge amount of goods and distribute to wholesalers. Since sellers in different countries make much more contacts with each other in the information age, sources of goods are now accessible to importers and wholesalers. They build up commercial channels directly with overseas producers or even establish their own factories over there. An abalone shop owner said, "Larger shops on this street have their own abalone-raising factories in the mainland. The abalones are then sent to Hong Kong for processing." Increased market demand brings keener competition in this industry. Operators have to make frequent visits to the yielding grounds to familiarize themselves with the local market in search of good abalone producers, or to supervise the production processes. Owners on the Hoi-mei Street are all experts. They have many insightful stories about the industry to tell. Besides changing operating modes, how we consume abalones have also changed over time. Operators need to research and work out on new products, for instance, tightly-sealed cans or preserving freshness in pre-packed abalones.



海味批發店集中的文咸西街。  
Hoi-mei wholesalers cluster at  
Bonham Strand West.



市場競爭瞬息萬變，海味街步履不停地追趕，然而他們始終堅持著一些東西，那便是社區的人情和人們反覆強調的「信」字。海味街上將近一半的店舖都是子承父業，談起街道的變遷，大家都充滿感情，津津樂道。章叔年過七十仍被聘請為行銷經理，他說：「老關念我在這條街做了四十多年，從他爸開店的時候就認識我了。」其實只要細心張望，便會發現海味街上不少員工都已年過半百，他們把青春留給了這條街道。



農曆春節將近，海味街人潮湧湧，迎來了一年一度的旺季。  
Lunar New Year is about to come, and Hoi-mei Street welcomes its annual peak with waves of people.

Market competition never ceases. The shopkeepers' race never stops. What remains unchanged, however, is the bondage in the community and "faith". Nearly half of the shops are family business in which sons succeed fathers. They are passionate when talking about what they have gone through on this street. Uncle Cheung, in his 70s, is still hired as the Sales Manager. "I have worked in this street for more than 40 years, and my boss had known me when his dad started the shop," said Uncle Cheung. Most of the staff are over 50 years old. They had devoted their golden years to this street. It is a common for staff of the entire shop to have lunch together at one table. They are proud of their professionalism, with "credibility" always on top priority. "I grew up on this street and used to watching my father doing business. How we do it is as simple as one word: Faith." It was "Faith" that anchors the Hong Kong abalone market in the decades of volatility, and holds firm the industry for its steady growth today. ✨



中午時分，也不難看見全店員工一起圍在飯桌上吃飯的場景。他們為自己的高尚職業操守感到驕傲，一直以來強調堅持信譽為先。一位店主跟我說，「我是在這條街上長大的，從小看著我爸做生意。我們很乾脆，就憑個『信』字。」一個「信」字，伴隨著香港鮑魚市場在幾十年中的風雲變幻，也正是這個「信」字，使它堅強地挺到了今天。 ✨



清早街上行人稀少，店主時常把乾鮑放在門前的馬路上晾晒。  
In the morning with only few pedestrians, abalones are bathed under the sun on the road before the shops.