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素食漸漸成為一種健康生活的潮流。隨之而來的是愈來愈多人開始發掘和研究素食的食材，當中一個很重要的食材類別就是菌類。菌類食材種類繁多，最具盛名的便是廣府素菜「鼎湖上素」。其特別之處是採用「三菇六耳」，再配上竹筍等多種菌類共同烹調，口味清淡且富有層次感。相傳肇慶鼎湖山慶雲寺的慶雲大師來到廣州六榕寺，在當時享譽廣州的西園酒家品嚐羅漢齋後，發覺其雖用料眾多且名貴，但味道一般，未能發揮食材的鮮味，遂向西園的廚師提議改變烹製方法。此羅漢齋後來被西園採納並定名為「鼎湖上素」，成為西園名菜。當中的三菇分別是蘑菇、草菇和香菇，六耳分別是木耳、雪耳、榆耳、黃耳、石耳和桂花耳。

In recent years, vegetarianism is trending more and more innovative non-meat recipes. Among these fungi has become a significant ingredient.

The famous Cantonese dish - "Best Mixed Vegetables in Dinghu Style" is a dainty collection of edible fungi of different textures and flavours. Legend has it that this vegetarian dish was an enhancement of "Buddha's Delight" (a popular vegetarian dish) in the notable Xiyuan Restaurant of Guangzhou by a veteran monk from Xingyun Temple of Dinghu Mountain. The three mushrooms used in the dish were mushroom, straw mushroom and shiitake, while the six fungi were cloud ear, snow ear, elm ear, yellow ear, rock ear and sweet osmanthus ear.

三菇

Three mushrooms

據說「鼎湖上素」所用的蘑菇不是普通的白蘑菇，而是「張家口蘑菇」，簡稱「口蘑」。其原產地實為蒙古，但由於以前蒙古的土產都經過河北省張家口市轉往內地，於是張家口便成了蒙古土產的集散地，故而這些蘑菇被稱為「張家口蘑菇」。由於它們產量低，而且帶有很多泥沙，清洗時很花工夫，所以價錢很貴。而對於一般的素菜來說，選用的食材都是普通蘑菇。

The mushrooms in the “Best Mixed Vegetables” was said to be no ordinary white mushrooms, but “Zhangjiakou Mushroom” (“koumo” in short) from Mongolia imported to mainland China via Zhangjiakou in Hebei. The yield of this mushroom is limited and it requires a lot of work to remove mud and sands from the mushrooms, and they are hence highly priced. Other vegetarian dishes usually use cheaper alternatives.



草菇發源於華南廣東一帶。華南氣候溫暖潮濕，雨後腐爛的禾草甚為適合野生草菇繁殖，故稱為草菇。現時中國出產的草菇佔世界八成產量，主要由南方各省培植，以龍門菇為佳品。由於鮮草菇容易變壞，除了產地附近比較容易享用到鮮品外，大部分產品都會被製成乾品或是罐頭。草菇產量大，各類製品包括乾品價格都相對便宜，所以多見於雜貨店，海味店並不常見。草菇的用法也很多，除了傳統的蒸雞之外，也可滾燙和作煲仔飯，以增加香味。

Straw mushrooms are grown around Guangdong in southern China. With warm, humid climate, decaying straws are excellent beddings for wild straw mushrooms - hence its name. Currently China produces 80% of world's straw mushrooms. They are mainly grown in the southern provinces, and Longmen straw mushroom is the best of all. Fresh straw mushrooms are not durable. Most straw mushrooms on the market are dried or canned. Straw mushrooms are yielded more than enough and are thus sold at a relatively low price. They are more common in grocery stores than in dried seafood (hoi-mei) shops. They can be cooked in many ways, such as traditional steamed chicken with straw mushrooms, soup with straw mushrooms or clay pot rice with straw mushrooms.





香菇
Shiitake

香菇即是香港人常常掛在嘴邊的「冬菇」。野生香菇由於多在冬春之季出現，所以統稱為「冬菇」，是最常見的一種食用菌。為便於貯存，香菇一般都會被製成乾品，在海味店、雜貨店或者超級市場發售。香菇有很長的食用歷史，是中國最早人工培植的菇類，培植香菇早於元代已經出現。但要說把培植香菇發揚光大的，就不可不提日本。日本的菇農選用菇種和木材都很嚴格，每家菇農都有家傳秘方，令出產的香菇擁有特殊的香味，加上人工成本高，因此價錢昂貴。直至現在，日本出產的香菇依然普遍被認為是質素最好的。筆者年前到上環做調查，日本冬菇標價二百八十港元一斤，相比之下大陸冬菇的價位則徘徊在八十至一百港元之間。上環乾貨老字

號「海昌號」負責人波叔解釋，日本冬菇烹飪後比大陸菇更香，但是一般人在乾貨店裡單憑菇的花紋和氣味，是難以將二者區分出來的。波叔憑著他的豐富經驗，分享了辨別日本冬菇和大陸冬菇的秘訣，即觀察菇的菌環和菌褶部位。一般來說，日本冬菇的菌環要比大陸冬菇更細。

Shiitake, a.k.a. “winter mushroom”, is the most common edible fungus. Wild species grow from winter. They are usually dehydrated for easy storage and sold in hoi-mei shops, grocery stores and supermarkets. Shiitake have long been consumed by humans, and is the first mushroom cultivated in China (since Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368). However, it was the Japanese who took a great leap forward in its cultivation. By careful selection of spawns and bedding logs and secret formula handed down by family ancestors, shiitakes produced by different farms are distinctly flavoured. Japanese shiitake is widely regarded as the best choice of all and are pricey. Years ago I did a survey in Sheung Wan: Japanese shiitake was sold at HKD\$280 per catty, and that from China fluctuated between \$80 and \$100. Uncle Po, owner of a time-honoured dried goods seller “Hoi Cheong Ho”, explained that Japanese shiitake is much more flavourful when cooked, compared with that from China. Yet it is difficult for laymen to distinguish the two in shops only by their patterns and aromas. The tips for choosing good shiitake? Look at the annulus (“ring”) and gills of the mushroom - the annulus of a Japanese shiitake is generally smaller than the Chinese ones.



香港的香菇主要來自日本、韓國和中國大陸，而上環承擔了香菇批發和轉口的主要角色。談起各地香菇近年來的沉沉浮浮，上環店主們聲聲感嘆。九十年代以前，香港上環南北行街的入口商大多數從日本九州一帶進口香菇，運往香港分銷。由於價格不菲，普羅市民一般難以享用。相反，當時中國大陸生產的香菇價位偏低，卻因質量較差而未能獲得良好口碑，因此入口商較少從內地進貨。改革開放以後，中國菇農從日本買種、汲取技術和經驗，質素和產量得以漸漸提升。目前，大陸出產的香菇已成為香港市場的主流，它的產地廣泛，包括安徽、湖南、湖北、福建、廣東等。不過，由於大陸市場相對缺乏市場規範，其買賣過程伴隨著不少問題。中國內地的香菇種植產業龐大，香菇收成後菇農通常會在大市場放售，收購商收購後自行包裝，再打上自己的牌子。此種買賣沒有統一的標準，香菇的厚薄、大小、顏色等規格都由收購商自行制定，不僅如此，產區也可能每次不同，質量較難控制。因此，分銷商或零售店主都寧可見貨買貨。南北行街幾乎每天早晨都有的「開盤」（拍賣），便成為買家檢查新來貨質量的機會。位於永樂街的「文記海味」就是其中一個香菇進口商，據老闆梁先生說，近年由於中國的經濟發展，國內市場大而且消費能力比香港強，相反本地轉口分銷境況大不如前。與此同時，近年來越來越多內地客前來香港購買海味香菇等食品，因為他們對香港經營者的信譽更有信心。

Most shiitakes sold in Hong Kong are from Japan, Korea and China, and Sheung Wan is the hub for the wholesaling and re-exporting. The shopkeepers in Sheung Wan have sighed with the ups and downs the shiitake markets. Before 1990s, most importers on the Nam Pak Hong Street of Sheung Wan bought shiitakes from Kyushu, Japan. Not all customers could afford expensive Japanese shiitakes. In contrast, Chinese shiitakes were low-priced but not good enough to earn fame among customers, thus only small amount of them were imported. Later, shiitake farmers in China acquired spawns, techniques and experiences from Japan to gradually improve the quality and yield. Chinese shiitakes produced in Anhui, Hunan, Hubei, Fujian, Guangdong and many other parts in China now dominate the market in Hong Kong. However, there is not a standard among Chinese shiitake exporters, causing problems in the transactional processes. Given the sheer number of Chinese shiitake growers, harvested Chinese shiitakes are first sold to a large local market. Purchasers would then repack the shiitakes with their own brands printed on the packages. Transactions as such are not standardized - the thickness, sizes and colours of the shiitake sold are specified by individual purchasers instead of a general market rule. Quality control is difficult as it is hard to trace the production area. In this case, distributors and retailers would prefer buying only the what they can see and smell instead of placing distant orders. "Morning auctions" are held nearly every morning in Nam Pak Hong Street, where it is possible for importers to check product qualities by themselves. "Man Kee Dried Seafood" is one of the shiitake importers in Wing Lok Street. Mr. Leung, the owner, says that



China's burgeoning economy creates huge domestic spending power. The re-export and distribution markets of Hong Kong dwindle. At the same time, more and more Chinese visitors buy dried seafood and shiitakes in Hong Kong instead of China as the products sold in Hong Kong have better quality control.

六耳

Six (edible) fungi

木耳其實可分為多個種和屬，而香港最多人食用的分別是黑木耳和白背木耳，兩者都普遍應用於各類菜式。黑木耳較薄，乾品為黑褐色，兩面顏色相近，香港人多稱之為雲耳。白背木耳則比較厚，一面像黑木耳的黑褐色，而另一面則是灰白色並滿佈細毛，多被稱為木耳，主要產地為貴州、四川、雲南、湖北、廣西等地。根據資料記載，人工培養的黑木耳起源於一千四百年前的中國，是世界上第一種人工栽培的食用菌，但由於生產量不多，木耳在當時都是奢侈品。

Black fungus has many subordinate species and genera. What Hong Kong people usually consume in Chinese dishes are black fungus and white-back fungus. Black fungus is thinner, with similar colour on both sides, dark-brown when dried, and is normally known to Hongkongers as “cloud ear”. White-back fungus is thicker, dark-brown on one side and grayish-white with fuzz on another. They are usually called “wood ear”, mainly from Guizhou, Sichuan, Yunnan, Hubei and Guangxi. It is recorded to be the earliest edible fungus cultivated in the world, dating back to 1,400 years ago in China, once extravagant before it could be massly yielded.



木耳
Cloud ear



雪耳
Snow ear

相對於木耳，雪耳（或稱銀耳）的人工培植歷史相對較短。據說人工栽培雪耳始於光緒二十年（一八九四年），慈禧太后的侍女於《御香飄渺錄》的《御膳房》一篇便談到雪耳的市價極之昂貴，即使有錢買得到也未必質素好，原因是出產地四川的地方官早已把最優質的雪耳留下來，作為巴結慈禧太后和外商的貢品。及至一九六零年起，中國發展出瓶栽法和袋栽法等人工培植方法，雪耳的產量大幅增加，其價格也下滑。現在木耳和雪耳已經成為了普羅市民都能夠負擔的食材。

White fungus, “snow ear”, or “silver ear” fungus, has a shorter cultivation history. The practice began in 1894 during the reign of Qing Emperor Guangxu. An entry in the cook book of Empress Dowager Cixi’s lady-in-waiting mentioned that white fungus was extremely expensive. Even if one was wealthy enough to get some, they might not be of good quality for the best white fungus were held by local officials in Sichuan (where white fungus was grown) as tribute to please Cixi and foreign merchants. From 1960s, new farming techniques such as bottle cultivation and bag cultivation were used to yield white fungus. It has since flourished and the price declined. Both “wood ear” and “snow ear” are now affordable for the mass.

榆耳和黃耳的人工培植則是近年才成功，人工培植產品的價格相對變得便宜。但由於人工培植技術尚新，而且野生的產品雖量少，但還未如木耳和雪耳般被人工培植品所取締，所以野生的價格未見回落，甚至有些質素較好的更是身價上漲。在上環走一圈，便可看見有些雜貨店、海味店都把這些上等的菌類裝進玻璃瓶，跟其他的貴價食材一併展示。近年，雲南一帶出產的野生菌也可在一般的海味店見到，正如乾貨的牛肝菌、羊肚菌、乾巴菌等，給我們帶來豐富的選擇。



Cultivated *Gloeostereum* (“elm ear”) and *Tremella frondosa* (“yellow ear”) has only succeeded in recent years, pushing down prices of the cultivated species. However, wild species are still expensive, as the cultivation technology is rather new and the cultivated ones have not taken over the market yet, unlike the black and white fungi. Those of better quality have become even pricier. You should be able to see some top-grade fungi being displayed in large glass jars alongside other valuable foodstuff. Recently, hoi-mei shops are offering a wide variety of fungi products, including wildy grown fungi in Yunnan and the dried porcini, morel and ganba mushrooms.

至於石耳和桂花耳，在香港已經很難找到，甚至有說已經絕跡。上環店主解釋道，石耳必須清洗後才可以發售，既花工夫亦花時間。八十年代香港經濟發展轉型後，人工變得昂貴，加上很多餐廳都甚少使用石耳作為食材，令本身價格高昂的石耳更加難以出售，是以進口商便不再買入。而桂花耳也因為菌體很小，但卻要為每顆剪去耳腳，同樣必須花費很多工夫，於是漸漸被淘汰。另一絕跡的食材便是香信，其味道與冬菇類似，但香味相差甚遠。在難以消費冬菇的年代，香信常用來作為冬菇的替代品。一位店主回溯過去的時光，感嘆道：「以前沒有冰箱的年代，做粽子的時候會貼一塊香信在粽子的面上，是為了保證粽子味道不變壞。」如今對於一般消費者來說，購買冬菇已經不再是問題，香信也就銷聲匿跡了。伴隨著一起消失的，是香信所代表的那個年代。

The “rock ear” and “sweet osmanthus ear” may have disappeared in Hong Kong now. As explained by a hoi-mei shop owner in Sheung Wan, “stone ears” needed to be meticulously cleaned before selling, which is time and labour consuming. When labour costs in Hong Kong kept increasing in 1980s, “rock ear” gradually become unpopular among local restaurants. No wonder they were priced out of the market and abnegated by the importers. Likewise, despite the bitty size of “sweet osmanthus ear”, their bottom part is unpalatable and has to be cut away one by one - lifting labour cost and pricing itself out. One other “extinct” food is the “thin mushroom” - the inferior shiitake which is less aromatic, but was a popular substitute when shiitake was still a luxury item to the mass population. “At that time not many households had fridge,” remembered a hoi-mei shop owner, “a piece of thin mushroom is put atop the rice dumpling we made in Dragon Boat Festival to keep it fresh.” Since buying shiitake is no longer a problem for us, “thin mushroom” has also gone from the market, like the old days it represents.

就一道「鼎湖上素」，不單給我們看到菌類食材的多樣性和變化，更加讓我們窺見香港和中國的貿易和經濟環境轉變。一道菜不只是感觀的載體，也是不同地方和文化間的交流和衝擊的印記。❖

Of mushrooms and fungi, a single dish shows the diversity and myriad forms of edible fungi, as well as how trades and economies changed in Hong Kong and China. Not just for your taste and sight, a dish could reflect exciting cultural exchange and contrast over the borders. ❖



鼎湖
上素