

# Japanese Foods Near You

## — Foods that Have a Nickname —

- A Hi. I went to the dried goods section in the supermarket the other day and found packages of dried cuttlefish labeled “*atarime*” and “*surume*.” What’s the difference?
- B They’re the same. Long ago, merchants started calling the dried cuttlefish *atarime* instead of *surume*, because the “*suru*” part of *surume* is a homonym with terms associated with misdeeds and was considered bad luck. “*Suru*” could mean “to use up,” as in using up one’s money on gambling. It could also mean “to pickpocket,” as in pickpocketing someone’s wallet.

- A Tofu is also sometimes called by a different name: “*yakko*.”
- B During the Edo Period, *yakko* was the person who headed a feudal lord’s procession. Because the *yakko* typically wore a *hanten* (a short coat worn over a kimono) that had an emblem resembling tofu, the term *yakko* came to be used as another name for tofu. In summer, tofu is especially delicious chilled and garnished with dried bonito flakes, ginger and shoyu. This is called “*hiya-yakko*,” which literally translates to “chilled *yakko*.”

- B There are many more examples. In Osaka, puffer fish is also called “*teppo* (gun),” because its poison can kill a man.

- A I suppose the Japanese people in olden days gave nicknames to delicious foods and foods that need to be eaten with caution, because eating is such an essential part of daily life.

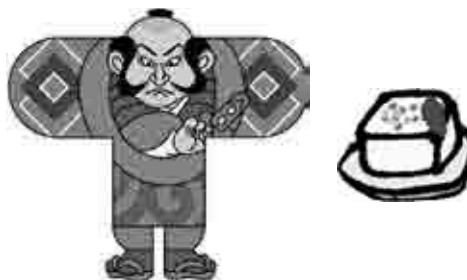
# 身近にある日本の食物

## — ニックネームの付いている食物 —

- A こんにちは。スーパーに行ったら乾物コーナーに、イカを乾燥させたものに「あたりめ」や「するめ」と表示していたのですが、どう違うのかな？
- B 同じものだよ。昔、商人達の間で「するめ」の「する」が「賭け事でお金を擦る(使い果たす)」「財布を掏る(人が身につけているものを密かに盗み取る)」などを連想させ縁起が悪いので、「あたりめ」と呼ばれるようになったそうだよ。



- A 豆腐のことも「やっこ」と呼んだりしますね。
- B 江戸時代の大名行列の先頭に立っている人を奴といい、奴が着ている半纏の紋が豆腐に似ていたので、呼ぶようになったのだよ。夏には冷たく冷やした「冷やっこ」を、鯉節をかけて、しょうが醤油で食べるとおいしいですね。



- B まだまだありますよ。魚のフグのことを大阪では、「当たる」と死ぬ」という洒落から「てっぽう(鉄砲)」と言ったりします。



- A 食事は毎日欠かせないものだから、おいしいものや食べる時注意が必要なものには、分かり易く愛称をつけて呼んでいたのですね。