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学位論文題目 The Study of the Religious Meaning of Food towards Value Creation: A Case of Olive in North Africa（価値創造に向けた食の宗教的意味の研究－北アフリカのオリーブを事例に）

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### Abstract of thesis

The objective of this research was to examine the question of whether the cultural religious value on food embedded by the traditional production and the religious acts on olive in Tunisia can contribute to create a new value, i.e., an innovative value for the people in modern society. In the global society the definition of health is expanded to include the spirituality for achievement of overall well-being. It is important to learn from the traditional society the complex meaning of “food” not limited to nutrition intake. While the pharmaceutical importance of olive has attracted considerable attention as a core of the Mediterranean diet, the strong significance of its religious cultural roles in the myths and the scriptures of the Mediterranean world has been ignored. In this study, while the author interprets the meaning and the social role of the religious phenomena found in the fieldwork in Tunisia using the theoretical frameworks of saint veneration and the history of religions, she employs a socioeconomic analysis of consumer behavior to examine whether the cultural religious meanings of olive can bring an innovative value of olive oil for consumers who belong to different cultural background than the Mediterranean world.

The Chapter 1 was an overview of the symbolic manifestations of olive through the myths, figures, customs and

teachings in the Mediterranean region. The symbols of olive can be classified into certain types as Cosmic Axis, fertility, purity or light, and those are the symbols of source of life. It is confirmed that the belief of olive has existed widespread of in the history of the Mediterranean region under the diversified religions and cultures. The symbolic effects of olive in modern North Africa are also examined to be mainly in common by comparative analysis of the customs in current Tunisia and the Morocco in the 1920s.

In chapter 2, the connection of the saint veneration to natural objects and their symbolic functions were discussed at the sanctuaries of the border between Arab and Amazigh influences in South Tunisia. The author discovers that the more Arabized the villages, the more established saints such as missionaries are found. Contrarily, the more the villages keep Amazigh culture, the more there are local, and spiritual ancestral saints. This chapter concludes that the indigenous elements of belief of nature as belief of olive have survived the pressure by Islam under Arabization, and they transformed into new forms acceptable within Islam.

The Chapter 3 revealed the short local pilgrimages (*ziyāra*) to old olive trees in Village T, a traditional Amazigh village in the region by discussing the role of old olive trees to enable the people to have total experience of pre-Islamic and Islamic values. It is considered that the sacred olive trees in the village have a complex symbolism with cultural, social, and religious meanings. By performing *ziyāra* to the olive-saint complexes on the sanctuaries, the villagers return to their ancestral lands and the olive trees as the centers of their communities. As well as tribal ties, the belief of olive works as inter-tribal ties by exchanging visit to other tribe's olive-saint complexes. It is understood that the veneration of olive-saint complexes represents people's experiences of the renewal of the world through contact with the sacred by means of the peculiar symbolism of olive tree.

In Chapter 4, the traditional dietary and medicinal cultures of olive in the villages of South Tunisia were discussed, and the author examines the expression of the importance of olive as dietary resource with various living aspects, on the agricultural festival. Due to the hard environment for the introduction of the modern technologies, the traditional olive farming and processing methods are still preserved. In the society where the life and the production processes are not separated yet, the significance of product is embedded in cultural values. While the traditional dietary usages of olive have been re-recognized with their evidenced functional values, olive is used due to its symbolic function of bringing about fertility or magical effects. Mahrajan, a new agricultural festival with the ritual donation, communal eating of olive, and the community parade of an olive shoot, is the expression of the moments and experiences of olive farming.

Finally in Chapter 5, the author conducted an internet survey in Japan to explore the impact of religious cultural attributes of olive oil on the consumer's willingness to pay with the choice experiment. The information of religious cultural images of olive are based on the mythological background, the sacred olive trees in Tunisia, and the local dietary and medicinal applications found through the previous chapters. The results of the choice experiment shows that there was positive impact of religious and cultural attribute of olive oil on consumers' preference. If the consumers are provided the additional information about its religious and cultural background, the premium of religious olive oil increases 6.7 times (946 JPY) of the premium given by non-informed consumers (141 JPY), which indicates a strong effect of the religious cultural information on consumers' choice of the olive oil with a religious attribute.

By recalling youthfulness, richness, or fruitfulness, olive is regarded to bring rejuvenation, exorcism, prosperity,

and all-cure of any disease in the traditional values. It is comprehensible that these effects are based on the sense of creativity, that is, the source of life, which is the universal significance of “foods.” According to the communication between olive and the villagers as their ritualistic actions, olive is considered to be the archetype of food in the Amazigh villages in South Tunisia. With this peculiar meaning of olive which has never been known so far, the author confirmed that its cultural and religious meanings bring a positive evaluation of olive oil by the consumers in a global food market. This study shed light on the primordial meaning of food by the traditional belief of olive in Tunisia, and concludes that the religious cultural meaning can enrich the image of olive as a new value shared among the people with a different cultural background.

## Abstract of assessment result

### **【Review】**

This thesis investigated whether the cultural and religious aspects of olive contribute to create new value added for food innovation. Based on the field work on traditional production and the religious acts observed in southern Tunisia as well as market survey on olive oil consumption of Japanese consumer, the applicant concluded that olive has been regarded as sacred as a symbol of life from the ancient Mediterranean religions, the indigenous belief system to nature rather than Islam has more influence on belief of olive including saint veneration, the veneration of olive saint complex works to strengthen tribal and inter-tribal ties, olive based agro-food culture is the core of the festival for fertility and regeneration of community, and religious cultural images on olive could contribute to create new value added of olive oil. To our knowledge, this thesis is one of the first attempts that examined the effect of religious and cultural aspects of olive on creation of new added for food innovation. Most of the above findings and new, and could provide novel aspects of value of olive and olive oil. The approach of this research, which employed religious studies on food innovation, has an originality to be applied to the study on other foods.

### **【Result】**

The final examination committee conducted a meeting as a final examination on 17 January, 2019. The applicant provided an overview of dissertation, addressed questions and comments raised during Q&A session. All of the committee members reached a final decision that the applicant has passed the final examination.

### **【Conclusion】**

Therefore, the final examination committee approved that the applicant is qualified to be awarded Doctor of Philosophy in Food Innovation.