

孔昭：滷水豬肉佬
The Stewed-Pork Vendor

By Hung Chi

Translated by Janice Wickeri

Going to the market when I have time off work, I always spot the vendor who sells stewed pork.

His mobile stall is not large, but all sorts of things are nicely accommodated. Besides the cleaver and chopping block, there is of course a large pot of piping hot sauce for stewing. There is also a huge pig's head on display. This whole pig's head constitutes a 'living' signboard, which sits there looking ever so blameless—and silly.

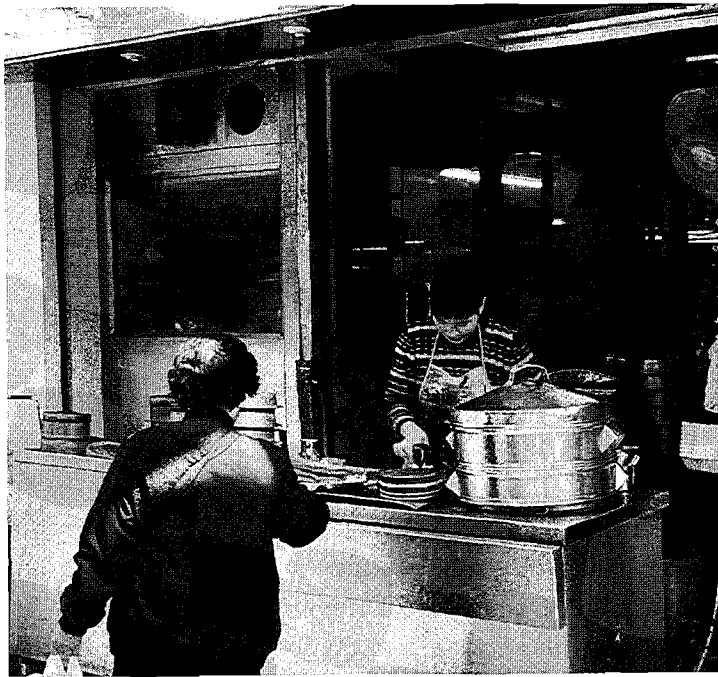
With its flaring nostrils, stubby round snout, little eyes and two big ears, I thought at first it was a fake pig's head, a 'stage prop', and put out a hand to touch it. It felt gummy and sticky—the real thing.

I asked him when the 'ornament' would be sold. He said if business was good, he would cut into it fairly early, slice it up for sale. If business was not so good he would hang on to it a bit longer, but he always sold the whole thing within a day. Jokingly he said, if I keep it too long, it'll go bad and I'll take a loss. Unfortunately there's no Bodhisattva with a stuffy nose to come along and buy it.

One day as I passed through the market, I saw the stewed-pork vendor again. But he wasn't selling stewed pork any more: his bubbling pot held not sauce, but broth.

It turned out that his wife had just given birth to a son—a golden piglet.¹ He shouted out: When I saw that pig's head, I thought of that little piggy at home, and my hand shook!

What a laugh. He's switched to selling boiled dumplings.



Cooked Food Stall.
Photograph by the editors.

¹Born in the Year of the Pig with the element gold ascendent.