HISTORY OF EREWHON -
NATURAL FOODS PIONEER IN THE UNITED STATES
(1966-2011):
EXTENSIVELY ANNOTATED
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCEBOOK
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Compiled
by
William Shurtleff & Akiko Aoyagi

SOYINFO CENTER
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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is dedicated to
Paul Hawken and Aveline Kushi

Part of the enjoyment of writing a book lies in meeting people from around the world who share a common interest, and in learning from them what is often the knowledge or skills acquired during a lifetime of devoted research or practice. We wish to give deepest thanks...

Of the many libraries and librarians who have been of great help to our research over the years, several stand out:

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Finally our deepest thanks to Tony Cooper of San Ramon, California, who has kept our computers up and running since Sept. 1983. Without Tony, this series of books on the Web would not have been possible.

This book, no doubt and alas, has its share of errors. These, of course, are solely the responsibility of William Shurtleff.

This bibliography and sourcebook was written with the hope that someone will write a detailed and well-documented history of this subject.
Where did the natural food business as we know it come from? It started with a company called Erewhon. Were there other companies selling natural foods before there was an Erewhon? Of course. Plenty. So couldn’t they just as well be considered the founders of the natural food business?

Those companies, some of whom – like Walnut Acres (founded in 1946), or Arrowhead Mills (1960), or Chico-San (1962), or New Age Natural Foods (1965/66) – preceded Erewhon by years or even decades, growing, producing, marketing natural foods and still there was no natural food industry in the sense that we know it today. After Erewhon, the natural foods’ industry didn’t need founding anymore.

Once Erewhon demonstrated that the ‘grocery’ model could be brought to natural foods – high turn, low margins, reasonable prices, easy access, good availability – they made it possible for the growers and producers to expand (and made a place for more of them) and the retailers to exist, and they created a distribution model that enabled both. Even better – they showed you could make a business selling only the products you cared about and believed in.

Like a shoot of rice, the business of Erewhon grew from a seed. In this case the seed was an idea – what George Ohsawa called “one grain, ten thousand grains.” The Japanese idea of the obligation to return more than you’ve received when given something. Ohsawa also said “The bigger the front, the bigger the back.” And Ohsawa probably would have said that the seed of Erewhon’s destruction came from what he called the greatest sickness: a kind of arrogance.

Erewhon had a mission: to make the world a better place. People would eat better, they’d be healthy. Being healthy, they’d think better. Thinking better, they would then realize war made no sense...theft made no sense...we’d all be on a mission TOGETHER, as everyone ate better and got with the program. What a great adventure: to not only change the world, but to SAVE the world!

And so it followed that when Michio and Aveline Kushi began Erewhon it was to be an educational effort, in the form of a business. That vision gave it a tremendous strength in the beginning – when there really wasn’t any money, so it wasn’t a business in the usual sense anyway. However - it didn’t need to make money, it was a school.

In the end, when it was big and really was a business, what had given Erewhon its ideological strength became its weakness. Ohsawa said: ‘Everything turns into its opposite at its extreme. Everything changes.” You need to change with it!

As a business entity, Erewhon failed. As a business idea, it was wildly successful. I’ve heard it said that Erewhon failed because the company compromised its vision. I’ve also heard it said that it failed because the company didn’t compromise its vision. And I’ve heard that the vision itself was the problem...

Even so, imagine that Michio wrote “Erewhon” on a pebble forty-odd years ago and dropped it into a pond. Today we can see only the ripples, and no evidence of the pebble or even where it might have been dropped. Just the ripples, and a little wave once in awhile. Think though... the really fascinating thing is that Erewhon was both the rock AND the pond.

The tuition has been paid, the education is yours. One grain, ten thousand grains.

James Silver
Irvine, California
March 21, 2011
Erewhon was founded in April 1966 by Aveline and Michio Kushi as a tiny retail store in Boston, Massachusetts selling macrobiotic and natural foods. By 1968 it was importing foods from Japan. By 1969 it had grown into the first natural foods wholesale and distribution company in the United States. Its founders saw it as a macrobiotic company, but many of the young Americans who built it saw it as a natural foods company as well.

There have been three major reform movements, or waves, related to food and health in the United States. Each has had its own philosophy or theory of diet and health, its own periodicals, and, of course, its own founders, leaders, and teachers/lecturers. All three believed that there were certain natural laws of health and of the body which, if transgressed, would lead to sickness. The way to restore health was not (generally) to take medicines (which simply cover up the symptoms) but to stop the activity which was causing the sickness. All three believed in the healing power of nature, and advocated the return to a simpler, more natural way of living and eating. All three emphasized the importance of a good diet as the basis of good health, and (at least initially) all three advocated a vegetarian diet based on traditional, natural foods, and avoidance of refined, highly processed, or artificial foods. Each new wave was bigger than the one before it and had more influence on American food culture.

The first wave, which went from the 1820s to the 1890s, is generally called the health reform movement. Centered in Boston, it was started by Sylvester Graham and the American Physiological Society; good diet, water, exercise, fresh air and rest were considered the foundations of good health. Other pioneers and leaders included William Andrus Alcott (M.D.), Amos Bronson Alcott, James Caleb Jackson, Russell Thacher Trall, Larkin B. Coles, Ellen G. White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most preached a return to whole-wheat bread, and avoidance of flesh foods and alcohol. Health reformers strongly opposed the use of patent medicines; they called it “drugless healing.”


The second wave, which went from the 1890s to the 1960s, is called the health foods movement. Many of its original ideas and some of its pioneers (especially in California and New York in the early 1900s) came from Germany and its Reformhaus and Lebensreform (“life reform”) movements. These Naturmenschen (“natural men”) from Germany were California’s original hippies (see *Children of the Sun*, by Gordon Kennedy, 1998).

Its major early centers of activity were Southern California (especially Hollywood), Battle Creek, Michigan (Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, who popularized the term “health foods” from 1892 and whose Sanitarium Health Food Co. made the first line of health foods), New York, and Boston (Benedict Lust of Germany, the leading naturopath and a major publisher). Pioneers in California included Otto Carque, Clark Irvine, Gayelord Hauser, Paul C. Bragg, Mildred Lager, Lelord Kordel, Adelle Davis, and Gypsy Boots. Vitamins and minerals were discovered during this period, and the movement emphasized (and overemphasized) their importance. Hundreds of health foods stores (many of them small, mom-and-pop operations) were started during this period (most after 1935); their owners believed deeply in their work.


Important early distributors included Kahan & Lessin (1932, Los Angeles), Landstrom Co. (1931, San Francisco),

Pioneers and leaders included the founders and heads of the major distributing companies and periodicals.

In 1937 Anthony Berhalter of Chicago organized the American Health Food Association, quickly renamed the National Health Foods Association. In 1970 it was renamed the National Nutritional Foods Association (NNFA), which is still the health food industry’s trade association.

The health foods movement started out emphasizing natural and specialty foods but, by the 1960s, had gradually changed its focus to pills and protein powders – which is where the money was.

The third wave, called the natural foods movement, had two parts:

The first natural foods movement, which started in 1953, was quite centralized. It was based on an organization named “Natural Food Associates” (NFA) (founded in Feb. 1953), which had its headquarters in Atlanta, Texas. It had a large membership from the mid-1950s on, and had quite a few nationwide chapters—such as the “Connecticut Natural Food Associates.”

The founder, president and sparkplug of NFA was Joe D. Nichols, M.D., from 1954 until his death on 27 May 1992. Most of the officers and leaders of this movement were adults, and a large percentage were physicians (M.D.s), dentists, or in academia. They had annual nationwide conventions/conferences, and before long, regional and state chapters and conventions. They were quite active nationwide, but never very well funded.

The first natural foods movement had only one major periodical, an excellent monthly magazine titled Natural Food and Farming, published in Texas by NFA from April 1954 until Aug. 1995 (Vol. 41, No. 2). Each issue was 8½ by 11 inches, and in 1957 typically 22 pages long.

The movement’s basic missions were to raise awareness that our food system, soil, water, and bodies were being poisoned by a host of new agricultural chemicals (such as DDT), fluoridation, etc., and to provide an alternative for those who were concerned about their health and/or the environment: “natural foods grown on fertile soil eaten fresh and poison free” (April 1958, p. 6). They encouraged people nationwide to start a vegetable garden and grow their own food organically using compost and without using chemical fertilizers or toxic pesticides.

They were independent of but closely allied with and active in promoting the fledgling organic gardening and farming movement and the biodynamic farming movement (led by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer in the U.S.). As they watched with alarm as the fertility of the soil was being destroyed by large-scale chemical farming methods, they were especially active in linking the health of the body to the health of the soil. They worked very hard, for example, to ban DDT and fluoridation and many of their leading members (PhDs and university professors) testified against these substances.


Major accomplishments: In 1958 the Delaney Clause, an amendment to the Food, Drugs and Cosmetic Act of 1938 was enacted. Named after Congressman James Delaney of New York, it said: “the Secretary of the Food and Drug Administration shall not approve for use in food any chemical additive found to induce cancer in man, or, after tests, found to induce cancer in animals.” In 1972 DDT was banned in the USA.

The second natural foods movement, which started as a macrobiotic foods movement in the mid-1960s, has continued until the present. It began with the idea of changing the existing health food business into something new and different – the natural foods business. It was founded largely by young men and women who came of age during the period from 1960 to 1980. Theirs was a positive message. They wanted to grow and process foods naturally, and to make them widely available in a way that would attract people to an alternative that was good for the body and for the planet; by contrast, previous food movements had generally motivated people to avoid certain foods out of fear.

Most of the founders and members of the second natural foods movement were completely unaware that there had been an earlier natural foods movement, with a national association, its own excellent periodical, and annual conventions/conferences.

They discovered, to their surprise, that most food crops grown since the 1940s, were produced using chemical herbicides, pesticides, insecticides, and fertilizers. The safety of these agrochemicals had not been adequately tested. Moreover, many foods were then highly processed or refined, and contained added white sugar, preservatives, stabilizers, and other chemicals. It was quite difficult to obtain traditional, natural foods – even at health food stores.

These young people, most of whom considered themselves part of the counterculture (they had fought against the Vietnam War and racial segregation, and for women rights) decided to try to create a new food system. Some started companies to make new foods (from whole-grain breads and pastries to tofu and miso). Hundreds
(eventually thousands) of others started new natural foods stores – which (for the first 10-15 years) sold many foods unpackaged in bulk, would not sell meat, refined foods, or foods containing sugar or chemical additives, pills, alcohol, or tobacco.

From the beginning, the influence of macrobiotics, and of macrobiotic teachers such as Michio and Aveline Kushi (in Boston), Herman and Cornellia Aihara (in Chico, California), and George and Lima Ohsawa (world travelers from Japan) was strong. They imported, introduced, and helped to popularize a host of foods from Japan – foods that most Americans had never heard of or tasted – such as brown rice, tamari soy sauce, miso, seitan, rice cakes, sesame seeds, sesame salt (gomasio), azuki beans, soba (buckwheat noodles), amazake, sea vegetables (hijiki, wakame, konbu/kombu, nori, etc.), umeboshi (salt plums), kuzu, udon (special wheat noodles), kabocha pumpkins, burdock root, bancha twig tea, and mu tea.

Chico-San (Chico, California), acting on the initiative and teaching of George Ohsawa, pioneered the production of organically grown brown rice in the United States. In 1968 Bob Kennedy, president of Chico-San (a macrobiotic company), signed a 5-year exclusive contract with the Lundberg brothers of Wehah Farms (in Richvale, California, near Chico). In 1969 the Lundbergs planted 78 acres of organic short-grain brown rice; it became available to Chico-San in late 1979 and they had no trouble distributing it all. The acreage increased each year, but in early Aug. 1972 a fire burned Chico-San to the ground. Since they were now unable to distribute the rice, the exclusive contract was rendered null and void. Erewhon, which in 1971 had found its own source of brown rice in Arkansas, then agreed to take as much brown rice as the Lundbergs could provide, starting with that year’s harvest (late 1972). After their plant was rebuilt, Chico-San focused on manufacturing rice cakes – made by heating brown rice in a round mold until it puffed.

Chico-San and Erewhon were the first companies to sell many of the macrobiotic natural foods imported from Japan, and many of these foods (including soyfoods such as natural soy sauce/tamari and miso) gradually made their way into the American diet and language. Chico-San was primarily a foods manufacturer and importer; it sold most of its foods through old-line health food distributors. Erewhon, by contrast, was primarily a distributor.

Macrobiotics taught that whole grains should be the center of the diet – something many Americans had once believed but had long forgotten. Substances unfit for normal human consumption were white sugar, alcohol, dairy products, and all kinds of drugs.

Important early periodicals were East West Journal (Jan. 1971, Boston, macrobiotic), Vegetarian Times (March 1974, Chicago), Health Foods Business (1973), Whole Foods (Jan. 1978, Berkeley), and Natural Foods Merchandiser (Feb. 1979).


Pioneers and leaders included the founders and heads of the major distributing companies and periodicals, and Fred Rohe, plus new natural food retailers Sandy Gooch (Mrs. Gooch’s), Anthony Harnett (Bread and Circus; he had previously worked for Erewhon), Peter Roy and John Mackey (Whole Foods).

During the second natural foods movement, the organic movement which had started in the early 1940s, blossomed. An increasing number of small farmers were saved from extinction by the growing market for organics. More and more growers and consumers realized that organics is about the health and fertility of the soil and its ability to produce healthy plants that don’t need chemicals to resist pests, weeds, and disease. Although usually thought of as a “chemical-free” claim (and organic producers would certainly hope to be), organically grown and processed is really a broader claim about growing and processing, and what is or isn’t relied on in production.

By the mid- to late-1970s, most of the health food distributors mentioned above were carrying a complete line of natural foods and distributing them to both health food stores and natural food stores.

Surprisingly, the natural foods industry has never developed its own trade association. Therefore the company that owns Natural Foods Merchandiser has used this opportunity to organize very successful trade shows at Anaheim, California, and Washington, DC each year, and to publish the industry’s most important periodical.

In those heady days of the late 1960s and early 1970s it looked like America was headed into a peaceful, nonviolent revolution. Young people, the revolutionaries (“Power to the people!” “Don’t trust anybody over 30”) would be in the vanguard. They needed to develop new models for the rapidly approaching future. The Erewhon retail store at 342 Newbury Street that opened in Nov. 1968 was developed as a model new food store. Wooden walls, food in bins, only healthy natural foods. Fred Rohe’s New Age Natural Foods in San Francisco was an early West Coast model retail store.

Erewhon was developed as a model wholesale distributor of the new foods. Many other new and successful companies modeled themselves after Erewhon.
CHRONOLOGY OF EREWHON

1966 April 9 – Erewhon opens as a small (10- by 20-foot) macrobiotic and natural foods retail store at 303-B Newbury Street (below street level) in Boston. Aveline and Michio Kushi are the founders, but Aveline is the sole owner. Evan Root is the first retail store manager. The origin of the second natural foods industry and movement in America can be traced to this date. Erewhon is the first store of its kind in America and it soon serves as a model for many other similar natural food stores across the nation. Erewhon sells several soyfoods, mainly miso and shoyu purchased from Howard Rower’s Infinity Foods or Japan Foods Corp., both in New York.

1967 Aug. – Paul Hawken takes over the management of Erewhon (one small retail store) from Evan Root. He changes the name to Erewhon Trading Co. (from simply “Erewhon”) and starts to expand the business.

1968 May – Paul Hawken incorporates Erewhon Trading Company. Paul later states that he and Aveline Kushi each own 50% of the stock. However Aveline Kushi and her attorney, Morris Kirsner, agree that they offered him 50% of the Erewhon stock shortly before he left for Japan (in March 1969) but he did not accept it. To this day (Feb. 1999) Aveline has no idea why Paul did not accept such a generous offer.

1968 June – Hawken establishes his first supplier of organically grown grains, Ted Whitmer, a wheat farmer in Montana. By 1973 Erewhon had established and contracted with 57 farms in 35 states to provide the company directly with organically-grown foods.

1968 Aug. – Erewhon starts to import foods from Japan, initially from Muso Shokuhin, later by correspondence with Mr. Akiyoshi Kazama, who worked for an import/export company named Mitoku, which sold no food at the time. The initial orders contained red miso (made by Sendai Miso Shoyu Co.) and natural shoyu (made by Marushima).

1968 Nov. – On Thanksgiving day, Erewhon moves up and across the street to a much bigger and nicer location at 342 Newbury St. Paul had hired Bruce Macdonald, a carpenter, to remodel this store. The company now has 6 employees: Paul Hawken, Roger Hillyard, Bruce Macdonald, Bill Tara, Jim Docker, and Jean Allison. One day later, Bill Tara leaves to start a macrobiotic East West Center in Chicago. The original downstairs room is taken over by Tao Books, then Redwing Books. Tofu, curded with calcium sulfate and made by a Chinese company in Boston, starts to be sold.

1969 March – Paul Hawken and Evan Root leave for Japan. Bruce Macdonald takes over as general manager of Erewhon. Paul stays in Japan for 9 months, arranging for individual packaging of products that were formerly imported in bulk, and finding new items for Erewhon to import. He visits suppliers, works with Mitoku and Muso, and studies Japanese language and culture.

1969 spring – Erewhon starts wholesaling foods, under the direction of Bruce Macdonald. Their first wholesale product is natural sesame oil.

1969 Aug. – Aveline Kushi moves to Los Angeles where her youngest son, Hisao, undergoes traditional Japanese bone massage therapy. In Los Angeles, she establishes the first macrobiotic study house at 7511 Franklin Ave. Bill Tara arrives about a month later to set up a retail store, Erewhon West, which opens on 8001 Beverly Blvd. in about September.

1969 Oct. (early) – Bruce Macdonald leaves for Los Angeles with his new bride, Maureen Traill, to run the new Erewhon West retail store there. Roger Hillyard takes over as general manager of Erewhon in Boston.

1970 Jan. 1 – Erewhon’s earliest existing catalogue seen (wholesale and retail) lists 7 pages of natural food products–most of them imported from Japan. By March 1970 Erewhon lists 96 products in its catalog.

1970 July – Erewhon’s rapidly expanding distribution business moves into a large (20,000 square feet) fifth-floor leased brick warehouse at 33 Farnsworth St., on the docks in South Boston. East West Journal and Tao Books soon move to the same area.

1970 fall – Erewhon receives its first shipment of brown rice from the Lundberg brothers in Richvale, California; it is “unsprayed” but not organic. Chico-San has exclusive rights to all Lundberg’s organic brown rice.


1971 – Erewhon West (in Los Angeles) has expanded and is now at 8001 and 8003 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048.

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1971 March – Roger Hillyard is replaced as general manager of Erewhon–Boston.

1971 March – Paul Hawken finalizes a contract with Carl Garrich of Lone Pine, Arkansas, to grow short-grain brown rice organically and exclusively for Erewhon. 330 acres are planted in April. That fall, Erewhon starts to retail and wholesale its first organic brown rice.

1971 May – Bruce Macdonald leaves Erewhon in a dispute over ownership of the company.

1972 – John W. Deming Jr. plans to invest $150,000 in Erewhon in exchange for stock, and Advest Co. plans to conduct Erewhon’s first public stock offering—but neither happens after Michio Kushi nixes the plans.

1972 fall – Erewhon first buys organic brown rice from Lundberg brothers of California; a fire that destroyed Chico-San’s plant in early Aug. 1972 rendered their exclusive contract with the Lundbergs null and void.

1973 Aug. – Paul Hawken writes a critical history of Erewhon and its problems. Published in *East West Journal* it is titled “Erewhon: A Biography. The View Within.” Shortly thereafter Paul Hawken resigns, saying that running Erewhon was a nightmare. Some say he sells his 25% ownership back to the company, which was subsequently managed by Bill Garrison, Tyler Smith, Jeff Flasher, and Tom Williams, in that sequence.


1975 Aug. 1 – Erewhon sells all of its West Coast Division in California (Los Angeles and Culver City) to John Fountain and John Deming for cash and notes, realizing a net gain of $86,872.

1977 March 23 – Erewhon sues natural foods retail stores in several states for boycotting Erewhon for selling to co-ops. Erewhon eventually wins the case, but its legal bills are something like $250,000. There was not enough money to pay these fees and Erewhon never recovered.

1978 (early) – Erewhon moves into a huge warehouse and office complex at 3 East St., Cambridge, Mass. 02141.

1979 April 27 – The workers in Erewhon’s production, trucking, shipping, and kitchen departments vote 42-19 to form a union affiliated with Local 925, the Service Employees International Union.

1979 – John Deming steps in to liquidate all the assets of financially failing Erewhon–Los Angeles. Tom DeSilva, Tyler Smith, and Jeff Flasher buy the retail store at 8001 Beverly Blvd.

1981 Feb. – Erewhon currently lists 4,000 products in its catalog—in its bid to become a full-line distributor. It services 2,000 customers and provides jobs for 175 people in its warehouse and retail stores.

1981 Nov. 10 – Erewhon files for bankruptcy protection under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Act because of debts totaling $4.3 million. At this time, Aveline Kushi is the sole owner of Erewhon. Stow Mills picked up the lion’s share of the Erewhon business, with Westbrae also getting a significant part of it.

1982 May – A $1.3 million offer by Ronald Rossetti, president of Nature Food Centres, is accepted as the reorganization plan in the Erewhon, Inc. bankruptcy. Rossetti purchased Erewhon as an individual; it was never part of Nature Food Centres.

1986 – Erewhon acquires U.S. Mills, which had been founded in 1908. In effect U.S. Mills and Erewhon were merged, and U.S. Mills was chosen as the corporate name, largely since it had been around longer.

1988 May – Chuck Verde (who was the president of Erewhon) and Cynthia Davis acquired the U.S. Mills / Erewhon business. They became the main joint shareholders.
ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is the most comprehensive book ever published about the history of Erewhon. It has been compiled, one record at a time over a period of 35 years, in an attempt to document the history of this company and its work with natural foods, macrobiotic foods, and soyfoods. It is also the single most current and useful source of information on this subject.

This is one of more than 50 books compiled by William Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi, and published by the Soyinfo Center. It is based on historical principles, listing all known documents and commercial products in chronological order. It features detailed information on:

- 41 different document types, both published and unpublished.
- 213 published documents - extensively annotated bibliography. Every known publication on the subject in every language.
- 145 original Soyinfo Center interviews and overviews never before published.
- 140 unpublished archival documents
- 25 commercial soy products.

Thus, it is a powerful tool for understanding the development of this subject from its earliest beginnings to the present.

Each bibliographic record in this book contains (in addition to the typical author, date, title, volume and pages information) the author’s address, number of references cited, original title of all non-English language publications together with an English translation of the title, month and issue of publication, and the first author’s first name (if given). For most books, we state if it is illustrated, whether or not it has an index, and the height in centimeters.

For commercial soy products (CSP), each record includes (if possible) the product name, date of introduction, manufacturer’s name, address and phone number, and (in many cases) ingredients, weight, packaging and price, storage requirements, nutritional composition, and a description of the label. Sources of additional information on each product (such as advertisements, articles, patents, etc.) are also given.

A complete subject/geographical index is also included.
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS BOOK

A&M = Agricultural and Mechanical
Agric. = Agricultural or Agriculture
Agric. Exp. Station = Agricultural Experiment Station
ARS = Agricultural Research Service
ASA = American Soybean Association
Assoc. = Association, Associate
Asst. = Assistant
Aug. = August
Ave. = Avenue
Blvd. = Boulevard
bu = bushel(s)
ca. = about (circa)
cc = cubic centimeter(s)
Chap. = Chapter
cm = centimeter(s)
Co. = company
Corp. = Corporation
Dec. = December
Dep. or Dept. = Department
Depts. = Departments
Div. = Division
Dr. = Drive
E. = East
ed. = edition or editor
e.g. = for example
Exp. = Experiment
Feb. = February
fl oz = fluid ounce(s)
ft = foot or feet
gm = gram(s)
ha = hectare(s)
i.e. = in other words
Inc. = Incorporated
incl. = including
Illust. = Illustrated or Illustration(s)
Inst. = Institute
J. = Journal
J. of the American Oil Chemists’ Soc. = Journal of the American Oil Chemists’ Society
Jan. = January
kg = kilogram(s)
km = kilometer(s)
Lab. = Laboratory
Labs. = Laboratories
lb = pound(s)
Ltd. = Limited
mcg = microgram(s)
mg = milligram(s)
ml = milliliter(s)
mm = millimeter(s)
N. = North
No. = number or North
Nov. = November
Oct. = October
oz = ounce(s)
p. = page(s)
P.O. Box = Post Office Box
Prof. = Professor
psi = pounds per square inch
R&D = Research and Development
Rd. = Road
Rev. = Revised
RPM = revolutions per minute
S. = South
SANA = Soyfoods Association of North America
Sept. = September
St. = Street
tonnes = metric tons
trans. = translator(s)
Univ. = University
USB = United Soybean Board
USDA = United States Department of Agriculture
Vol. = volume
V.P. = Vice President
vs. = versus
W. = West
°C = degrees Celsius (Centigrade)
°F = degrees Fahrenheit
> = greater than, more than
< = less than
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On the left side of your screen a “Search” box will open up.
When asked: “What word or phrase would you like to search for?” type that word or phrase in the box. For example: Kushi or Ohsawa Foundation. No need to use quotation marks. Then click “Search.”
At “Results” click any line that interests you.

For those using a Mac without Acrobat Reader: Safari is often the default browser. Click “Edit” in the toolbar at top. In the dropdown click “Find,” then click “Find...” again. A search bar will open across top of screen with a search box at right. In this box type a word or phrase you would like to search for, such as Aveline or Ohsawa Foundation. Click “Done” then scroll through the various matches in the book.

Chronological Order: The publications and products in this book are listed with the earliest first and the most recent last. Within each year, references are sorted alphabetically by author. If you are interested in only current information, start reading at the back, just before the indexes.

A Reference Book: Like an encyclopedia or any other reference book, this work is meant to be searched first - to find exactly the information you are looking for - and then to be read.

How to Use the Index: A subject and country index is located at the back of this book. It will help you to go directly to the specific information that interests you. Browse through it briefly to familiarize yourself with its contents and format.

Each record in the book has been assigned a sequential number, starting with 1 for the first/earliest reference. It is this number, not the page number, to which the indexes refer. A publication will typically be listed in each index in more than one place, and major documents may have 30-40 subject index entries. Thus a publication about the nutritional value of tofu and soymilk in India would be indexed under at least four headings in the subject and country index: Nutrition, Tofu, Soymilk, and Asia, South: India.

Note the extensive use of cross references to help you: e.g. “Bean curd. See Tofu.”

Countries and States/Provinces: Every record contains a country keyword. Most USA and Canadian records also contain a state or province keyword, indexed at “U.S. States” or “Canadian Provinces and Territories” respectively. All countries are indexed under their region or continent. Thus for Egypt, look under Africa: Egypt, and not under Egypt. For Brazil, see the entry at Latin America, South America: Brazil. For India, see Asia, South: India. For Australia see Oceania: Australia.

Most Important Documents: Look in the Index under “Most Important Documents -.”

Organizations: Many of the larger, more innovative, or pioneering soy-related companies appear in the subject index – companies like ADM / Archer Daniels Midland Co., AGP, Cargill, Dupont, Kikkoman, Monsanto, Tofutti, etc. Worldwide, we index many major soybean crushers, tofu makers, soymilk and soymilk equipment manufacturers, soyfoods companies with various products, Seventh-day Adventist food companies, soy protein makers (including pioneers), soy sauce manufacturers, soy ice cream, tempeh, soynut, soy flour companies, etc.


Soyfoods: Look under the most common name: Tofu, Miso, Soymilk, Soy Ice Cream, Soy Cheese, Soy Yogurt, Soy Flour, Green Vegetable Soybeans, or Whole Dry Soybeans. But note: Soy Proteins: Isolates, Soy Proteins: Textured Products, etc.

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**Industrial (Non-Food) Uses of Soybeans:** Look under “Industrial Uses ...” for more than 17 subject headings.

**Pioneers - Individuals:** Laszlo Berczeller, Henry Ford, Friedrich Haberlandt, A.A. Horvath, Englebert Kaempfer, Mildred Lager, William Morse, etc. Soy-Related Movements: Soyfoods Movement, Vegetarianism, Health and Dietary Reform Movements (esp. 1830-1930s), Health Foods Movement (1920s-1960s), Animal Welfare/ Rights. These are indexed under the person’s last name or movement name.

**Nutrition:** All subjects related to soybean nutrition (protein quality, minerals, antinutritional factors, etc.) are indexed under Nutrition, in one or more of 14 subcategories.

**Soybean Production:** All subjects related to growing, marketing, and trading soybeans are indexed under Soybean Production, e.g., Soybean Production: Nitrogen Fixation, or Soybean Production: Plant Protection, or Soybean Production: Variety Development.

**Other Special Index Headings:** Browsing through the subject index will show you many more interesting subject headings, such as Industry and Market Statistics, Information (incl. computers, databases, libraries), Standards, Bibliographies (works containing more than 50 references), and History (soy-related).

**Commercial Soy Products:** See page 13.

**SoyaScan Notes:** This is a term we have created exclusively for use with this database. A SoyaScan Notes Interview contains all the important material in short interviews conducted and transcribed by William Shurtleff. This material has not been published in any other source. Longer interviews are designated as such, and listed as unpublished manuscripts. A transcript of each can be ordered from Soyinfo Center Library. A SoyaScan Notes Summary is a summary by William Shurtleff of existing information on one subject.

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**Document Types:** The SoyaScan database contains 130+ different types of documents, both published (books, journal articles, patents, annual reports, theses, catalogs, news releases, videos, etc.) and unpublished (interviews, unpublished manuscripts, letters, summaries, etc.).

**Customized Database Searches:** This book was printed from SoyaScan, a large computerized database produced by the Soyinfo Center. Customized/personalized reports are “The Perfect Book,” containing exactly the information you need on any subject you can define, and they are now just a phone call away. For example: Current statistics on tofu and soymilk production and sales in England, France, and Germany. Or soybean varietal development and genetic research in Third World countries before 1970. Or details on all tofu cheesecakes and dressings ever made. You name it, we’ve got it. For fast results, call us now!

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**History of Soybeans and Soyfoods:** Many of our digital books have a corresponding chapter in our forthcoming scholarly work titled History of Soybeans and Soyfoods (4 volumes). Manuscript chapters from that book are now available, free of charge, on our website, www.soyinfocenter.com.

**About the Soyinfo Center.** An overview of our publications, computerized databases, services, and history is given on our website.

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Color digital photo courtesy of Kezia Snyder of New York City
Logo on Erewhon Organic Short Grain Brown Rice Bag (50 lb.)
Courtesy of Kezia Snyder of New York City
Erewhon short grain brown rice is grown in Richvale, California on fertile organically composted soil of the upper Sacramento valley and is irrigated by pure Feather River water from the Sierran Nevada Mountains. Cover crops of purple vetch, clover and oats along with rice straw and husks are turned back into the soil to build up the humus and organic matter in the soil. Insect control is accomplished by Gambusia fish which live in the paddies during the growing season. Absolutely no toxic or synthetic chemicals, fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, fumigants or seed treatments are employed in cultivation of this rice. This high quality brown rice is stored on the farm in specially cooled bins to prevent damage from heat or insects and is husked to order throughout the year by custom built rubber rollers which protect the delicate germ and outer bran.
We at Erewhon are happy to offer these whole natural foods to you. Since food is basic to good health, and since good health is the foundation of a happy and creative society, we treat our foods with the greatest respect and care. Since the effects on man of many of the chemicals which are presently being used on farms may not be known for many years hence, and since their effect on the delicate ecological balance of man and his environment is not beneficial, we are following that path which will take us towards a renewal and regeneration of our land and natural resources. Food represents that very essence of the power of creation and stands at the crossroads between the infinite forces of nature and the biological wonder of man. Erewhon attempts to provide those foods which reflect this great natural order and we hope that you enjoy these foods and take as much pleasure in preparing and eating them as we do in offering them to you.

Erewhon Inc., Boston, MA. 02210 Los Angeles, CA. 90230

Organic Farmers
Certified by
Organic Gardening and Farming Magazine
Lundberg Farms
Richvale, California

Text on Back of Erewhon Organic Brown Rice Bag
Courtesy of Kezia Snyder of New York City

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HISTORY OF EREWHON


• Summary: 1949–Michio Kushi, a student of George Ohsawa, arrives in New York City from Japan, in connection with the World Federalist Movement. He writes letters back to Japan, and Ohsawa reads them to his students at his center (Maison Ignoramus) in Yokohama, near Tokyo, Japan.

1951–Aveline Tomoko Yokoyama falls in love with Michio’s letters, wins a trip to America by being the best seller of Ohsawa’s newspapers, and meets Michio in New York.

1952, early–Herman Aihara, age 31 (born 28 Sept. 1920), arrives in America, and settles in New York City. As early as March 1952 he was selling macrobiotic foods in New York; he imported them from Ohsawa in Japan.

1953–Michio Kushi and Aveline Tomoko Yokoyama are married in New York. They had exchanged letters before she arrived.

1955 Dec.–Herman Aihara and Chiiko (Cornellia) Yokota are married in New York. Cornellia arrived in the United States from Japan in Oct. 1955. They had exchanged many letters before she arrived.

1950s, late–Zen Teahouse, the first macrobiotic restaurant in the USA, is started in New York City by Alcan Yamaguchi. It was located at 317 Second Ave. and consisted of a small (4-table) main room containing a kitchen. Miso and shoyu were served regularly. This restaurant was later renamed Paradox.

1959 Nov. or Dec.–George Ohsawa arrives in America for the first time, staying in New York City with Herman Aihara, his closest associate. After a week he flies to California to find a source of short-grain brown rice; he locates Koda Brothers (in Dos Palos), but also gives lectures in San Francisco and Los Angeles. After one week in California, he returns to New York City.

1960 Jan.–Ohsawa presents the first of three series of lectures designed to introduce macrobiotics, and the philosophy and medicine of the Orient, to America; each for ten nights during January, February, and March of 1960 at the Buddhist Academy in New York City. During these lectures his first work in English is published, a mimeographed edition of Zen Macrobiotics. He and the Aiharas duplicated and bound these in the Aiharas’ apartment, then sold them at the lectures for $0.50. He also lectured at the Universalist Church, The New School for Social Research, Columbia University, and New York City College (See: Macrobiotics: The Art of Longevity and Rejuvenation, p. 188-89).

1960 May 10–Herman Aihara starts publishing Macrobiotic News, a magazine consisting mainly of Ohsawa’s lectures, plus some current news.

1960 July–Ohsawa returns to America (after a trip to Europe) and lectures daily for two months at the first American macrobiotic summer camp at Southampton, Long Island, New York. Mrs. Lima Ohsawa, aided by Cornellia Aihara, gives macrobiotic cooking classes. Many people attend, especially writers, actors, artists, musicians, and intellectuals.

1961 Nov.–The first printed edition of Zen Macrobiotics, by G. Ohsawa is printed in Japan (218 pages). It has been edited and the parts rearranged.

1960–To serve this growing interest, a tiny restaurant named Musubi is started in Greenwich Village and run by Alcan Yamaguchi, Romain Noboru Sato, Herman Aihara, and Michio Kushi. In late 1961 Musubi was moved to 55th Street.

1960–The first macrobiotic food store (combined with a gift shop), named Ginza, is started by Herman Aihara.

1961 Feb.–At a meeting of the Ohsawa Foundation, Inc. (New York City), Herman Aihara is elected president while he was traveling in Europe. He accepted the position when he returned later that month.

1961 summer–Ohsawa comes to America again for the second macrobiotic summer camp, this time in the Catskill Mountains at Wurtsboro, New York. Lima Ohsawa and Cornellia Aihara give cooking classes. After the camp, at the time of the Berlin Wall crisis (August 1961, before the Cuban missile crisis of Oct. 1962), Ohsawa feared that a nuclear war might be near. He urged his followers to leave New York and find a place that was safer from radioactive fallout and good for growing rice. After extensive research, they chose Chico, California.

1961 Oct. 1–Thirty four people (11-13 families) arrive in Chico from New York City in a caravan of vans, buses, and station wagons. Among the active people in the group were Bob Kennedy, Herman Aihara, Teal Ames, Lou Oles, and Dick Smith.

1962 March 6–The group in Chico establishes a new food company named Chico-San as a retail store and an import and wholesale business. It was capitalized with $10,000. In addition to a line of whole-grain products, they soon began to import a variety of macrobiotic foods from Ohsawa in Japan. The first store and food plant (they made sesame salt or gomashio and repackaged foods) was in the...
basement of a small hearing aid shop in Chico. It became the first macrobiotic food production company in the USA.

1962 Christmas–George Ohsawa visits Chico and lectures on macrobiotics.

1963–Ohsawa lectures in Boston, New York City, and at the fourth macrobiotic summer camp (the first on the West Coast) at Chico. Lima Ohsawa and Cornellia Aihara give cooking classes. In Chico, Ohsawa suggests that the group try making rice cakes. He sends them a rice cake machine from Japan and production began in the fall of 1963. Rice cakes soon became Chico-San’s first really popular and successful product.

1963 May–Junsei Yamazaki arrives in the USA (in San Francisco) from Japan. He first goes (by bus) to Chico, California, to help with the installation of small rice cake machines. After the 1963 summer camp he goes to New York, arriving in August.

1964 summer–Ohsawa lectures in California at the fifth macrobiotic summer camp (2nd on West Coast) at Big Sur. Lima Ohsawa and Cornellia Aihara give cooking classes.

1964 Sept.–After the Macrobiotic Summer Camp on Martha’s Vineyard, the Kushi family moves from the island to Cambridge, Massachusetts (101 Walden St., on the outskirts of Boston to the northwest). Michio stops all his outside business activities and directs his full attention to teaching macrobiotics.


1965–The macrobiotic movement in America, though small, is growing rapidly. Ohsawa lectures again in California at Mayoro Lodge, near Pulga.

1965–Michio Kushi organizes the first East West Institute out of his home in Cambridge and begins teaching macrobiotics, cosmology, and cooking to mostly young people.

1965–The third edition of Ohsawa’s Zen Macrobiotics is prepared and published by Lou Oles of the Ohsawa Foundation in Los Angeles. It contains much more information (including much more about soyfoods) than the original 1960 mimeographed edition or the printed 2nd ed.

1965–You are All Sanpaku by William Dufty is published.

1965 Nov. –Beth Ann Simon, a young heroin addict from New Jersey, dies while following a strict macrobiotic diet. This is the movement’s first major setback. Ohsawa and the macrobiotic diet receive much adverse publicity, and the incident brands macrobiotics among many in the medical and health professions as a dangerous and extreme form of food faddism. The image was hard to get rid of. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration closes the New York branch of the Ohsawa Foundation, run by Irma Paule.

1966 April 24–George Ohsawa dies unexpectedly in Tokyo, Japan, at age 72–just as his teaching is beginning to spread rapidly in the West. The cause of his death: a heart attack, perhaps caused by filarial parasites he had picked up at Lambarene, Gabon.

1966 April–Erewhon opens as a tiny (10 by 20 foot) retail store downstairs at 303-B Newbury Street in Boston.

1966, summer–Michio Kushi begins to lecture each Monday and Wednesday evening in a back room of the Arlington Street Church in Boston. These talks were supplemented by cooking classes with Aveline Kushi in Brookline.

2. Product Name: [Seitan].

Foreign Name: Seitan.

Manufacturer’s Name: Marushima Shoyu K.K.

Manufacturer’s Address: Kamigata-dori Ko 881, Uchiumi-cho, Shodo-gun, Kagawa-ken, Japan.

Date of Introduction: 1962, January.

Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price: 3.5 oz jar.

How Stored: Shelf stable.

New Product–Documentation: Note: This is the world’s earliest known commercial seitan product (March 2011). It was first imported to the USA by Erewhon Trading Co. in 1969.

Talk with Aveline Kushi. 1992. April 9. The first seitan imported to America was made by Marushima Shoyu Co. on Shodoshima in Japan. George Ohsawa went to visit the company, talked with Mr. Mokutani and showed him how to make it. Marushima began to make seitan commercially in the late 1960s. It was imported to America by Muso Shokuhin at about the same time the first miso and shoyu were imported. She thinks it came in small jars. This seitan probably started to be imported to America in about 1969.

Letter (fax) from Yuko Okada of Muso Co. Ltd., Japan. 1992. July 2. “I remember the term ‘seitan’ since I was a kid; it was probably coined by George Ohsawa. Sei means ‘is’ and tan is the first character in the Japanese term tanpaku, which means ‘protein.’ So seitan means something like ‘right protein substitute.’ Japan and Muso has carried their seitan since Feb. 1966 when we started. We shipped seitan to Erewhon on a regular basis from 1968. [Note: Kotzsch. 1984, Dec. East West Journal p. 14-21 states that Muso began to export foods in 1969.] We also exported it to Chico-San [in the USA]. In Europe, we exported seitan to Paris, France.” This seitan went to Institut Tenryu, which had a little macrobiotic food shop in Paris run by Madame Francoise Riviere.


who coined the term “seitan” upon seeing it. Commercial production began in 1962. For details, see interview.

• Summary: 1966 Feb. 12–“Lincoln’s Birthday Party with Sopwith Camel at the Firehouse, former quarters of Engine Co. 26 and Truck Co. 10, 3767 Sacramento St. The Charlatans also appeared.”
  Feb. 19–“Family Dog and Bill Graham presented The Jefferson Airplane at the Fillmore Auditorium. Wildflower and Sopwith Camel at the Fire House.”
  March 12–“The Alligator Clip, the Charlatans, Sopwith Camel, and Duncan Blue Boy and his Cosmic Yo-Yo, at the Firehouse on Sacramento Street.”
  March 19–“Big Brother and the Holding Company, A Moving Violation, and movies appeared at the Fire House. Projections by Elias Romero, Assorted Effects by Ray Andersen. Sgt. Barry Sadler, who was to entertain, could not attend.” March 26–Great Society, The Outfit. April 2–The Wildflower, Ale Extrom and His Conceptina, movies. “The Wreckers Ball–see this grand old firehouse in its last days before it becomes a parking lot ..” [Final Show].
  Note: “Most of the shows were advertised by large format handbills, each containing humorous notations.” Each of the handbills is shown on the 1st website cited below.

3a. Photograph of members of the San Francisco Calliope Co. 1966. San Francisco, California.
• Summary: This photograph appeared in I.D. magazine’s Band Book (pages 16–17, unpaginated). Wally Gorell, who sent this photo, writes: “Deacon is at the left wearing an Indian block-printed cotton bed cover (his face is largely out of frame). I’m wearing the Liberty print shirt with the bow tie, Jean Allison is at the center rear wearing white glasses. Georgeanne Coffee (later known as Annapurna Broffman) is in front, just right of the fold, wearing a blouse with a white collar. Elias Romero, who invented the liquid light projections emblematic of the ‘60s, is in the rear, bearded [3rd person to right of centerfold] Bill Tara is at the extreme right of the frame. Even at the time I didn’t know most of the others who appear in the photograph.”
  Context (from Wally): Most or all people in this photo were members of San Francisco Calliope Co., which was a theater company that ended up putting more energy into producing rock and roll dances than to mounting theater productions. They found they could make money and have fun more easily by producing rock dances. The company was founded in late 1965 or early 1966 as the Firehouse Repertory Company. It changed its name to the San Francisco Calliope Company after we got kicked out of the firehouse on 2 April 1966. (Calliope was the eldest of the Muses, the goddesses of music, song and dance. She was the goddess of epic poetry and of eloquence.) The company worked with various San Francisco bands, including The Charlatans, the Sopwith Camel, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Quicksilver Messenger Service, and the Grateful Dead. The group was quite stable for its roughly two years of existence; few people came or went. The members lived in many different places in San Francisco—rather than all in one place. Wally was one of three actors. He does not think he created the group’s logo in the lower left corner of the photo, but he might have.
  Jean Allison was the only actress in the company. Bill Tara was the director. Elias Romero did the lights for the rock dances. So far as Wally knows, Paul Hawken continued his involvement under both company names. Paul probably co-produced some of the dance events with Bill Tara. To support themselves financially, Wally worked at the post office and Bill Tara earned money from producing the dances. Wally does not know about the others. Wally does not know how the money from the dances was divided, but the basic idea was that it would be used for future theater productions. The company lasted until (I believe) autumn of 1967.

  Paul Hawken comments by e-mail (28 March 2011): “Who do you think took the picture? ;-) I took it. I was there at Calliope and yes, we worked together, Wally, Jean, Bill. It went on after the Firehouse, George [Ebey, not pictured] left early as I remember. And once it moved to Harriet St. it was pretty much Bill, Michael, Jean, Wally for awhile and myself in Calliope.”

  Bill Tara comments by e-mail (28 March 2011): “The reason that Paul is not in the picture is that he took it–Paul was a very talented photographer. Back row left in sunglasses Steve Tortoreci (musician), very back David Oliver (artist) (old friends of mine from Santa Cruz)–Next to me on far right Ken Connoly (Wally identifies occupation- street name ‘Goldfinger’—a drug dealer), Elias Romero is the bearded guy in the back row two to the right of Jean, guy kneeling to my right is Michael Layton (Actor). I cannot remember any of the other names. People came and went. Wally, Jean, George (not pictured) and I were the only holdovers from the Firehouse.

  “The Firehouse opened in February 1966 and was open till April when the property was sold the last event was ‘The Wreckers Ball’, there were six events in all. Wally, Deacon, George, Jean and I were the only actors (I was also the Director) we were planning on producing several plays, I had rights to ‘The Fire Bugs’ and ‘Endgame’. The sale of the place threw things off, Paul was interested in technical work such as lighting. We were the core. Michael Lawton
and Goldfinger were also involved. Once we moved to the warehouse (summer of 1966 we started work again and got into producing concerts at California Hall with the Grateful Dead et al. Paul was designing Light Shows. The last event by the Calliope Company (rock wise) was our Halloween Dance opposite the Kesey Acid Test Graduation. We then had one theatre event at the Straight Theatre, the premier of Michael McClure’s ‘Blossom.’ After Xmas that year I left for Boston.” Address: San Francisco, California.

4. Photograph of Evan Root at the first Erewhon retail store at 303B Newbury St. in Boston, Massachusetts. 1966.

*Summary:* Evan Root wrote in Nov. 2010: This “one is me, circa 1966, at 303-B Newbury St., Boston, below street level, at the corner of Hereford Street, wearing a Japanese clerk’s coat, something like what is called a Happi Coat, hand made by Aveline [Kushi]. This picture was in Lilly Kushi’s marvelous photo album, which you may well have had a chance to see. She took it out and gave it to me near the end of her life.

“There are, to my knowledge, very few photo archives of that first little Erewhon store. You can’t see anything of the store or the shelves in the picture. I am sitting at the check-out desk, upon which there is a decorative bouquet of wheat grain in a vase.

“This store defied all business reason as so few people came through the doors to shop. It was principally a place where people came to talk and wonder about our place in the universe, and how macrobiotic practice could align us with that order. It took about one year before we had our first $100 day, and that was worth a celebration.”

Question: In those early days, which important macrobiotic addresses were in Boston and which were in Brookline (which was enclosed on three sides by Boston)?

Evan: “Before I left for Japan (spring 1969), in Brookline there was the Kushi’s house at 216 Gardner Road. This is the first house the Kushis rented when they moved from Wellesley in March of 1966 and was their home along with as many other people as could fit in, myself included. There were several apartments where groups of mb (macrobiotic) students lived, as well. Sometime later (I can’t recall the timing here) 29 University Road opened up as the first ‘study house’ outside of the Kushi’s home. I think another one opened on Washington Street before I left, though my memory is hazy on just when. These first ones were rented by Aveline and were all under the Kushi umbrella with ‘house leaders’ usually a couple whose studies of Macrobiotics qualified them as ‘senior students.’ There may have been one or two others. “By the time I returned, there were numerous ‘study houses,’ more in Brookline and in various other locations.
such as Brighton, Cambridge, Boston, Jamaica Plain, and Wakefield as well. At this time, maybe 6 or 7 of them were in the Kushi study house system, and many were independent.

“Before I left for Japan, the important Boston addresses were: 303B Newbury Street (first as Erewhon retail store, then as Tao Books), 342 Newbury Street (Erewhon retail), 272A Newbury Street, and The Arlington Street Church, a Unitarian Universalist church at 351 Boylston Street where Michio’s lectures and large community events were held. I could say (only somewhat facetiously) that the Half Shell, a seafood restaurant on Boylston Street was important as well, as it was very near Erewhon, and served as a place for many a meeting with Michio and fish dinner for the working crew.

“When I returned from Japan, arriving in Boston in late October of 1972, added to the list above, the Seventh Inn restaurant, an outgrowth of Sanae was operating near the corner of Boylston and Arlington Street. Aveline had rented space in the building next to the Arlington Street Church on Boylston St. and had installed a Noh Stage there. This was referred to as the Noh Center, and most of the downtown classes were held there at this time. Erewhon’s warehouse at 33 Farnsworth Street in Boston had, of course, been up and running for some time.

“In an eight-block stretch, running from Erewhon on Newbury Street to Seventh Inn on Boylston, there were 5 (6 counting the Church) active Macrobiotic “hot spots.” During any given walk down Newbury or Boylston Street, a macrobiotic person of those days would encounter many friends just by virtue of walking down the street.”

Note: Evan helped the Kushis open the pioneering natural / macrobiotic food store, Erewhon, and was it’s first manager. This first Erewhon retail store was located at 303B Newbury Street in Boston and opened for business on 9 April 1966. The business was registered in Aveline’s name.

Evan continues: “Interesting side note: During a certain period of time, not too long after we opened the retail store, when the U.S. government was attempting to have the Kushis deported, the registration of the business was transferred to my name. For almost a year, I was the straw owner. After some time, the Kushis prevailed, and the ownership went back to Aveline.

“You may ask, why do I prefer the wording ‘registered’ rather than ‘owned’? This is because questions, and even thoughts about ownership did not arise until later. The store was opened to serve a need, and the Kushis acted more like the custodians of a communal trust or mission. In essence, I believe they tried to act in this manner throughout Erewhon’s existence, although many factors came into play to muddy that water.”

This photo was sent by Evan Root to Patricia Smith (of Mill Valley, California) and by Patricia to Soyinfo Center (Nov. 2010).

• Summary: This is “the first in a series of profiles of young people who are studying the Unifying Principle under the guidance of Michio Kushi in order to deepen their own understanding and to prepare themselves to become leaders and teachers of others.

“Evan is, in many ways, the dean of young Boston friends. For the past year he has been proprietor of Erewhon, where some food supplies are obtainable, and hundreds of people have become grateful to him for his attendance... His manner is quiet and thoughtful, punctuated by occasional bursts of hilarity which are apt to be accompanied by impromptu monologues or imitations.”

Evan was born on 12 June 1943 in New York. His earlier ambition was to become a director in the theater or the cinema. “A few weeks ago, Evan ‘graduated’ from Erewhon and began to make plans for the future. At present, he is considering a lecture tour, a restaurant, and perhaps supplementing his studies with Haikoryu jujitsu.”

Note: This is the earliest document seen (March 2011) that mentions Erewhon.

Talk with Evan Root. 1992. April 27. He notes that this “profile” was written by Jim Ledbetter, editor of this magazine, and the cartoon of Evan’s head was drawn by Michio Kushi. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


• Summary: Continued: 1981–Annual sales of Lifestream brand products jump to a record $12 million, and there are about 100 employees. All the retail sales and sales of Lifestream’s distribution company are in Canada. However, the majority of Lifestream’s Manna Bread, natural energy bars, and organic baked goods are in the USA. An estimated 25% of Lifestream’s total sales were in the USA to wholesale distributors.

1981–Arran refuses to co-sign a bank loan for Lifestream, in an attempt to resolve partnership problems at Lifestream, by trying to force his disaffected partner to either buy his shares at a price for which Arran was willing to sell them, or to let Arran buy his shares at the same price. But the disaffected partner refuses to sell his shares to Arran, and he doesn’t have the means to buy Arran’s shares. The third partner wouldn’t decide one way or the other. Parshan Sahota, an Indian man, owns 8% of the shares; a hardworking, loyal employee, he had $60,000 to invest, an amount calculated to equal 8% of Lifestream’s shares. Parshan is now operating a successful Lifestream distribution operation out of Ontario, is behind Arran all the way (he is not an initiate), however even with his support, Arran does not have the requisite 51% ownership or backing to gain control of the company. Despite the company’s success, the only alternative at this point is to sell to an outsider. Arran and Ratana do not want to sell the Lifestream baby, as they felt very much identified with it. This is a painful but valuable lesson for them. A buyer is found.

1981 July or Aug.–Lifestream is reluctantly sold to a holding company controlled by investment bankers Gordon Byrne and David Mindell. They hire Arran to remain as president, but renego a promise to give him back 10% of the company, so he resigns as president by the end of August. He recalls that they effectively cheated him out of approximately $200,000 in the technicalities of the sale.

Several months later, on the advice of a seasoned attorney, Hyma Altman, Arran decides to seek legal recourse for the recovery of the promised 10%; the defendant settles out of court. Gordon sells his shares to David Mindell and they hire an ex-executive of a large consumer goods firm to run the company. Under the new ownership, Lifestream has difficulties in the marketplace and labor problems at the stores, which they sell or close.

After Arran resigns from the company, he goes back to work at Woodlands Natural Foods (the family restaurant business), and abides by a 3-year non-compete agreement which restricts him from going into retail, wholesale, or manufacturing.

1981 Aug.–Nabob Foods (Canada’s #2 brand of coffee) buys (from David Mindell) the much weakened Lifestream manufacturing operation at 9100 Van Horne Way, Richmond, BC. Nabob invests heavily in the Lifestream brand.

1981 Oct. 11–Arjan, the Stephens’ fourth child and first son, is born–on Canada’s “Remembrance Day.” Arran recalls: “From early ages, our kids worked for hourly wages at our various enterprises, as they wanted spending money. We told them that if they wanted money, they needed to earn it, and learn valuable life skills along the way.”

1981 to 1985–During these three years when his non-compete agreement was in effect, Arran helped Ratana at the Woodlands vegetarian restaurant. He recalls: “She was the heart and smarts behind the restaurant operation. I was the builder, the Don Quixote, tilting at Windmills. I did wait on tables, chop vegetables, clean toilets, sweep the parking lot.” Using the initial large restaurant at 2582 West Broadway as a central bakery and commissary, they supply the old Mother Nature’s Inn–still there in the back of the original Lifestream store (it is a tenant of the store), convert it to a Woodlands, and open and supply two additional Woodlands restaurants and stores in Vancouver (permitted in the non-compete agreement). Arran continues: “But it was very difficult to keep it all organized and profitable, and the world load was excessive. Ratana had the three daughters and now out newborn son to look after, plus she helped out with the main restaurant. She was the real hero that kept it together. The various Woodlands satellites were

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becoming increasingly difficult to manage properly and cash flow was in a dangerous position. We decided to sell off the two outlets at a loss, and contracted back to the two original, profitable restaurants. But now we did have a nice bakery built in the back of Woodlands on Broadway, and it was out of this little bakery [in 1985] that we began Nature’s Path Manna Bread.”

1982 July–Lifestream is selling (and perhaps making) Vegi-Patties, which are meatless burgers made with textured soya flour and wheat gluten.

1985 Jan.–Arran Stephens founds Nature’s Path, Ltd.–supported by Ratana and her restaurant–and launches the company’s first product, Manna Bread, at Natural Products Expo West. As a limited corporation (an “Ltd.”), Nature’s Path takes in over 20 small investors, but this becomes unwieldy, and the investors have very high expectations. So Arran and Ratana buy back the shares at cost plus interest.

1985 end–Nature’s Path soon outgrows the Woodlands and moves to a much larger leased building on Simpson Road in Richmond, BC. Ratana continues to profitably manage Woodlands, while Arran works very hard to establish the Nature’s Path bakery. Arran would drive a truck each week, loaded with bakery products, all the way down to Portland, Oregon, making store deliveries. There were difficulties with the fresh bread, however, as most stores wanted guaranteed sales, and the stale bread returns were sometimes unbelievable. Yet Manna Bread was the staple seller. Arran then “shifted emphasis toward more shelf-stable organic bakery products, and introduced a line of sprouted, organic breakfast cereals under the Manna / Nature’s Path banner.”

1988 Feb.–Arran makes his tenth pilgrimage to India. “Weary of our ups and downs in business, Ratana urges me to ask Master [Sant Darshan Singh] for his advice to help set my feet firmly on the path to consistent profitability.” Very humbly and graciously Darshan gives three basic principles: (1) “Keep to quality. Quality should never be sacrificed either for quantity or money. Be honest.” (2) “We should expand our business to the extent that we can control our best, and make the most of our business, but not be too ambitious. Be very cautious–expansion is very easy; retreating is very difficult. We should be contented with whatever the Master blesses us.” Arran deeply appreciated the wisdom of this extemporaneous and free advice. He later recalled: “Sales began to take off. We then started effectively competing with Health Valley, Lifestream, Arrowhead Mills, Erewhon and others. It was a lot of fun, and the growth was explosive.”

1988–“Multigrain, Multigrain ’n Raisin, and Millet Rice are the very first Nature’s Path cereals. All are still for sale today.” Continued. Address: 724-26 W. 6th Ave., Vancouver 9, BC, Canada.

7. **Product Name:** Mugi Miso, or Hacho Miso.
**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). Made in Japan. Imported from Muso Shokuhin.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** Newbury St., Boston, Massachusetts.

**Date of Introduction:** 1968. August.

**Ingredients:** Hacho miso: Soybeans, water, sea salt.

**Wt/Volume, Packaging, Price:** 16 oz.

**How Stored:** Refrigerated preferably.


Advest Co. 1972. Nov. “Private placement $500,400. Erewhon Inc.” On page 30 is a photocopy of the label for “hacho miso (soybean paste–soybeans only).” The text reads: “Hacho miso comes from one of the oldest manufacturers of miso in Japan. The company was originally established in 1362 and has been continuously processing miso since that time. In olden times boats would come up the Yahagi River near Nagoya bringing the raw materials for miso including the big stones which were placed on the kegs during aging. The water used in Hacho Miso is drawn from artesian wells located along the same river. The fermentation storerooms and the large cedar wood kegs used in producing Hacho Miso are over one hundred years old. The miso during its two year aging process is placed and situated so that it can freely interact with the four changes of season. Hacho Miso is easily digested and absorbed because the proteins are in a free state due to aging and fermentation. It can be used in the preparation of soups, sauces, and vegetable dishes, adding a rich and hearty flavour to them. New weight: 32 oz. (2 lb). Ingredients: Well water, soybeans, and sea salt. Distributed by Erewhon Trading Company, Inc.”

Label. 1977, undated. 3.5 by 4.75 inches. Paper. Olive green, greenish brown on white. Vine illustration (hacho miso). “Erewhon Miso is produced by enzymatic fermentation and aging of soybeans a minimum of twenty-four months in wooden kegs. Its concentrated flavor makes it an ideal seasoning for enriching the taste of soups, sauces,
vegetable dishes, noodles, casseroles, and fish. Erewhon Miso is completely free of chemical preservatives. Store in a cool place.” Note: In 1971 Erewhon was located at 342 Newbury Street, Boston. Phone: 262-3420.

Shurtleff & Aoyagi. 1983. The Book of Miso. 2nd ed. p. 236. In 1968 Erewhon started to import miso and shoyu from Japan. “A wholesale and distribution company was started that year and soon it was trucking a line of fine Japanese imported red, barley, and Hatcho misos to a growing number of natural food stores.” By 1970 sesame miso and tekka [miso] were added to the Erewhon line. By 1976 brown rice (genmai) mīso was added.

Ad (7.5 by 13 inches, full color) in Natural Foods Merchandiser. 1989. Feb. p. 25. “Erewhon... Macrobiotic foods you can recommend with confidence.” There are now 4 varieties of miso under the Erewhon brand: Hatcho (note new correct spelling), genmai, kome, and mugi.

At about this time, Erewhon also sold Short Grain Brown Rice, Whole Wheat Flour, and Corn Meal.

8. **Product Name:** Moromi.  
**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). Made in Japan. Imported from Muso Shokuhin.  
**Manufacturer’s Address:** Newbury St., Boston, Massachusetts.  
**Date of Introduction:** 1968. August.

Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price: 7 oz.  
**How Stored:** Refrigerated preferably.  

• **Summary:** (1) Front of the store. (2) Back of the store. To the left is the door to the office. On the pallets stacks of both multiwall paper sacks (left) and burlap bags (rear). They arrived at the store by the truckload and the workers
(including Jean) had to unload them by hand—sometimes hoisting them onto one shoulder. (3) Jean Allison seated at a desk in the Erewhon office.

These photos were sent to Soyinfo Center by Jean Allison Young of Chatham, Massachusetts, in Feb. 2011.

Letter (e-mail) from Norio Kushi. 2011. Feb. 8. These photos were “both taken at 342 Newbury Street, Boston, in 1968 soon after the move from 303-B Newbury to 342 Newbury, in Boston. I am guessing that both photos were taken within minutes of each other.

“The person behind the cash register, facing towards the right in the photo is Eric Utne, who later worked at East West Journal, eventually becoming the editor. He later left East West Journal and he, along with his then wife, Peggy Taylor, started New Age Journal. When Eric and Peggy split up, Peggy retained New Age Journal, with Eric Utne soon thereafter starting The Utne Reader. Eric Utne currently lives in Minneapolis with his wife, Nina...

“The person facing Eric Utne, might be Jim Ledbetter,... or it could be a customer who I have never met. Jim Ledbetter and Jean Allison both lived at 216 Gardner Road. in Brookline with our family during this time. Eric Utne lived in one of the other study houses, 6 Ellery St, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

“The 2nd photo is of the stockroom in the rear half of the store. The size of the stockroom and how the bags of rice and other commodities are stacked would indicate the photos were taken soon after the move. Shelf space in the retail section kept growing along with business, and the rear storage room, once half the square footage of the store began shrinking as the need to expand the retail space increased, eventually necessitating the opening of the warehouse at 33 Farnsworth St. in Boston. Other than brown rice being in the burlap or paper 100 lb sacks, I don’t know what any of the other products would be in the other sacks or boxes.

“As I recall, we didn’t start getting the 50 lb organic rice in the paper sacks till after the opening of the Erewhon warehouse. Up till that point I recall the brown rice came in the 100 lb burlap sacks. Therefore, I feel that what is in the paper sacks would be beans and grains other than brown rice.

“I was noticing on the selves to the left there are smaller sacks. All the rice, grains, beans, etc were all packaged from bulk into these bags by hand. The item that was in these bags were rubber stamped onto the front of the bag just prior to filling them.

“We also received many Japanese items, such as shoyu (which we called tamari), miso, and umeboshi in those bulk wooden kegs. They were hand poured or scooped into bottles and jars. I don’t see any of these items in this photo. The store photo was also rather Spartan, which is what lead me to feel that these photos were taken soon after moving from 303-B Newbury St. to 342 Newbury St. “I would stop by the store regularly but didn’t actually ‘work’ there during this time. I used to some in and just help out after school or on Saturdays just for the fun of it.

“At the prior location at 303-B Newbury St, I spent many full Saturdays helping out. I was there one Saturday when we had the very first day we did over $100.00 in sales. The other person who was working on that day was Jean Mohan. At least during the 303-B Newbury Street days, people who lived in our house at 216 Gardner Rd, Brookline, MA, would take turns working at the store, although Evan Root was the manager.”

Letter (e-mail) from Evan Root. 2011. Feb. 10. These two photos ‘are of the store at 342 Newbury St. This was the ‘first edition.’ It was, of course, remodeled from the shell that was rented. But it is before a bigger remodeling which yielded the whole first floor for the store, bins for grains and beans, and a walk-in refrigerator where the office was. The accounting office and storage moved to the basement and a winched lift to bring the goods up for stocking.” Address: Boston, Massachusetts.

• **Summary:** (1) Student identification, East-West Institute, Wakefield, Massachusetts 01880. Wallace Gorell. Date of birth: 21 Dec. 1944. With photo ID and signature.

Concerning the date of the card, Wallace writes: “The ID card says on it that it’s valid for academic year ’70-’71 which is confusing. I was in Japan on that first trip from August ’69 through all of 1970. But I cut my hair just before I left so that photo pre-dates Aug. 1969. As I recall, we made up those ID cards as a way of getting student discounts on our air tickets to Japan. I don’t think there ever was an East-West Institute where we actually took classes. So I guess I made up that card to use to get my air ticket and to take to Japan with me—having it show that it would be valid still for over a year—and then I decided to cut my hair.”

This card was sent to Soyinfo Center by Wallace Gorell of Berkeley, California, in Dec. 2010. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.

11. Photographs of Paul Hawken and Evan Root inside the Great Buddha at Kamakura, Japan, looking out the rear window. 1969.

• **Summary:** This Buddha is hollow and there are windows in the rear and a staircase up through the inside. This photo was taken shortly after Paul and Evan arrived in the spring of 1969.

Evan writes (Nov. 2010): “Paul and I went to Japan together, by boat from San Francisco to Yokohama. We took the *Brazil Maru* of the Mitsui OSK line. This was a combination passenger and freight vessel taking 15 days to cross with a one day stop in Honolulu.”

Q: Why did you go and why did Paul go? Was it Michio or Aveline Kushi’s idea? “In conversations with Michio, he often said, ‘when you go to Japan...’ such and such. He never said ‘if you go to Japan.’ I had been running Sanae Restaurant for about a year and a half (a long time in those youthful days). We had gone from a few loyal customers to lines down the block waiting to get in every night. I was starting to think about opening a second restaurant. Michio counseled me not to limit myself by getting tied down to business. At that time, the Boston Macrobiotic community was like a school, and people were coming from all over the country to study. Many of these people worked at Erewhon, Sanae or other macrobiotic enterprises. I wanted to take on a new adventure, and, at the same time make room for others to grow. I did not know exactly what to do, but Michio’s words ‘when you go to Japan’ filled that gap. Of course, I thought, the next step was to go to the country of origin of this movement.

“As far as the case with Paul, I cannot speak for him. My sense is that it was for cultural education plus business.

“Paul and I had been close friends since he arrived in Boston in the summer of ’68. He hung out at the little Erewhon (303B), and picked my brain about everything. I wanted to start a restaurant and convinced Aveline that Paul was the best man to take over the store. When this was settled, Martin Russell and others filled in at Erewhon while Paul and I took a drive away car out to California so he could arrange to make the move to Boston. On the way, we stopped in all sorts of places to give classes in macrobiotic philosophy and cooking. We also visited Jacques and Yvette DeLangre, Reme’s ranch and Chico-San, places where food...
processing was going on (Reme’s tekka [miso] and onion concentrate were excellent).

“It seemed like Paul and I were both on the same timetable in terms of needing some new horizons, so it was convenient and natural that we went at the same time. Though Erewhon paid for his trip, and Sanae paid for mine, we both went on business visas connected to Erewhon.”

Q: Did you stay together or see each other often?

“Our arrival was celebrated by a big dinner party at Lima Ohsawa’s. Because we were Michio’s students, many people were there to welcome us. It was a testament to the esteem with which Michio was held in the Japanese seishoku [macrobiotic] community. Michio and Aveline themselves had not been back to Japan since leaving for the U.S.

“Note: seishoku is the word that was used for ‘macrobiotic’ in Japan when I was there. It is written with the characters for correct / proper + food. The word ‘macrobiotic’ was not commonly used in Japan at that time.

“Paul and I were taken here and there for some sightseeing including the trip to Kamakura. We also met Mr. Kazama. After a short time together in Tokyo, Paul went to Osaka to stay with the Okada family and connect into the food scene and make connections for Erewhon. We saw each other from time to time, once to visit some food production sources like shoyu, rice vinegar and sesame oil. Another time we went on an outing to meet Kôji Ogasawara, the noted proponent of Kototama (the word soul); he was the author of a book titled Kototama: The Principle of One Hundred deities of the Kojiki. This was something Michio had told us about, related to a kind of esoteric history of Japan. Mrs. Okada took us to Ogasawara’s and we listened to him tell us about the Kototama and the Kojiki, though due to the language difference and the esoteric nature of the subject, it went largely over my head.”

Q: What of importance did each of you accomplish? How long did each of you stay?

“I recollect that Paul stayed somewhere around 9 months. During that time he did a lot of relationship building for Erewhon, as well as learning about foods and processing. Certainly, the relationship with Muso Shokuhin was deepened.

“As for me, after a month or two, I realized that I didn’t really know what I was doing over there. I had begun to take lessons in Japanese at the Tokyo Nippongo Gakko in Shibuya, but this was no easy language that I could pick up without really applying myself. There quickly came the day that I had to decide to let it go or really dig in. I choose to dig in. That became the what that I was doing. To me that was probably the single most important decision because it affected everything else. After about two years of study, I serendipitously met a teacher who could actually teach the language to Westerners. This was a revelation, and I began to learn the language according to the Japanese way rather than the translated from English way. This deepened my ability to relate and opened many doors for me. My last year there, I worked for Muso Shokuhin as their translator / international correspondent.

“I stayed in Japan for 3 years and 7+ months. By agreement if I did not return within 18 months, I let go of my 50% ownership position in Sanae Restaurant at a prearranged figure (a modest sum) and used that money to support my living and education in Japan until I knew enough to utilize my Japanese in gainful ways.”

Note: This photo was sent by Evan Root to Patricia Smith and by Patricia to Soyinfo Center (Nov. 2010).
12. Photograph of Paul Hawken and Evan Root before the Shinto temple gate at Ogasawara. 1969.

**Summary:** Paul Hawken (left) and Evan Root (summer 1969) in front of the gate of a Shinto shrine. This particular shrine was said to house ancient historical documents regarding the esoteric meaning of the Japanese language, “word soul” or *Kototama.*

They had met Kôji Ogasawara, the author of *Kototama, The Principle of One Hundred Deities of the Kojiki.* He also founded Dai San Bunmei Kai (The Third Civilization Association).

Note: This photo was sent by Evan Root to Patricia Smith and by Patricia to Soyinfo Center (Nov. 2010).

13. **Product Name:** Erewhon Soy Sauce. Later renamed Tamari Soy Sauce.

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). Made in Japan by Marushima Shoyu.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** 342 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02115. Phone: (617) 262-3420.

**Date of Introduction:** 1969. October.

**Ingredients:** Water, wheat, soybeans, salt.

**Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price:** 16 oz or 32 oz bottle, or 18 liter keg.


**Summary:** 1969 Nov. 4–Eden Organic Foods is named and incorporated as a non-profit corporation by Bill Bolduc. Other names on the articles of incorporation are Judith Bolduc, Ronald Teeguarden, Gloria Dunn, and Linda Succop. It is a natural foods co-op retail store at 514 East William St. in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Bill is president of the company and his wife, Judy, is part-time secretary. The date of incorporation, Nov. 4, was selected by an astrologer, Michael Erlewine, because it was astrologically propitious. Michael also designed the Eden logo of four sprouts in a circle. Also in Nov. 1969 Eden begins selling soyfoods, tamari and miso purchased from Erewhon.

Prior to this, starting in about the summer of 1969, Ronnie Teeguarden and Gloria Dunn had started a loosely-knit food buying co-op—which had no name, no assets, no formal structure, and no bank account. Original or very early members included Tim and Pattie Redmond, Mark and Nancy Retzloff, Linda Succop, Iona Teeguarden, and Bob Thorson. On about 3-5 different occasions they collectively ordered macrobiotic staples (including tamari and miso) from Erewhon in Boston, Massachusetts, using the Erewhon catalog. When the foods arrived, the members got together and divided them up at the Teeguarden-Leabu General Store, at 209 South State St. in Ann Arbor. This general store, located in the basement below Marshall’s Bookstore, carried mostly antique clothing and records, and the art of local artists. By September 1969, Bill and Judy Bolduc joined the food co-op. They also joined the Zen Macrobiotic Supper Club; all of its members were also members of the food co-op.

In the fall of 1969 the Teeguarden-Leabu second-hand store looked like it was about to close, which would leave the food co-op without a home. The group (especially Ronnie Teeguarden) convinced Bill Bolduc to take charge of the food co-op and find it a permanent home, which he did—in an upstairs apartment at 514 East William St. Members of the informal food-buying co-op who worked at Eden Organic Foods included Bill Bolduc, Gloria Dunn, and Tim Redmond. An environmental group named the Environmental Defense Education Network (EDEN) also operated out of the Teeguarden-Leabu General Store; it was from this group that Eden got its name. That fall, after the
Eden Organic Foods co-op was up and running. Tim Redmond went to Boston to work and study at Sanae, a macrobiotic restaurant on 272A Newbury St.

1970 summer–Bill Bolduc establishes Eden’s first contact with an organic food grower (Bill Vreeland of Ypsilanti, Michigan, who grows organic wheat and soybeans). He soon makes Eden’s first direct purchase of organically grown wheat, which the company mills and sells.

1970 July 6–Eden Organic Foods, Inc is reorganized upon a stock basis. Bill Bolduc (who resides at 6210 Bethel Church Rd., Saline, Michigan) owns all the shares (1,000). Other people listed on this document are Judith Bolduc, Ronald Teeguarden, and Gloria Dunn.

1970 Sept.–The fledgling company has an offer from Cynthia Shevel to move into a newly decorated mini-mall at 211 South State St. on the main street of campus. They need money to finance the move. Tim Redmond’s father says he will help finance the expansion only if the business is reorganized as a for-profit corporation. So Eden is changed into a for-profit corporation, and Redmond invests the $10,000 he borrowed from his father in Eden in exchange for 50% ownership. In Nov. 1970 Eden moves into the mini-mall (they register the new address on Nov. 17) and soon begins to mill flour and bake granola at the new store. Bolduc and Redmond are now equal partners.

1971 April 8–Bolduc registers a change in the company name to Eden Foods, Inc. from Eden Organic Foods, Inc. After the store was up and running, Redmond returns to Boston and Sanae restaurant, where he completed his studies.

1971 Jan.–Michael Potter is hired by Bill Bolduc. Mike had initially had a good-paying job at an art gallery in Royal Oak, Michigan. Then he began working for, and eventually became a partner in Joyous Revival, a macrobiotic and natural foods retail store in Birmingham, Michigan. At that time he and his wife, Carol Roller Potter (Ron Roller’s sister), moved from Royal Oak to Walnut Lake, Michigan–to be nearer to Joyous Revival. In the fall of 1970 Michael Potter, while still working at Joyous Revival and at Bill Bolduc’s request, had done volunteer work to try to help a failing new Eden retail store in downtown Detroit on the campus of Wayne State University. This store was owned jointly by Eden and two people named John and Darleen–two of the first people in the area interested in macrobiotics. By Jan. 1971 it had become evident that the store would not be able to survive financially, so Michael’s first job after being hired was to make one last try to save it, then to help in shutting it down.

1971 May or June–Tim Redmond returns to Ann Arbor permanently, having finished his macrobiotic training in Boston. He planned to open a restaurant like Sanae in Ann Arbor but instead got increasingly involved with Eden Foods.

1971 June–Eden starts to wholesale natural foods out of the back of their retail store at 211 South State Street. They buy increasingly from original sources instead of other wholesalers. Buying clubs and co-ops come to the retail store to pick up their bulk foods.

1971 July–Eden’s wholesale pricelist, dated July 26, shows that Eden is selling bulk (50 and 100 lb) soybeans, corn, soft wheat, and rye, which are being grown organically in Michigan (by Tom Vreeland). Eden stone-ground a portion of them into flour–on order. Eden is also selling numerous bulk and packaged grains, cereals, flours, and beans from Arrowhead Mills in Deaf Smith County, Texas; some are organically grown.

1971 early summer–Bill Bolduc asks Mike Potter to manage the Eden retail store at 211 South State St. Mike and his pregnant wife, Carol, move to Ann Arbor from Walnut Lake. By this time the company name was Eden Foods, Inc.

1971 Aug.–Eden Foods starts to distribute its wholesale bulk products, especially in the Detroit area. The company starts to bring in small trailer loads of staples from Arrowhead Mills in Texas. Bolduc and Redmond, realizing that Eden is the only natural foods store in the area, borrow some money and rent a 4,000 square foot Quonset hut warehouse on North Main Street north of Ann Arbor near the Huron River. They expand their wholesale and distribution operations.

1971 Oct.–Mike Potter is given 13.5% of the common stock of Eden Foods, Inc. largely to compensate him for his many hours of unpaid volunteer work. According to Michael Potter (Dec. 1986), at this point the common stock ownership of Eden Foods is: Between Bill and Judy Bolduc 43.5%, Tim Redmond 43.5%, and Michael Potter 13.5%. Potter later says (Feb. 1993) that Bill Bolduc and Tim Redmond now own the same number of shares, but Judy Bolduc owned a small number of shares so the Bolducs owned the largest block.


• Summary: Continued: 1973 March–Eden moves into a larger warehouse at 310 West Ann Street in Ann Arbor, sharing it with Midwest Natural Foods, which initially was not a competitor. At about this time, Ron Roller starts working full-time for Eden. While at this warehouse, in late 1973 or early 1974, Eden receives its first shipments of imported Japanese natural foods from Mr. Kazama of Mitoku in Tokyo. Tim Redmond had ordered these foods from Mr. Kazama at a meeting of the Natural Foods Distributors Association in Florida. Initially Eden was
forced to import Erewhon-branded products. Redmond recalls that at this time he was working at and managing the warehouse and Potter was working at and managing the retail store. Redmond was managing the corporation because he controlled it.

1973 summer.–The Eden retail store moves to a much larger location at 330 Maynard St. in Ann Arbor, on the University of Michigan campus. It now includes three operations under one roof in 6,000 square feet of leased space: A large natural foods retail store, a natural fast-food deli, and a natural foods bakery named Sun Bakery that had relocated itself from Kalamazoo, Michigan. This operation proved to be very profitable; it paid off all Eden’s debts and paid for the new warehouse, offices, trucks, and equipment.

1973 July.–Bill and Judy Bolduc leave Eden Foods, selling their stock to Mike Potter for $2,500 cash. Tim Redmond becomes president. Redmond ends up owning 51% and Potter 49% of the shares in Eden Foods. Potter recalls that he bought the stock directly from the Bolducs, then gave a small amount to Redmond so that Redmond would have majority ownership. Redmond recalls that the Bolducs sold their stock back to the corporation, then Redmond sold enough shares to Potter so that he (Redmond) would keep control with 51% of the shares.

1973 late or 1974 early.–Potter and Redmond become equal owners of Eden Foods after Potter loans the company $44,000 (entrusted to him by his father), then converts the loan into an investment in the company in exchange for equal ownership.

1973 Sept.–Mike Potter becomes president of Eden Foods at the unanimous recommendation of an employee steering committee. At about this time Midwest Natural Foods starts to compete with Eden Foods, carrying many of the same products that Eden carries plus dairy products and frozen foods. Eden has never sold dairy products or frozen foods and, in the face of new competition from Midwest, Michael Potter reaffirms this position. This decision makes it impossible for Eden to become a full-line distributor like Midwest, and lays the groundwork for Eden’s eventual decision in 1986 or 1987 to discontinue distribution to retail stores and focus on manufacturing of natural foods.

1974 spring.–Eden moves from 310 West Ann St. into a larger warehouse at 4601 Platt Road. This move extricates Eden from what had become a “pathetic relationship” with Midwest Natural Foods. Redmond is sure that he and Potter became equal partners before this move.


1977 Aug.–Eden Foods opens Turtle Island restaurant at 315 South State St. in Ann Arbor.

1979 spring.–Cliff Adler, a painter renovating apartments in Ann Arbor, is hired by Michael Potter to work for Eden in Chicago, Illinois, to try to expand their sales to natural food retail stores. During that summer Cliff lends Eden Foods $100,000, for which he is paid bank interest rates. Tim Redmond, however, believes Cliff was hired as a salesman in 1976, and that on 15 March 1979 Cliff became a shareholder in Eden Foods, buying 10% of the stock.

1979 Nov. 26–The Eden warehouse at 4601 Platt Road is destroyed by a large fire. According to the Ann Arbor News (Nov. 27–29) total damages are estimated at $650,000. Eden Foods, organized in 1970, employs some 100 persons in distribution and production, supplies about 500 natural food stores and restaurants, has annual sales of about $5 million, and is said by its owners to be “the largest natural foods distributorship in the Midwest.” This fire burned many of Eden’s key records, including records that would have helped in determining dates and facts for this chronology. Eden has never kept a written chronology of key events in the company’s history.

1979 Dec.–Within 10 days after the fire, the board of directors (Potter, Adler, and Redmond) meets, authorizes a large number of additional shares of common stock, and decides to give away (free of charge) shares of Eden Foods’ common stock to six key employees/managers to try to motivate them to stay with the company and help try to rebuild it. They also decide to lay off 35 other people. Shortly thereafter Cliff Adler decides to convert his $100,000 loan to stock (equity).

1980 Jan.–Tim Redmond decides to leave Eden Foods; he leaves in May, selling most of his stock (he kept 1,000 shares) in exchange for ownership of the Maynard Street Connection, Inc., which has a retail store and restaurant at 330 Maynard St., which are now separate companies.

1980 Feb.–Now Michael Potter and Cliff Adler each own 34% of Eden Foods shares, Frank Dietrich (of Natural Foods, Inc., Toledo, Ohio) owns 10% (which he bought for $100,000), Ron Roller owns 5%, Michael Gordon 4%, Mark Cook 4%, Kathy Knor 3%, Bill Swaney 3%, and Bob Duha 3%. Michael Potter notes that four things saved Eden Foods (which now had a negative net worth of more than $800,000) after the fire: (1) Cliff Adler’s conversion of his $100,000; (2) The incredible cooperation, generosity, and kindness that Eden received from its suppliers in the natural foods industry, and their trust that Eden would do its best to pay back they money at a time when interest rates were over 20%; (3) Frank Dietrich’s investment of $100,000 in the company; and (4) The great effort made by natural foods retail stores and consumers to go out of their way help Eden survive by purchasing more Eden products. Note that it was not until Feb. 1982 that Eden ended up receiving from its

1980 Nov.–Eden Foods headquarters moves into a 20,000 square foot building at 701 Tecumseh Road in the tiny town of Clinton (population 2,000) about 60 miles southwest of Detroit.

1981 Nov.–Erewhon Trading Co. files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Trying to keep up with the super-distributors in their region (especially Balanced Foods) Erewhon had moved into an 80,000 square foot warehouse and added too many items to their product line too fast—which destroyed the company. Stow Mills picked up the bulk of their business, with Westbrae scooping up most of the business for their Japanese imports. Eden had not yet recovered enough financially to take advantage of this opportunity. Continued.


- Summary: 1983 July–Eden Foods surprises the U.S. natural foods industry by introducing Edensoy, a long-life soymilk in plain, carob, or cranberry flavors, imported from Marusan-Ai Co. in Japan, and packaged in a stand-up foil retort pouch.


1984 March 2–A series of calamities hit Eden Foods in quick succession. The FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) informs Eden Foods, in a strongly worded letter, that it considers eleven claims in a promotional pamphlet for Edensoy to be erroneous. The FDA advised that the “Good for Babies” section of the pamphlet be deleted.

1985 June 14–The FDA informs Michael Potter that a six-month-old child in Canada had become seriously ill after being fed the company’s soymilk as an infant formula. The mother said her decision to forgo regular infant formula was inspired by Eden’s own literature—the promotional pamphlet cited above which said that Edensoy was “Good for Babies.” Eden took the position: “There’s a problem and we’re responsible for it.” To date some 18 million packs of Edensoy have been sold.

1985 June 23–Eden Foods voluntarily mails 10,686 requests for a recall of the pamphlet to its distributors and to individual retail stores.

1985 July–Eden Foods forms a joint venture partnership with four Japanese companies, and incorporates in the state of Michigan as American Soy Products, Inc.

1985–Eden opens a west coast sales office and warehouse in San Francisco, California.


1986 Nov.–American Soy Products, Inc. launches a new generation of Edensoy soymilk products, in original, vanilla, and carob flavors. Made at a large, new factory in Saline, Michigan, they are packaged in Tetra Brik Aseptic cartons. This is the first aseptic soymilk plant in the USA.

1987 Jan. 1–Eden Foods stops distributing products directly to retail stores (which comprised only 10% of Eden’s total sales), drops 150 products, and starts serving as a master distributor, selling only through other distributors. This decision had a very positive effect on Eden’s growth; all the energy that was formerly required to attend to 10% of the business was now free to be focused on developing new products and the Eden brand.

1988 April 13–Cliff Adler and Michael Potter are in a serious car accident. Cliff is killed and Michael is seriously injured. Upon Cliff Adler’s death, Michael immediately and automatically acquires Cliff’s 34% share in the company—because Eden Foods Inc. and Michael and Cliff, jointly and severally, had a buy-sell contract that came into effect in the event that either Cliff or Michael should die. The value of Cliff’s stock was $500,000. Michael pays this amount from his personal funds for the stock. Potter now owns a large majority of Eden Foods’ stock.

1988 May–While Eden Foods is still reeling from the effects of the car accident, the FDA files charges against Eden for publishing inaccurate information in a pamphlet which stated that Edensoy was “Good for Babies.” Eden’s previous major effort to recall all of these pamphlets from retail stores apparently had little or no effect on the FDA charges.


1989 Jan. 20–Nearly 6 years after Eden Foods published its ill-fated Edensoy pamphlet, the company is fined $110,000 by a federal judge in Detroit, and its president, Michael Potter, is fined $25,000 and sentenced to 30 days imprisonment. On Feb. 24 he begins to serve out his sentence in Bay City, Michigan.


1989–Eden and OCIA establish standards for food processing as well as growing crops.

1991 mid-June–Ron Roller, president of Eden Foods, is asked to resign from his position. He chooses to leave and go to American Soy products to work full time. There he becomes CEO.

1992–Eden Foods now has 180 distributors, virtually all of whom distribute Edensoy. Owners of stock in Eden

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Foods include Mike Potter (who owns more than 50% of the shares), Tim Redmond, Mark Cook, Bill Swaney, and at least one other person.

1992 Aug.–Michael Potter returns to work at Eden Foods. He was re-sentenced and his sentence is changed to 60 months probation. 1993 Dec. 31–Potter purchases Tim Redmond’s remaining 1,000 shares of Eden Foods stock, which Tim has kept since 1980.

17. **Product Name:** Seitan.
**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer-Distributor). Made in Japan by Marushima Shoyu Co.
**Manufacturer’s Address:** 342 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02115.
**Date of Introduction:** 1969.
**Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price:** 3.5 oz jar.
**How Stored:** Shelf stable.

**New Product–Documentation:** This is the earliest known commercial seitan product sold in the USA; it was imported from Japan. Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. 1970. Jan. 1. “Traditional foods: Importers, processors, distributors. Wholesale-retail catalog.” The company imports and sells “Seitan: Wheat and soy sauce cooked together for a long time. When used in soups or sauteed in vegetables it has a taste much like beef; 3½ oz.”

Barbara and Leonard Jacobs. 1985. *East West Journal.* Oct. p. 38-39. “Flour power! Cooking with seitan, the delicious natural food from grain.” “When I (Barbara) first tasted seitan, about sixteen years ago, I was fascinated by its flavor and texture. I had stopped eating meat for intellectual rather than sensory reasons, so the idea of using a grain-based product which had the texture of animal food was an appealing one. There were a few problems, however. The only seitan available at that time was expensive, and salty. And the pieces of seitan, as they came out of their jar from Japan, were tiny and hard. Perfect for beer-snacks but not really useful for other purposes.”


Talk with Aveline Kushi. 1992. April 9. The first seitan imported to America was made by Marushima Shoyu Co. in Japan. George Ohhsawa asked them to make it and showed them how. It was imported to America at about the same time the first miso and shoyu were imported. She thinks it came in small jars, and was so salty that she used it as a seasoning in place of soy sauce in stews (such as soybean stews) or cooked it with vegetables; this cooking made it softer. She is not sure which Japanese company (Muso or Mitoku) exported this seitan to America, or which American company imported it, but it probably started to be imported in about 1969.

Letter (fax) from Yuko Okada of Muso Co. Ltd., Japan. 1992. July 2. “I remember the term ‘seitan’ since I was a kid; it was probably coined by George Ohhsawa. *Sei* means ‘is’ and *tan* is the first character in the Japanese term *tanpaku,* which means ‘protein.’ So *seitan* means something like ‘right protein substitute.’ Marushima Shoyu Co. developed seitan commercially in Japan and Muso has carried their seitan since Feb. 1966 when we started. We shipped seitan to Erewhon on a regular basis from 1968. [Note: Kotzsch. 1984, Dec. *East West Journal* p. 14-21 states that Muso began to export foods in 1969.] We also exported it to Chico-San. In Europe, we exported seitan to Paris, France.”

Talk with Tom DeSilva, owner of Erewhon Natural Foods in Los Angeles. 1992. July 10. The first seitan sold at the Erewhon retail store in Los Angeles, by late 1969, was imported from Japan. “I used to eat that stuff with rice crackers like mad. It was just like jerky. I loved it. I could eat a whole package. But it was so salty that you had to keep eating rice crackers to cut the salt.” Originally it was sold in a plastic bag, then later in a jar immersed in a dark liquid. Tom liked the product in the bag better.


**Summary:** (1) Jean Allison near the Stiskin’s home shortly after her arrival in Tokyo. Photo by Beverly Stiskin.
(2) Jean Allison’s room at the Stiskin’s house in Kyoto.
(3) Left to right: Women in white kimono are Beverly Stiskin, Jean Allison. In the midst of a tea ceremony.
(4) Left to right—Top row: Wally Gorell, little Reuben Stiskin, and Nahum Stiskin. Front row: Jean Allison and Beverly Stiskin.
(5) Jim Docker and Jean Allison standing between two cars. At that time Jean had a very serious crush on Jim. “Obviously he’s the most handsome man in the world.”

Note: On 30 June 1970 Jean Allison married Andy Young. As of Feb. 2011 her name is Jean Allison Young. She and her husband live in Chatham, Massachusetts—at the “elbow” of Cape Cod, surrounded on three sides by the Atlantic, Ocean.

Photos sent to Soyinfo Center by Jean Allison Young (10 Feb. 2011). Beverly Stiskin, now Beverly Sky, lives in Somerville, Massachusetts.


• **Summary:** (1) Left to right: Bill Tara, unknown woman (perhaps Dora Coates) and Paul Hawken, seaside, probably summer of 1969.

(2) Wally Gorell and Jean Allison (left) teaching a cooking class in Providence (Rhode Island) or Boston (1968 or 1969). Wally taught a lot of cooking classes.

(3) Beverly Stiskin (back row, 3rd from right), Wallace Gorell (back row, far right), and Nahum Stiskin (2nd from right, tall, dressed in formal black Japanese kimono with hakama {over trousers}). All at Ruben Stiskin’s Shinto name-giving / naming ceremony in about late 1969 at a Shinto shrine in Japan. The four people on the left are Japanese friends of the Stiskins. Ruben (a baby at the time) is barely visible.

Letter (e-mail) from Beverly Stiskin Sky. 2011. Feb. 11. “Reuben’s naming ceremony was held at the huge temple to the east of the center of Kyoto—not Kitano Shrine–The people around us are the Takeda family, oba- and oji-san, Reuben’s Japanese Godparents. We lived above their house on the grounds of Higashiyama Sanso, a beautiful family estate on the scenic drive on the other side of Higashiyama–overlooking both Kyoto and Lake Biwa in the distance. Reuben Stiskin was born in Kyoto on August 24, 1969.”

These three photos were sent to Soyinfo Center by Wallace Gorell of Berkeley, California, in Dec. 2010. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


• **Summary:** On the cover is the silhouette of three heads of grain on the plant, by a Japanese crest. The company sells the following types of foods: 1. Grains: Brown rice (short grain Kokuho Rose grown by Koda Brothers, in 2 lb, 5 lb., 10 lb, 25 lb., 50 lb., or 100 lb. quantities). Sweet brown rice (Koda Bros.; it is more glutinous than brown rice, in the same 6 quantities). Note: No claim is made, anywhere in the catalog, that this rice is organic, or unsprayed, or “natural” or anything other than regular brown rice.

2. Beans: Azuki beans (imported from Hokkaido), Black beans (“Kuromame, a black soy bean import”),
Chickpeas (Garbanzo, imported from southern Europe).

3. Sea vegetables: Dulse (From Grand Manan Island, Canada), hiziki, kombu, nori (dried laver), wakame (the latter 4 imported from Japan).

4. Soy Bean Products: Soy sauce (“Aged naturally in wooden kegs at least 18 months”; 16 oz, 32 oz, 18 litre keg). Hacho miso (“Soybean puree made from soybeans, salt & water. No chemicals used in fermentation. Aged at least 18 months”; 1 lb, 2 lb, 44 lb keg). Mugi miso (“Soybean puree. A lighter miso made with barley”; 1 lb, 2 lb, 44 lb keg). Moromi (“A thick sauce removed from the bottom of the soy sauce kegs after fermentation. Its uses are unlimited in soups & sauces”; 7 oz). Seitan (“Wheat and soy sauce cooked together for a long time. When used in soups or sauteed in vegetables it has a taste much like beef”; 3½ oz). Note 1. This is the earliest document seen (July 2005) that mentions seitan and clearly understands what it is.


6. Sea salt: Grey unrefined (from the Mediterranean Sea, unwashed and unground), White unrefined. 7. Oils: Corn germ oil (unrefined, pressed. No solvents, chemicals, or preservatives), Sesame oil. 8. Noodles: Ito soba, Kame soba, Udon. 9. Beverages: Kukicha, Kohren (Lotus root or preservatives), Sesame oil. Made from miso and unhulled sesame seeds”; 3½ oz). "Soybean puree. A lighter miso made with barley”; 1 lb, 2 lb, 44 lb keg). Moromi (“A thick sauce removed from the bottom of the soy sauce kegs after fermentation. Its uses are unlimited in soups & sauces”; 7 oz). Seitan (“Wheat and soy sauce cooked together for a long time. When used in soups or sauteed in vegetables it has a taste much like beef”; 3½ oz). Note 1. This is the earliest document seen (July 2005) that mentions seitan and clearly understands what it is.


Note 2. The products in this catalog do not require refrigeration; they contain no refined sugar / white sugar, no meat, and no dairy products–just like the catalogs of almost all subsequent natural food distributors during the 1970s and 1980s.

Note 3. This is the earliest existing Erewhon catalog seen (March 2011), and the earliest document seen (March 2011) concerning Erewhon and soy.

Note 4. This is the earliest document seen (March 2006) that mentions Arrowhead Mills, of Hereford, Texas. Address: 342 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02115. Phone: 617-262-3420.

Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). From Japan.
Manufacturer’s Address: 342 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02115. Phone: (617) 262-3420.
“Azuki beans. Imported from the island of Hokkaido, Japan. Premium quality. Unlike the usual imported Azuki. Price: Due to foreign market fluctuations, prices on request.”

Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). From Japan.
Manufacturer’s Address: 342 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02115. Phone: (617) 262-3420.
“Kuromame, a black soy bean import. Price: Due to foreign market fluctuations, prices on request.”

23. Product Name: Furikake, Sesame Miso, Tekka.
Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). Made in Japan. Imported from Muso Shokuhin.
Manufacturer’s Address: 342 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02115.
How Stored: Shelf stable.
Products imported from Japan include the following “Condiments,” each made with miso: Furikake (“A tangy sesame condiment made from Miso, sesame seeds, soy flour, nori and bonita [sic, bonito] flakes”; 3½ oz.), Sesame miso (“A hearty condiment for use on rice and other grains. Made from miso and unhulled sesame seeds”; 3½ oz). Tekka (“A strong dark condiment; famous for its medicinal qualities. Made from carrots, burdock, lotus, ginger, sesame oil, and miso”; 3½ oz).
1973. Sept. Tekka vegetable condiment. Product of Japan. Distributed by Erewhon Trading Co., Boston and Los Angeles. 3.5 oz. 3.75 by 2.5 inches. Paper. Light green, yellow, and black on white. “Tekka is an iron rich condiment prepared by cooking several root vegetables for one day in sesame oil and miso.” Tekka “has a nutty taste and pleasing flavor. It is delicious as a seasoning on brown rice and rice cream.” Ingredients: Carrots, burdock root, lotus root, miso, sesame oil, ginger.


- Summary: «1970-63836a-b» On the orange cover is the silhouette of three heads of grain on the plant, by a Japanese crest. The company sells the following types of foods: 1. Whole grains: Brown rice (short grain grown by Koda Brothers, in 6 weights from 2 lb. to 100 lb). “Not strictly organic, but the finest available in the U.S. today.”

  Note: The previous sentence, starting with “Not strictly organic” is deceptive and misleading. According to “Erewhon, A Biography,” by Paul Hawken (East West Journal, Aug. 1973, p. 13) the short-grain brown rice being sold by Erewhon at this time was grown by the Lundberg brothers (Wehah Farm, Richvale, California) and harvested in the fall of 1969. But this rice was the result of a secret deal, so Koda Brothers is listed in the Catalog as the grower. According to the Koda website, Koda first started to convert some fields to organic in 2004. Moreover, this rice was not “the finest available in the U.S. today.” The only organically grown brown rice in the USA in March 1970 was grown by the Lundberg Brothers (Wehah Farms) in Richvale, California. 1969 was the first year they had grown rice organically, and they grew 78 acres under contract with Chico-San, who agreed to buy all the brown rice grown on that acreage in exchange for the exclusive right to sell that rice. Chico-San sold half the rice in advance and had no trouble selling all of it. But they refused to sell any of the rice to Erewhon. In 1970 Lundberg expanded their exclusive organic brown rice acreage to 200 acres; that rice was harvested in the fall of 1971.

  Sweet brown rice (also grown by Koda Bros.), buckwheat groats (Kasha, from Pocono Mts. in Pennsylvania), wheat berries (organically grown in the Golden Valley of North Dakota), millet (organically grown), barley, yellow and white corn (organically grown in Deaf Smith County, Texas), oats, rye (organically grown in Deaf Smith County, Texas). Table of prices for different weights.

  2. Fresh stone ground flours. 3. Cereals, made from whole grains and milled in a manner to allow quick cooking, incl. Kokoh (which can be used as a milk substitute or prepared as a cereal for children). 3. Noodles (udon, soba, and shonai fu–wheat gluten cakes). 4. Beans: Azuki beans (“The King of Beans... Organically grown on the island of Hokkaido, Japan), black beans (a sweet black soybean imported from Japan. Organically grown), chickpeas, soybeans (“Organically grown in Pennsylvania. A food high in protein, vitamins and minerals. Should be soaked many hours before cooking. Particularly good if cooked with Kombu”), pinto beans, whole green lentils, red split lentils. Table of prices for different weights.

Cereal grains get their name from a pagan goddess, Ceres, to whom the Romans accorded rule over all vegetation. Because of the nourishment offered by grains, they are our most economical food. Arable land planted with grain will provide more food than the same land used for non-cereal food. The story of grains is the story of mankind, the cultivation of grains was the beginning of society.

**BROWN RICE:** A short grain natural rice grown by Koda Brothers in California. Not strictly organic, but the finest available in the U.S. today. Like all whole grains, it should be washed gently before using. If boiling, use two parts water and simmer with a lid for one hour. If pressure cooking, use one and a half parts water and cook at least 45 minutes.

**SWEET BROWN RICE:** Also grown by Koda Brothers. It is a glutinous rice used for desserts and holiday dishes. Especially good when cooked with Azuki beans.

**BUCKWHEAT GROATS (Kasha):** This buckwheat comes from the Pocono Mts. in Pennsylvania. It is prepared by lightly toasting and adding it to two parts water. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Especially delicious with an onion sauce or cooked with carrots and onions. Very good for the cold winter months.

**WHEAT BERRIES:** Organically grown in the Golden Valley of North Dakota. The quality is unsurpassed for making flour and bread. A good source of minerals and protein. Wheat berries may be added to rice or cooked with various beans.

**MILLET:** A light grain, it is cooked easily by boiling two parts water or by pressure cooking. It is best toasted first. Very good cooked with leeks or onions. Organically grown.

**BARLEY:** Barley can be prepared like brown rice, and is especially delicious cooked with carrots and onions. It is also very good used in soups. It swells up and becomes very soft, adding a creamy consistency.

**YELLOW AND WHITE CORN:** Organically grown in Deaf Smith County, Texas. Grown in soil known for its high mineral content. It is used primarily for grinding into meal, grits, or flour.

**OATS:** This is cooked like rice and is more flavorful if lightly toasted first. Excellent as a morning cereal or with vegetable sauces. Cook in three parts water.

**RYE:** From Deaf Smith County Texas. Prepare as you would barley or oats. Very good in casseroles or with vegetable sauces. Organically grown.

### PRICES

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8. Soybean Products (imported from Japan): Soy sauce (“aged for at least 18 months”; 16 oz, 32 oz, ½ gallon, 1 gallon, 4.75 gallon keg). Mugi miso—Soybean puree (“Made by a special enzymatic process, this Miso is aged for 18 months. It is made from soybeans, barley, water and salt. It is ideal for making soups and sauces and blends well with tahini to make a spread for bread.” 1 lb, 2 lb, 4 lb, 44 lb keg). Hacho miso—Soybean puree (“A darker, stronger miso than Mugi Miso...”). Moromi (“A thick sauce removed from the bottom of the Soy Sauce kegs after fermentation. Its uses are unlimited in soups & sauces”; 7 oz.). Seitan (“A concentrated protein source made from wheat and soy sauce. When used in soups or sauteed in vegetables, it has a taste much like beef”; 3½ oz.).


On the inside rear cover is a United Parcel Service rate chart. Address: 342 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02115. Phone: 617-262-3420.

Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc.
Manufacturer’s Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.
Ingredients: Sunflower or pumpkin seeds, tamari.
How Stored: Shelf stable.
New Product–Documentation: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. 1970. Natural and organic foods. Price list. Effective Thanksgiving day, Nov. 1971. Talk with Nik Amartseff. 1992. April 3. See long interview. These two products were developed by Jerry Sh—, were made in a corner of the Erewhon warehouse at Farnsworth Street, and were on the market by late 1969 or early 1970.


• Summary: Seated at the table is Susan Sims, wife of Duncan Sims. Duncan was already in Brookline when Susan arrived—in her “really Blue 1968 Mustang Fastback. She was a big fan of Bob Dylan.” They were married in Brookline. In about 1970 they left Brookline and started a macrobiotic community in Fernie, British Columbia, Canada; it was still active in July 1978 when Norio Kushi was in the area on a bicycle trip (Norio Kushi, 19-20 Jan. 2011).

“This was the house in which Michio and Aveline lived before they got The Big House (like a stone castle, 62 Buckminster Rd.) off Route 9, near the reservoir.

Wally Gorell lived in the Gardner Rd house, as did, at different times. Paul Hawken and Tyler (Ty) Smith as well as numerous others. Ty used to take care of Michio and Aveline’s kids when he first lived there. Yuko Okada used to teach us aikido in the backyard” (Jimmy Silver, 14 Jan. 2011).

This color photograph, taken by Lily Kushi, is from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Reprinted with permission of the Smithsonian. Address: Brookline, Massachusetts.

Summary: On the cover is the silhouette of three heads of grain on the plant, by a Japanese crest. "As of July 1st, we will be set-up in our new warehouse... All orders that are to be picked-up, will be from 33 Farnsworth Street, South Boston, Massachusetts. The new phone number for wholesale information and offices is (617-542-1358). Please continue to direct all correspondence and payments to 342 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02115."

New products include: Soybeans in 100 lb ($26.00), 50 lb, 25 lb, 10 lb, and 1 lb quantities. Kome Miso (Made with rice. It is younger and contains less salt than other Miso’s. Used more as a delicacy; 44 lb ($24.50), 2 lb, 1 lb). Koji rice, imported from Japan, will be available soon. Address: 342 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02115.

28. Product Name: Soybeans.
Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). From Japan.
Manufacturer’s Address: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts. Phone: (617) 542-1358.

Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). Made in Japan.
Manufacturer’s Address: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts. Phone: (617) 542-1358.
Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price: 4 oz.
How Stored: Shelf stable.

30. Product Name: Kome Miso–Made with Rice.
Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. (Importer). Made in Japan.
Manufacturer’s Address: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02110. Phone: (617) 542-1358.
Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price: 44 lb, 2 lb, or 1 lb.
New Product–Documentation: Erewhon Trading Company Inc. 1970. July. Wholesale-retail catalogue. “New imports from Japan... It is younger and contains less salt than other Miso’s. Used more as a delicacy. 44 lb for $24.50, 2 lb for $1.49, 1 lb for $0.85.”


• Summary: This color photograph, taken by Lily Kushi, is from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Reprinted with permission of the Smithsonian.

E-mail from Norio Kushi (son of Michio and Aveline). 2011. Jan. 19. “In the spring of 1969, my mother moved to Los Angeles and the first place she rented was at 7511 Franklin Ave., Los Angeles, 90046. The house is on the corner of Sierra Bonita Blvd. and was owned by the actor Gary Cooper.

“It was a much smaller house than 7357 Franklin Ave., which they moved to in 1970.” Address: Hollywood, California.

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- **Summary:** Seated in a large room with the landlady (Mrs. Durkin), they are discussing the terms of the lease on the house they are about to move into.


E-mail from Norio Kushi (son of Michio and Aveline). 2011. Jan. 19. “In the spring of 1969, my mother moved to Los Angeles and the first place she rented was at 7511 Franklin Ave., Los Angeles, 90046. The house is on the corner of Sierra Bonita Blvd and was owned by the actor Gary Cooper.

“It was a much smaller house than 7357 Franklin Ave., which they moved to in Aug. 1970. This move was made when the people living in the house were working on the new Erewhon store. At the time Aveline moved into 7357 Franklin Ave., a TV movie was being shot there and wasn’t completed until after the move; it was “Goodbye, Raggedy Ann,” starring Mia Farrow (aired 1971).

“Jacques and Yvette DeLangre, along with their daughter Cynthia, and sons, Tommy and Philippe, lived on Sierra Bonita Blvd., two blocks away. Jacques DeLangre was a photographer at that time and later founded the Grain and Salt Society, which is now headquartered in Asheville, North Carolina.

“I stayed in Brookline for the summer and did my first overnight bicycle ride at age 14 from Brookline to Montreal, Quebec and back. I moved into 7511 Franklin Ave. the beginning of November 1969 after having driven across the country (as a passenger) with Jim Docker and Peggy Winters in their Dodge Dart.

“The Kushi homes in Los Angeles were always a bustle of activity. We always had lots of guests for dinner along with the many people who lived in the house. Particularly I recall the musicians who lived with us and who would come by for dinner. Some of the more notable people who would visit are, Cicely Tyson (actress), Lenny Capizzi (who wrote “The Monster Mash), Frank Zappa, along with the Mother’s of Invention, Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks, among others. I lived there for only a short time as I didn’t care for the Hollywood High School scene and ended up moving to Seattle soon after my 15th birthday at the end of December 1969.”

“Gloria Swanson had also become close friends at this time, although my parents may have met her earlier. Gloria Swanson had a Rolls Royce, but got rid of it because she..."
didn’t need such a car, especially as it was designed to be chauffeur driven and Gloria Swanson, having regained her health, much preferred driving on her own. Gloria Swanson replaced the Rolls Royce with a sporty Toyota Celica (manual transmission, as she preferred) and at the same time bought my mother a Toyota Corolla (automatic transmission).”

Follow-up e-mail from Norio on Jan. 20. “Regarding Gloria Swanson, I know my parents met her through William Dufty. I also know the story of her getting sick to the point she had to give up acting only second hand from Bill Dufty, She did recover through the suggestions from my father and resumed a long acting career on Broadway in New York City (NYC). This story may be in Gloria Swanson’s autobiography Swanson on Swanson, which I have never read. Yes, the 1970 Toyota Corolla was brand new and a gift from Gloria Swanson. My mother was once stopped on the Hollywood Freeway driving this car for going too slow.

“Gloria Swanson was close enough friends with the family that if I were in her neighborhood in NYC, near the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I would stop in to say hello without prior notice. Gloria Swanson also let me borrow her Toyota Celica [in Los Angeles] for a few months after I got my driver’s license since she at that time was living in NYC full time and didn’t need a car.” Address: Hollywood, California.


• Summary: This lease was executed on 8 October 1970 by and between Murray LaBel and Benjamin Izakowitz (lessors, owners of the building), and Erewhon Trading Company Inc. (lessee), for a retail and wholesale grocery at 8003 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles. The 2-year lease commences on 1 July 1971 and ends on 30 June 1973. The amount of the lease is $225/month. The lease is signed by the three parties to the agreement. Roger Hillyard (lessee) is Executive vice president for Erewhon Trading Co. Inc.

Talk with Tom DeSilva, owner of Erewhon–Los Angeles. 1995. Jan. 17. Tom is quite sure that this is the earliest lease for the Erewhon retail store in Los Angeles. From the time the store opened in about Sept. 1969 until the time of signing this lease, the rent was probably paid on a month by month basis without a formal lease agreement.

Note: This is the earliest document seen (March 2011) concerning Erewhon–Los Angeles. Address: Los Angeles, California.


• Summary: “Spearheading the surge to organic foods today is the West Coast’s literal Garden of Eden–the southern half of Golden California.” And this should be no surprise. A climate well suited for year-round gardening and farming join with people of all ages with people interested in natural foods plus “that rapidly-enlarging segment of the younger generation now so awake to wholesome eating.

“Actually, a sizable chunk of early interest in organic ideas belongs to this paradisiacal area. Pioneers like Phil Arena, Herbert Clarence White, Maria Wilkes, Clarence Tontz, Lee Anderson and dozens more have all lent the sunny Southwest locale an aura of organic history-in-the-making.”

In a late July trip from Santa Barbara south to San Diego the writer observed in shop after shop (there are at least 300 “health food stores”) along the beautiful Pacific coastline, streams of young folks—many with surfboards and/or children in tow—were coming in to buy fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, “juices, kelp and dulse, sea salt and soy products, breads and eggs.”

Veteran Betty Morales, prolific writer and lecturer, notes: “The influx of young people is like a blood transfusion to the health-food business, particularly to the retailers of organically-grown foods.”

Sun Circle Ranches, based in California, supplied by some 200 organic farmers (large and small), are the leading nationwide distributor of organic produce.

In Los Angeles, Erewhon Trading Co., related to the original shop in downtown Boston, Massachusetts, is only a year old, yet serves 100 West Coast stores, natural food restaurants, co-ops and various institutions. Paul Hawken, president of Erewhon [a macrobiotic company], notes that even some of the big universities, including UCLA, have become customers for the popular organic brown rice and soy sauce.

Jimmy Silver, shop manager, says the store’s retail clientele consist of about half each younger and older people. Fresh produce from Sun Circle attracts both. Silver sells about 1,200 hundred pound bags of brown rice each month–90% of it wholesale to established shops in L.A. and other parts of the Southwest. Grown for Erewhon by Wehah Farms in Richvale, California, it now retails for $16.50 per 100-lb sack.

“Grains from the well-known Arrowhead Mills in Deaf Smith County, Texas, also make up a sizable segment of business, says Hawken, a young man who typifies the keen, forceful drive of the new generation in health foods marketing. Along with these and rice, soy sauce made from Japanese organic-grown beans constitutes the biggest seller–nearly 4,000 gallons a month at $8 by the gallon, down to $1.20 per pint. Various soybean pastes, such as
mugi miso prepared with the beans, well water and salt, are also favorite products. So is seaweed.”

Says veteran store owner Walter Lindberg: “No question about it, people are becoming more concerned about the quality of the food they buy.” All store owners say that business has jumped during the past year—especially from young people. “Young people have an open communication system that far outstrips TV and radio.”

At the Sun and Earth shop in Goleta, a suburb of Santa Barbara packed with students, one popular item (called the “natural foods answer to the TV dinner”) is “a platter of our soyburgers, carrots and parsley,” which retails for 57 cents.

Goldman concludes: “The thunderbolt of organic living has not only struck ground in the West—it’s sent a strong, vital message crackling everywhere in the land.”

Contains 6 photos taken inside the new breed of food shops. Address: Box 866, Hereford, Texas.


• Summary: These five black-and-white photographs were taken in mid-November 1970 at the Erewhon West (Los Angeles) retail store on Beverly Boulevard (at the corner of Edinburgh) by Jimmy and Susan Silver. The photos were sent to Soyinfo Center by Jimmy Silver in Aug. 2010.

They show: (1-2) Bruce Macdonald (who was in charge of the store and Erewhon West Coast operations at the time) standing near the cash register. (3) Customers in the store. (4) Jimmy Silver hugging his daughter Rachael (who is in a wooden barrel) In the store. (5) The produce section at Erewhon–Los Angeles.

Note: In an e-mail dated 29 Aug. 2010, Jimmy Silver adds: “We had a warehouse catercorner across Beverly Blvd. The other store employees (and I use the term loosely, as we all lived at the house on Franklin Ave. and basically received room and board and sort of an allowance at Bruce’s discretion, not actual pay) were Bobby Orgo and John Curran. We all worked at both the store and the warehouse (which did some wholesale and institutional sales, to other stores and restaurants). For whatever reason, Bruce liked me working in the store and talking to the customers or talking to customers on the phone. So even though Bobby was the one with the most experience and know-how, I kind of became the de facto second in command after a little while, handling the money, etc.

“Also, Jim Docker and Leon Abehsera worked at the store, but doing construction and physical improvements, not the work of the business itself. They both had this incredible (to me, anyway) ability to lie down on a sack of
rice, any time of day, and immediately go to sleep for five or ten minutes, and then get up looking and acting as if they’d just had 8 hours sleep.

“Bobby Orgo was really a character. He once got in a big argument with the health inspector (!) of all people, who had come to check out the warehouse. Everything was ‘dry’ at the warehouse (no refrigeration), so the inspector was saying this and that about the rules, but was basically going to let it all go. Bobby comes in smoking a cigarette and the inspector tells him he can’t smoke in a food facility. Why not? Against the health code. So what—smoking isn’t bad for you (macrobiotics tended to look at smoking as ‘yangizing’, which was ‘good’ for yin people, which everyone was assumed more or less to be). They get into a big yelling match, and the inspector ends up citing us for about fifty violations, and we ended up having to put in tile coving, a floor drain and stainless steel sinks—all to handle bags of grain, because of Bobby’s argument.”

In an e-mail dated 10 Jan. 2010 Jimmy Silver adds: Doug Rauch was both sales and purchasing manager. I more or less worked for him, or was trained by him, when I came to Erewhon, mostly because I was interested in what he was doing. He was the guy that knew all the product information.

“Nominally I was in charge of getting the catalogs out, ‘envisioning’ and ‘theming’ them, labels and label concepts and designs, new products, customer relations (but in a more technical sense, like product research questions–our customers were primarily stores and coops), vendor relations (making nice with our suppliers and producers beyond issues of payments and shipments and orders), and handling the import business from Japan and our relations with our two Japanese suppliers, Muso and Mitoku. Sort of like a jack of no trades.

“Doug got Trader Joe’s (TJ) to take on natural food products from Erewhon. Eventually he left and then went to work for TJ. Their office at the time was only a few blocks from where he lived. I was sent over to his house for two or three days during the transition and made notes on a yellow legal pad of all the things I needed to do and pay attention to that he told me, and then I became the sales manager and purchasing manager. By then Erewhon was in Vernon, no longer in Culver City.

“Doug rapidly rose at TJ, and shortly became their youngest VP. He convinced them to expand to the East Coast and became president of the East Coast division. Now he has ‘graduated’ as he would put it, has some sort of fellowship at Harvard, and helps out at the local NPR station (I think he may be the chairman, which I believe means they rely on him to make sure that they raise enough
money to keep operating).” Doug is tall–a very interesting guy with a very dry wit.


• **Summary:** This photo was sent to Soyinfo Center by Susan Hillyard, a professional photographer in Santa Cruz, California. (Dec. 2010).


• **Summary:** Written from Hollywood, California, this article reports that “food faddism has been particularly prevalent lately.” Kahan & Lessin Co., one of the nation’s biggest distributors of organic foods, reports that its sales have doubled to $12 million a year from $6 million in 1968. New Age Foods of San Francisco [owned by Fred Rohé] recently opened a branch store in suburban Palo Alto, where it expects to gross $1 million during its first year.

“Health and organic food advocates say the popularity of such items–as well as the more conventional products grown under ‘natural’ conditions–reflects the growing public concern over pesticide poisoning and the publicity over the dangers of food additives, preservatives, and substitutes like cyclamates.”

Richard Hansen is a sociologist at the University of California at Davis; he is researching the organic food movement.

“New insights into universe: Bruce MacDonald [sic Macdonald], president of Erewhon Trading Co., a Boston and Los Angeles concern that specializes in such exotic foods as hacho miso (a soybean paste), says that organic foods appeal to many dropouts from the drug culture. ‘It’s not just that the body’s malnourished from being on drugs a long time,’ he says. ‘It’s also that organic foods can give a person new insights into the order of the universe.’”

Warren Stagg, the bearded proprietor of H.E.L.P., a popular vegetarian restaurant, believes in the mystical, spiritual value of certain foods. A vegetarian diet can help elevate a person to a higher level of consciousness and bring him into harmony with the order of the universe, he says. Since 75% of H.E.L.P.’s clientele are nonvegetarians, the “restaurant offers some meat substitutes such as ‘beef’ stroganoff made from vegetable protein, mushrooms, scallions, bell peppers and sour cream sauce, and a ‘vegeburger’ sandwich that’s also made from vegetable protein. Other dishes on its menu include braised tofu (soybean cake) with brown rice and a salad of cottage cheese, alfalfa sprouts, sunflower seeds, grated carrots, scallions, figs and apricots.”

A group of young people following a macrobiotic diet live in an old Victorian mansion above Hollywood’s Sunset Strip. They are students of the late Georges Ohsawa, a Japanese philosopher who taught about the delicate balance between yin and yang; they eat ascetic meals that include pressure-cooked brown rice and seaweed soup. There have recently been well-publicized cases of the deaths or severe illnesses of a few young people subsisting on only brown rice, the extreme form of the macrobiotic diet.

“Another famous food-faddist helped found a huge business in breakfast cereals. He was John Harvey Kellogg...” according to Ronald Deutsch, author of a history of food fads called “The Nuts Among the Berries.” Deutsch then tells his inaccurate version of how Mr. [sic, Dr.] Kellogg got into the cereal business.

“One man who spends a great deal of time pooh-pooing various nutritional eccentricities is Dr. Fred Stare, chairman of the department of nutrition at Harvard University’s School of Public Health.” Dr. Stare discusses his pet peeves.


Advest Co. 1972. Dec. “A recent *Wall Street Journal* article named this industry as one of the ten highest growth industries for the 1970s.” Address: Staff Reporter.

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**Summary:** Along with the growing interest in environmental awareness has come an interest in “organic or ‘natural foods,’ so strong the *Advertising Age* magazine calls these foods ‘the fastest growing segment of the entire food market in the 1970s.’

Organic food is grown without chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Compost is often added to the soil. People who eat organic foods are willing to pay a little more to avoid meals laced with many of the 10,000 food additives one can find in U.S. supermarkets.

Health food stores are opening everywhere to fill the demand. In San Francisco, Fred Rohe operates two natural food stores, and has recently organized a group of over-30 people called “organic merchants”—OM for short.

Erewhon Trading Co. of Boston “ships tons of organic rice each week.” In New York City, small established health food stores (such as Pete’s on Second avenue near 7th street) are overwhelmed with the new demand.

A photo shows shelves in a store that sells “organically grown food.” Address: New York, NEA.


**Summary:** This photo was sent to Soyinfo Center by Susan Hillyard, a professional photographer in Santa Cruz, California. (Dec. 2010).

40. Photograph of Paul Hawken at his wedding to Dora Coates in June, 1971 in Maryland. 1971.

**Summary:** This photo was sent to Soyinfo Center by Susan Hillyard, a professional photographer in Santa Cruz, California. (Dec. 2010).


**Summary:** This lease was executed on 1 July 1971 by and between Murray LaBel and Benjamin Izakowitz (lessors, owners of the building), and Erewhon Trading Company, (of 8454 Steller Ave. [Drive], Culver City, California 90230. A Massachusetts Corporation) (Lessees), for the purpose of retail and wholesale groceries, at 8001 and 8003 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles (two separate individual stores). The 3-year lease commences on 1 Aug. 1971 and ends on 31 July 1974. The amount of the lease is $800/month. The lease is signed by the three parties to the agreement. Roger
Hillyard (lessee) is Executive Vice President for Erewhon Trading Co. Inc. Address: Los Angeles, California.


**Summary:** “1. Our home address has been changed from 216 Gardner Road to 440 Boylston Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146 and the telephone number stays the same, 617-734-3853. Though this house is within a residential section, it faces Route 9 and two schools are at both sides of the house. We are having, therefore, our small studies at home including seminars for teachers, juniors, seniors and women. Two weekly church lectures are continuously held, and our enterprises such as Erewhon, Sanae, Tao, and the publications are being managed by our friends. Though all these establishments are respectively advancing, except Erewhon, they are still financially unsatisfactory.

“2. In Boston about 10 friends are with American friends who have come from Europe and South America. Since Eric [Utne] and Peggy [Taylor] have returned to America for their marriage, Ron Dobrin, the editor of EWJ, is going to be in London, and Rosemary [Traill] is also leaving for London in a few days. During this summer, besides Paul and Dora [Hawken], several marriages were made and several more babies were born among our friends. Duncan and Susan [Sims] with five other Boston friends are now in their land in British Columbia and NHK is planning to introduce their development of land and cultivation in sometime October or November for Japanese people. New Hampshire’s Erewhon farm is under the leadership of Richard and Elain [Mensoff; her maiden name was Sutton] and about 10 Boston friends are cultivating organic vegetables. Allan and Dorna are also there.

“3. For July 4th weekend, Herman and Cornellia [Aihara] and their two children with Bob Johnson spent three days with our Boston friends. Michel’s [Abehera’s] Binghamton camp [in upstate New York] was held for a week, and Awosting Retreat is having MB [macrobiotic] summer camp this week though our friends are attending as my substitute. Lynn Miller is now in Europe and Bill Antion will join her sometime in the future. Richard and Connie [Sandler; her maiden name was Frank] are in New York, planning to study Medical science more thoroughly. Bob Petrofsky and Hy Lerner are also planning to develop their lands in Vermont, though Hy may visit Japan early in the next year to study the oriental medicine. Los Angeles house and Erewhon are smoothly operated, and many Boston friends are there, including Roger and Susan [Hillyard], Carolyn [Heidenry], Maureen [Traill], Adele [Wood], John Demoulins. Bruce Macdonald is to return to LA after Roger and Susan set out for their domestic long travel. Aveline will spend this summer by the end of August. Ron Kotzsch and Jinx, with my children, are also in Los Angeles. Becky [Rebecca] Wood will be there also.

“EWJ [East West Journal] is managed by several friends with Jack Garvey who was in Tucson, and Bruce Gardiner with a few friends is trying to publish regularly the Order of the Universe. The Book of Do-in was published by Jack DeLangre, Macrobiotics, the Invitation to Health and Happiness, was published by Herman’s Foundation, and the Book of Miso by Aveline is now being prepared to publish.”

Norio Kushi adds by e-mail (27 March 2011): Maureen referred to in the letter is definitely Maureen Traill, the younger sister of Rosemary Traill. Maureen’s first husband was Bruce MacDonald and they had their first child (a daughter named “Lori,” who now goes by “Lorelei”), while living in Los Angeles at the first macrobiotic house, 7511 Franklin Ave. Address: 440 Boylston St., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146.


**Summary:** This is the earliest existing Eden Foods catalog seen that is dated. The company was wholesaling the following products: Bulk grains (including some organically grown: Wheat [Deaf Smith], organic [from Texas]; Rye, soft wheat, and open-pollinated corn, organic from Michigan; Brown rice (natural, unsprayed), and sweet brown rice), bulk cereals or packaged cereals (incl. organic cracked wheat, corn flakes, wheat flakes, and rye flakes from Deaf Smith, Texas), bulk flour (all flour is stone ground on order in Ann Arbor, incl. organic soy flour), beans (incl. organic soybeans from Michigan [60 lb], and azuki beans [out of stock until fall]), noodles, oil and nut/seed butters (all unrefined and pressed, incl. soy oil in pint, quart, and 5-gallon sizes), dried fruit.

Soybean products: Tamari soy sauce (pints, quarts, and liters), Hacho Miso (Soy Paste; 1 lb), Mugi Miso (Barley Soy Paste). Note: The Eden logo with 4 sprouts in a circle is shown. Many of these soy products were obtained from Erewhon, and the grains from Arrowhead Mills. The format of the catalog, the product categories, and the product names and spellings are very similar to those used in the Erewhon catalog at this time. Address: Ann Arbor, Michigan. Phone: (313) 769-8444.


**Summary:** “After you left for Japan, it has passed almost three years. During this period you have shown a steadiness of development. I have heard you are returning to Japan for a short period. By your eyes, please see the present Boston situation and what we are facing in America. You would feel that America is changing rapidly toward MB [macrobiotics],
When you come back to Boston, let us have a welcome party with many new friends.

“Aveline [Kushi] is now in Los Angeles until the 10th of September. On the way of coming over to the East Coast, I hope you can visit our Hollywood center and Erewhon in LA, staying a few days there. Make your report and lecture there too. Let them notify your arrival date before you leave Japan. They will pick you up at the airport. You may also visit San Francisco, Chico [California], Seattle [Washington], and several major places in this country, to see many friends.

“Hollywood address: 7357 Franklin Ave., Hollywood, California 90046. Phone: (213) 876-9153.” Address: 440 Boylston St., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146.


• Summary: “The mecca of macrobiotics in the United States today is Boston, and its Mohammed [Muhammad] is a Japanese professor of Oriental studies, Michio Kushi. Kushi is a disciple of Georges Ohsawa, who gave his first lectures in New York’s Buddhist Temple in 1959.”

Ohsawa’s followers went in two directions. In Oct. 1961, one group went to [Chico] California under the leadership of Herman Aihara. The other followed Kushi to Boston.

The first macrobiotic study house in the Boston area was established very informally about 7-8 years ago in the Kushi’s home in Brookline. Soon thereafter his students founded Tao Books and Erewhon. By word of mouth and by his writings, Michio Kushi has attracted young people from all over the USA, many of them seeking something better than drugs. Soon the demands on his time were so great that Kushi had to give up his classes at Harvard to teach from his home and lecture twice a week on the true path to happiness.

Erewhon is now almost the size of a supermarket; it owns a large warehouse near the Boston docks. Eight large photos show foods sold at Erewhon retail stores. One caption mentions miso.

Part II of this article, titled “Macrobiotics: where it’s at in Chicago,” is about Tom Swan and his macrobiotic food store “Food for Life.” This store, around which the local macrobiotic community revolves, was started in Feb. 1970 at 2356 Seminary by Ron Kotzsch, a Harvard student who had worked at the Erewhon store in Boston.

On the shelves are cans and bottles of corn germ oil and sesame oil (both auger pressed, and both with a rich, natural flavor), sesame butter, a variety of seaweeds imported from Japan, buckwheat noodles, “a fermented soy paste rich in energy called miso (dancers down it before a performance), and a natural soy sauce called tamari that makes you realize how much the supermarket stuff cheats you in taste. All of these things are proudly labeled ‘no preservatives.’”


• Summary: 1971 Aug. 23–Laurelbrook Foods begins as a macrobiotic natural foods wholesale distributor in Forest Hill, Harford County, Maryland (about 25 miles northeast of Baltimore). The company started as a division of Cycle Parts & Accessories, Inc., a motorcycle parts company that Rod was planning to start in late 1970 shortly before the idea of starting a natural foods distribution company took form. Laurelbrook company never moved from its original location, but they kept a post office box (P.O. Box 47) in nearby Bel Air. Their original price list shows that they carried 11 products, mostly bulk organic grains and beans (including soybeans) purchased from Arrowhead Mills. Erewhon was their other major supplier from the outset. The company was founded by Rod and Margy Coates, the parents of five daughters (including Sally, Judy, Marion [Ronnie], and Dora Coates) and one son (Dan). Dora was Paul Hawken’s first wife; they were married in June 1971 in Maryland. Judy was John Deming’s first wife; they were married in Aug. 1972. Both Paul and John worked with Erewhon. Rod and Margy decided to call the company Laurelbrook since they lived on Laurelbrook Road in Fallston, Maryland. Rod and Margy first got interested in natural foods in 1967 when their next to oldest daughter, Judy, who had been studying macrobiotics with Michio and Aveline Kushi in Boston, Massachusetts, and had worked for Erewhon, offered to come home and cook for her parents for two weeks and let them try out the diet.

1971 Sept. 30–Laurelbrook is still considered by Rod Coates to be a division of his Cycle Parts & Accessories, Inc.

1973 Dec.–Laurelbrook opens a new, second warehouse in Raleigh, North Carolina (at 330 West Davie St.). Four people start and run the operation.

1974–Laurelbrook, which now employs 24 people, enlarges its warehouse.

1975–Feb.–Laurelbrook publishes a 6-page booklet showing that the company now distributes about 43 different food products–including soy flour, tamari, and miso.

1976 Nov.–One of Laurelbrook’s employees is trying to start a labor union. Management vigorously opposes it.
Laurelbrook now employs 32 people and has a fleet of 12 trucks that delivers to 350 stores. It is still a family operation, with Rod and Margy Coates, their 3 children, a son-in-law, a niece, and a nephew working at Laurelbrook.

1977–Laurelbrook outgrows its warehouse at 330 West Davie St. in Raleigh, North Carolina, so they move into a larger warehouse facility at 2319 Laurelbrook Street in Raleigh.

1977 Nov.–Laurelbrook has 44 employees. Sales last year were about $3 million.

1978 June–Laurelbrook is now importing foods from Mitoku in Japan.

1979 May–Rod Coates hires Richard Curry as accountant and general manager.

1980 March 17–At a special meeting of the board of directors, Rod informs the board that he will be retiring in one week, on 23 March 1980, his 65th birthday. He recommends that he be replaced as president by Richard Curry and that his (Rod’s) official position be chairman of the board.

1981 March–Things are not going well at Laurelbrook. Rod and Marge feel that Richard is not doing a good job in running the company. Employee morale is down. But Richard blames the problems on Rod, and wants Rod to be less actively involved with Laurelbrook on a daily basis.

1981 March–Dora Hawken is fired from her position in the Laurelbrook office.

1981 July 21–Rod, Margy, and Dan Coates, constituting all the board of directors of Laurelbrook, resign, effective immediately. They are upset with the way Richard Curry is running the company.

1981 Aug.–Richard Curry offers to buy out the Coates’ interest in Laurelbrook foods. They accept the offer. Rod and Margy keep ownership of the property and Richard was to pay them rent for using it.

1981 Nov. 21–Over the next 30 days Richard Curry places five large orders with Hain Pure Foods in the amount of $35,577.

1982 Feb. 15–Laurelbrook Foods files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and does business under Chapter 11 for about 18 months. Richard Curry is president.

1982 Dec. 22–Rod Coates presents a list of items that he alleges Richard Curry sold illegally after the bankruptcy of Laurelbrook, and before the auction of the company’s assets. Attached to this are letters between attorneys.

1983 Oct-Dec.–Rod and Margy Coates have to pay off the debt of $35,577 to Hain—even though they no longer own the company. In Dec. 1983 the last of the equipment in the warehouse was auctioned off.


• Summary: The card, printed in the autumn of 1971 and topped with the erewhon logo, reads: “erewhon. wally gorell. director of imports. Erewhon Trading Co., 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02110. (617) 542-1358.

This card was sent to Soyinfo Center by Wallace Gorell of Berkeley, California, in Dec. 2010. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


• Summary: Erewhon has total assets of $488,963 including current assets of $406,600. Current liabilities are $345,766. Net profit before taxes was $152,168, and after tax profit was $84,417. Retained earnings were $124,203, up from $39,786 in 1970.

In Boston the company is leasing buildings at 33 Newbury Street ($825/month) and 33 Farnsworth Street (2 parts, totaling $1,267/month). In Los Angeles, California, the company is leasing buildings at 8454 Steller Drive ($1,450/month), 7972 Beverly Blvd. ($325/month), and 8001 Beverly Blvd. ($800/month).

Debts–Bank notes: Erewhon is indebted to the New England Merchants National Bank of Boston in the amount of $145,926. Interest rate: 6.5%. The company also has
contingent liability to this bank in the amount of $88,500 represented by various outstanding letters of credit.

As of July 1, 1971, the company ceased operations in its Seattle, Washington, store. All assets located in Seattle were turned over to a former employee of the corporation in consideration for the former employee’s assuming all liabilities brought about by the operation of the Seattle store. Total assets turned over had a net book value of less than $121,000. Address: Fifteen Court Square, Boston, Massachusetts.


• Summary: Starts with a brief history of rice cultivation in the USA, where South Carolina was the first major rice growing state. In 1912, rice was grown commercially for the first time in California. This year over 9,000 million lb of rough rice will be harvested in the U.S., but only about 25% of it will be used here; the rest will be exported, making America the largest rice exporter in the world. The leading rice-producing states are Arkansas, Texas, California, and Louisiana.

While looking for a farmer who could grow rice organically for Erewhon, Paul and Frank Ford (of Arrowhead Mills) drove into the Arkansas countryside and met Mr. Carl Garrich of the Lone Pine Rice and Bean Farm, in Lone Pine, Arkansas. Most farmers in that area had been “organic” farmers prior to World War II, growing their crop without chemical fertilizers or sprays. Formerly they used high-water culture for weed control instead of 2-4-D or Ordram. And they would rotate their crops with legumes and vetch to enrich the soil with nitrogen. “In Arkansas it was a common practice to graze cattle or raise fish on alternate years. Rice straw was stubble-mulched instead of being burned.”

A week later Erewhon signed a contract with Carl Garrich, including a guaranteed income per acre. Erewhon was taking a huge risk. “If the crop failed for reasons other than floods or natural catastrophe, Erewhon would go right out of business in order to compensate for the loss.” They began to prepare tons of compost. The land on which they chose to grow the first crop had been in soybeans for a while, so they felt it would be fairly fertile. Also they used biodynamic compost based on inoculation of the soil with nitrogen-fixing microorganisms, based on the work of German biochemist Dr. E.E. Pfeiffer. To complete the fertilization program, they added potash, rock phosphate, and mineralized seaweed. Then they planted an additional 300 acres of organic soybeans for next year’s rice crop. They were fortunate to have pure well water for irrigation. In late April and early May the untreated short-grain rice seeds were drilled. At first weeds seemed to be choking out the rice, then the weeds matured and died as the rice grew with increased vigor. They have refurbished an older Arkansas mill and “equipped it with a Japanese rubber sheller which will carefully remove the outer hull without harming the delicate germ and bran layers” of the rice.

Note: Mountain Ark’s Guide to Whole Foods (1982, p. 7) added that Hawken first went to Arkansas looking for a farmer to grow rice organically in December 1970. Erewhon and Garrich finalized their agreement in March 1971, after Erewhon had been turned down by 8 other Arkansas rice farmers. Erewhon placed $150,000 in a secured account as a credit against any losses the farmer might suffer. In April 1971 Garrich planted his first organic rice crop on 330 acres. That year he got a bumper-crop yield of 120 bushels per acre. Garrich, who started farming in 1941, didn’t start using synthetic agrochemicals until 1950, when it seemed like a wise thing to do. He knew that organic farming required a lot more care and work to ensure the growth of the plants. Address: [Vice-president, Erewhon, Inc.].


• Summary: Contains a description with photos of how miso is made at Norio and Fujimoto, but without the details necessary to actually make miso on a commercial scale.

Chico-San is developing a domestic miso which it hopes to offer commercially in the near future. Miso expert, Junsei Yamazaki, has tested and developed miso in Chico, California for the last seven years. Mr. Yamazaki has one batch which has been aging for a year. He hopes to market this batch in six months. Chico-San will expand its plant for large-scale production as the miso is perfected.

“We called Erewhon to ask if they had plans for the production of miso and Bill Tara reported that there is a big and rapidly growing market for miso. But, he said, ideally miso should be made in a given area for consumption in that area.” Erewhon will introduce to the domestic market a yeast grain called koji, essential to the production of miso.

There are currently two companies in the continental U.S. which produce miso on a commercial basis. One is located San Francisco and the other in Salt Lake City. Each produces rice miso made from white rice. The Norio Company has been located on the outskirts of San Francisco’s Japan-town, at 1532 Post Street, since the company started in 1919. The company is owned and solely operated by Mr. and Mrs. Minoru Arikawa and son.

Fujimoto and Company, which originated in Oakland, California, moved to 302 South Fourth West, Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1945. Mr. Sekino heads the three-man plant. He speaks little English. Address: EWJ, P.O. Box 203, Prudential Center Station, Boston, Massachusetts 02199. $6.00 for 20 issues.

Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210.


**Summary:** This price list has no cover. Products include: Grains (incl. organically grown brown rice [short, medium, or long grain; Note: The short grain was probably grown by the Lundberg Brothers of Wehah Farms, Richvale, California], Ted Whitmer [in Bloomfield, Montana] organically grown wheat, hard red spring and hard amber durum, and Deaf Smith [Hereford, Texas] organically grown wheat [hard red winter], rye, and corn). Cereals. Stoneground flours (incl. Soybean flour, full fat, organic Deaf Smith; Sweet brown rice flour). Beans (incl. azuki beans, black beans [Japanese, probably black soybeans], soybeans [organic]). Seeds. Tamari & miso: Tamari soy sauce (pints, quarts, half gallon, gallon, 4.7 gallon can, 4.7 gallon wooden keg). Hacho miso (soy paste, 1 lb or 44 lb kag). Mugi miso (barley-soy paste, 1 lb, 2 lb, 44 lb kag). Kome miso (rice-soy paste, 1 lb, 2 lb, 44 lb kag).


Pasta. Crackers (Chico-San Rice Cakes, organic–salted, unsalted, with buckwheat, or with millet). Snacks (incl. Corn munchies [organic corn chips with soy sauce], Chico-San “Yinnies” organic rice candy [made in Chico, California]). Hopi seeds: Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, cashews, or soybeans, each dry roasted with tamari. Dried fruits. Virgin oils (incl. Soybean oil, pressed and unrefined in pints, quarts, half gallon, gallon, and 5-gallon can). Nut butters. Condiments (incl. sesame salt, and Tekka [vegetable condiment]). Unusual foods: Umeboshi (plums pickled in brine) and Kuzu arrowroot. For cleanliness [body care products]: Sesame lotion [organic and biodegradable], Sesame shampoo, Orjene shampoo, Peppermint Castile soap, Toothpowder, charred eggplant and sea salt [Dentie in bag or jar], Clearlake all purpose cleaner, biodegradable. For cooking (utensils, incl. 2 sizes of “soy dispenser,” suribachi with pestle, Save A Tree canvas shopping bag). Flyers: The Organic Merchants NOT List. The Sugar Story. The Oil Story. The Macrobiotic Way.

On the last page is a note from Paul Hawken, with his signature, thanking customers for their orders.

Letter (e-mail) from Norio Kushi. 2011. March 31. “Rosemary Traill just reminded me of an interesting story regarding attempting to get rid of the mice at the Erewhon warehouse at 33 Farnsworth St.

“My mother [Aveline] didn’t want to use chemical poisons in getting rid of the mice so someone told her about ‘sonic’ pest repellents that emit a high pitch sound, inaudible to the human ear, to drive the mice away. These sonic devices were placed around the warehouse and interestingly, what occurred is that the mice changed their diet. Instead of eating the grains, they started eating exclusively seaweed. Somehow, the mice, by eating the seaweed had no problem thriving under the condition of the sonic pest repellents. My understanding is that, after that, they had to resort to regular standard ways of getting rid of the rodents.” Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.

53. **Product Name:** Hopi Seeds: Sunflower Seeds, Pumpkin Seeds, Almonds, Cashews, or Soybeans (Each Dry Roasted with Tamari).

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon Trading Co., Inc.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.

**Date of Introduction:** 1971. November.

**Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price:** 1 oz. polyethylene-cellophone bags.

**How Stored:** Shelf stable.


54. **Product Name:** Soybean Flour–Full Fat (Organic, from Deaf Smith).

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon Trading Co., Inc.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.

**Date of Introduction:** 1971. November.

**Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price:** 50 lb.

**How Stored:** Shelf stable.


Note: This is the earliest document seen (Dec. 2001) concerning Arrowhead Mills and soy.

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On the back we read: “The following seven suggestions are offered for consideration as the basis for a sound program to establish physical and mental well-being.”

1. Eat only pure, whole, natural foods.
2. Choose foods which grow and thrive naturally in your local area and eat them in season.
3. Chew.
4. Eat course [sic, coarse] simple foods only when hungry.
5. Eat serenely and gratefully while reflecting on the origin of our food.
6. Eat two meals a day.
7. Do joyous activity and exercise.

Details are given under each heading. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210.

HISTORY OF EREWON

56. **Product Name**: Corn Munchies (Organic Corn Chips with Soy Sauce).
**Manufacturer’s Name**: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc.
**Manufacturer’s Address**: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.
**Date of Introduction**: 1971. November.
**Ingredients**: Corn tortillas, sesame oil, soy sauce.
**Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price**: 24 x 4 oz.
**How Stored**: Shelf stable.
“Snacks: Corn Munchies, organic corn chips w/ soy sauce. 24–4 oz. $0.40 each.”

57. **Product Name**: Organic Soybeans.
**Manufacturer’s Name**: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc.
**Manufacturer’s Address**: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts. Phone: (617) 542-1358.
**Date of Introduction**: 1971. November.
“Beans: Soybeans, organic. 60 lb for $8.40.”

Talk with Bruce Macdonald. 2011. March 2. Bruce is not sure who grew Erewhon’s first organic soybeans. It may have been Frank Ford at Arrowhead Mills (who supplied a large percentage of Erewhon’s early grains and beans, for the first 3 years) or it may have been Carl Garrich, the organic rice grower in Lone Pine, Arkansas. Arrowhead sold quite a few items that it did not grow in Texas. “We didn’t start pushing the contract organic farming program until Paul Hawken returned from Japan.”

58. **Product Name**: Corn Munchies (Organic Corn Chips w/ Soy Sauce).
**Manufacturer’s Name**: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc.
**Manufacturer’s Address**: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.
**Date of Introduction**: 1971. November.
**Ingredients**: Corn tortillas, sesame oil, soy sauce.
**Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price**: 24 x 4 oz.
**How Stored**: Shelf stable.
“Snacks: Corn Munchies, organic corn chips w/ soy sauce. 24–4 oz. $0.40 each.”
the macrobiotic way

Without doubt we are the manifestation of both heavenly and earthly sustenance. From the earth we receive our food which forms our blood, cells, nerves, bowels, bones and skin. From heaven we receive vibrations which are manifested in desires, inspirations, dreams, thought and love. To live in harmony with heaven and earth is every man’s goal, which he calls happiness. To feel this in everyday life is to feel the power of the creator and destroyer, of infinite change and movement which men for thousands of years have been naming. Allah, God, Aum, Jehovah and many others.

We have been discussing for thousands of years the why’s and wherefore’s of change. In order to live in harmony we have sought to understand change itself in order that we not be rigid and fixed, so that we might flow with that change rather than unwittingly oppose it. In ancient times, the laws of change were reduced to the simplest of concepts — the alternating, complementary and dynamic opposites which the Chinese called Yin and Yang. But any name will do.

Macrobiotics is nothing but the game and adventure of the unraveling and application of these basic and simple principles of change. It is not a diet, it is not any particular food, it is not to be understood in dogmatic terms nor is it “oriental”. It is the collective attempt of friends, brothers and sisters to live a way of life according to the order of the universe. Its only motto is “non credo” which means “do not believe”. This simply means that the most meaningful discoveries we make in our lives are not “taught” to us by others but are rather the result of personal reflection, introspection and deep thought. These are the real discoveries that inspire and guide us through life.

The principles of Macrobiotics are very few in number and simple. They are commonsense and can be seen every day in nature and in society. Since we live in a constantly changing relative world, the only constants are the principles of change itself. These are our principles:
1. Everything is the differentiated manifestation of one infinity.
2. Everything changes.
3. All antagonisms are complementary.
4. Nothing is identical.
5. What has a front has a back.
6. The bigger the front, the bigger the back.
7. What begins, ends.

Laws are useless when written and codified since they are far from the living. They are rather dead. So there are no laws. There is only life. It is from life that we should learn and it is from life that we will be taught all great lessons.

The so-called “Macrobiotic diet” is an individual interpretation of what might be the harmonious diet for any one given climatic and geographical area. Therefore, the diet and food varies infinitely according to location and season. In an age in which mankind is suffering from many physical and spiritual diseases, the application of the Macrobiotic principles offers a simple
the oil story

by Paul Hawken & Fred Rohe

One very basic difference between our way of looking at vegetable oils and the industrial oil technician’s viewpoint should be understood. When he sees dark color, it represents the presence of “impurities” — material that prevents the oil from being light colored, odorless and bland in taste. From our viewpoint, those “impurities” look desirable — the things which impart color, odor and FLAVOR. NUTRIENTS. It is both tragic and ironic that the removal of nutrients should be equated with “purity.” Tragic because if those nutrients were present they would contribute to the health of the consumer. Ironic because establishing the desired “purity” really results in producing poor quality food.

We qualified ourselves to make public observations about oils by conducting a threefold research program. First, we read from the following sources: THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA; “Rancidity in Oils” and “The Lowdown on Edible Oils” published by the Lee Foundation for Nutritional Research, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and “The Story of Oils” published by Walnut Acres, Penns Creek, Pennsylvania. Second, we talked for several hours with Frank Lachle, a retired oil chemist with eminent technical qualifications who now owns Healthway Natural Foods, Watsonville, California. Third, we toured one of the largest vegetable oil extraction and refining plants in California, specializing in the production of safflower oil.

There are three methods of extracting vegetable oils from nuts, grains, beans, seeds or olives. The first is by use of a hydraulic press. This is an ancient method and yields the best quality oil. The only two materials that will yield enough oil without heating them first are sesame seeds and olives. Therefore, sesame oil and olive oil from a hydraulic press are the only oils which could truly be called “cold pressed”. The terms “cold pressed” as applies to all oils and “virgin” as applies to olive oil are meaningless to the consumer. They have no legal definition, mean whatever the manufacturer wants them to mean, and do not give a true description of the product behind the label. Organic Merchants will not condone misleading labeling. The term “virgin” for olive oil will refer only to the first pressing by a hydraulic press without heat. The term “cold pressed” will refer only to a hydraulic pressing without heat. These oils are the closest possible to the natural state, therefore have the most color, odor and flavor — in a word, the most NUTRITION — but they will often be unavailable because so little is produced this way.

If an Organic Merchant has an oil which has been extracted by hydraulic press but has been heated prior to pressing, he will refer to it as “pressed”, not “cold pressed”. The second method is by expeller, described in “The Lowdown on Edible Oils” as follows: “This uses a screw or continuous press with a constantly rotating worm shaft. Cooked material goes into one end and is put under continuous pressure until discharged at the other end with oil squeezed out.” Temperatures between 200 and 250 degrees are normal. Obviously, this type of extraction does not qualify as “cold pressed” either. Organic Merchants will refer to it as “expeller pressed”.

Now with a hydraulically pressed oil labeled “cold pressed” or “pressed”, you can assume you have a crude or unrefined oil. But this is not true of “expeller pressed” oil because the common fate of expeller pressed oil is to be refined after extraction. So you need additional information with the words “expeller pressed”. Organic Merchants will use either the words “crude” or “unrefined” to identify this additional classification of acceptable oils. So Organic Merchants draws the line of acceptability at this point and, to review, you may expect us to carry only four classifications of oil: (1) virgin (2) cold pressed (3) pressed (4) expeller pressed - crude. And this paper is your tool to remind yourself of what we mean by those words.

The last method is solvent extraction, described in “The Lowdown on Edible Oils” as “definitely dangerous to health.” “Oil bearing materials are ground, steam cooked, then mixed with the solvent (of a petroleum base) which dissolves out of the oils, leaving a dry residue. The solvent is separated from the oils. This method is universally used by the big commercial oil processors because it gets more oils out quicker and cheaper. About 98% of the soy oil in the U.S. is solvent extracted.

“Why do we use solvents? Most commonly used solvents are light petroleum fractions — four types of Naptha used are Pentane, Heptane, Hexane, and Octane types; another solvent used is synthetic Trichlorethylene. Some of these are commonly found in gasoline. Most used solvent is Hexane. Oils dissolved by this method are solvent extracted DISSOLVED oils are not pressed oils.

“The big commercial edible oil processors and distributors tell us that if any of the solvent remains in the oils it is VERY LITTLE. But you know how hazardous these solvents may be. Pertinent here is an observation coming out of a symposium of cancer specialists organized by the International Union Against Cancer meeting in Rome in August 1956. Among many things they observed “Since various petroleum contaminants, including certain mineral oils and paraffin, have produced cancer in man and experimental animals, the presence of such chemicals in food appears to be objectionable, particularly when such materials are heated to high temperatures.”

“VERY LITTLE” argument for solvent residues is just as weak for solvents as it is for pesticide residues. The amount of petroleum solvent that should enter the human system
the sugar story
By Fred Rohe

No Organic Merchant sells white sugar or any products containing white sugar because it is a foodless food. It is 99.96% sucrose and when taken into the human body in this form is potentially dangerous. It is touted as an energy food, but such propaganda is misleading for there is ample evidence that white sugar robs the body of B vitamins, disrupts calcium metabolism and has a deleterious effect on the nervous system.

The above material can be concluded by anyone through reading, but in addition to the reading, I have taken the trouble to visit sugar refineries in both Hawaii and California. Aside from general curiosity, my reason for these visits was that I had been selling “raw” or brown sugar without understanding what they are. There was no information available which seemed dependable.

Sugar cane is grown with the use of synthetic fertilizers and weed sprays. The fields are burned just previous to harvest. These are destructive agricultural practices; nothing truly good can come from soil so mistreated. I would, therefore, be uninterested in consuming anything derived from commercially grown sugar cane, either brown sugar or molasses.

Sugar refining is largely a mechanical process done in truly huge machines which boil, spin, filter and separate. Aside from water, the materials which enter the processing are lime, phosphoric acid and diatomaceous earth. I don’t consider any of these additives significant where white sugar is concerned because one thing is certainly true about white sugar; it is “pure.” No chemical residues could possibly remain at the end of the line, so effective is their purification process.

There are three kinds of sugar which are not white: light brown, dark brown, and Kleenraw. They are all made the same way — by adding back molasses to refined sugar. For years I had heard several different versions of how these so-called “raw” sugars are made. All of them led me to believe that the so-called “raw” sugar which has traditionally been used in the health food industry is a “partially refined” product removed from the refining process sometimes before the final stage of white sugar. But my investigation has proved this impression erroneous. All forms of non-white sugars are made from a base of white sugar.

The numbers go like this: Partially refined or “raw” sugar is 97% sucrose when it leaves Hawaii and goes through a gigantic California refinery to produce refined sugar, 99.96% sucrose. For Kleenraw they add back 5% molasses, for light brown they add back 12% molasses, for dark brown they add back 13% molasses. A special crystallization process is used for Kleenraw designed especially to create a raw-like illusion.

All sugar companies use similar processes, as it is against the law to sell sugar which has not been refined. Ostensibly, the purpose of this law is to protect us; in reality it means we have no freedom to choose what kind of sugar we would use. Personally, I would like to be able to buy sugar from organically grown cane in the form of an almost black, syrupy mass of crystals. It is rumored that the law which prevents us from buying such true raw sugar was enacted as a result of powerful lobbying on the behalf of the sugar refining companies.
The NOT List

By FRED ROHÉ

You, the consumer, will see many improvements in the quality of material goods during the coming decade due to the activities of the movement known as “consumerism.” One such activity can already be seen in the efforts of Organic Merchants. True, Organic Merchants is an organization of businessmen; but in its purpose it is nothing less than “consumerism” come to life.

When a businessman inquires about Organic Merchants, he receives an application which, if he wants to join, he must read, sign and return with his check for a year’s dues. This application is actually a no-nonsense commitment, reading as follows:

I recognize my kinship to the brotherhood known as Organic Merchants.
I understand that the purpose of our brotherhood is to provide information to the public regarding agriculture, the food industry, and nutrition and that this information shall be provided without profit.
I understand that the purpose of our brotherhood is to set quality control standards, making them in the form of a public contract that validly demonstrates a serious commitment. Therefore, I agree not to sell any food products containing:

- white sugar — “raw” sugar — turbinado sugar — corn syrup — bleached white flour — hydrogenated fats — artificial flavor — artificial color — cottonseed products — monosodium glutamate — synthetic vitamins — synthetic sugar substitutes — synthetic salt substitutes — synthetic preservatives, emulsifiers, or other synthetic food chemicals

I also agree not to sell refined salt, refined oil, & refined flours (white flour, degerminated corn meal, gluten flour, white rice flour) and to begin gradual elimination of products containing these items.

The above promise represents a truly remarkable phenomenon. There has never been a stricter set of quality control standards. Organic Merchants can rightfully claim to be the guardian of food integrity.

But it is not enough to set standards, not even enough to live up to them. You, the consumer, must understand these standards, why they exist, their importance to the planet, to you, to everyone. So the principal duty of Organic Merchants is to inform. We must inform because ultimately quality control must be where it belongs: in the hands of the people. It will not suffice for one poor, small organization, even though it be of pure intentions as Organic Merchants, to be guardians of food integrity for this entire nation. That task requires a force and the only force available is the people, armed with the knowledge of what they want and why they want it.

Organic Merchants believes that when they are properly informed, the people will want natural foods in abundant supply convenient to everyone living anywhere in this country. The necessary awakening is already well underway. This brochure and other writings published by Organic Merchants are designed to further stimulate the consumer consciousness. But again, it is not enough for Organic Merchants to do what it does. So we hereby propose a working agreement between you and us: we will do our part by printing thousands of brochures and giving them away; you do your part by asking one of your fellow men to read it. By being sure the brochures are not thrown away, thousands will turn into millions and we will have become the ultimate effective tool — the people working for the people.
Hexane. Oils dissolved by this method are solvent extracted dissolved oils; they are not pressed oils.

Refined oils are susceptible to rancidity, because their antioxidants are removed during refining. Crude oils retain their natural anti-oxidants. A rancid oil has a bitingly sharp taste and is unhealthy. A crude oil contains all its natural vitamin A, vitamin E, lecithin, and all other natural food factors.

On the bottom back of one edition is: “Preprints available from: Erewhon Trading Co., 8454 Steller Drive, Culver City, California 90230. Phone: (213) 836-7569.” Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210.


• Summary: This leaflet, printed with brown ink on orange-yellow paper, begins: “No Organic Merchant sells white sugar or any products containing white sugar because it is a foodless food. It is 99.96% sucrose and when taken into the human body in this form is potentially dangerous. It is touted as an energy food, but such propaganda is misleading for there is ample evidence that white sugar robs the body of B vitamins, disrupts calcium metabolism, and has a deleterious effect on the nervous system.”

“There are three kinds of sugar which are not white: light brown, dark brown, and Kleenraw. They are all made the same way—by adding back molasses to refined sugar... For Kleenraw they add back 5% molasses, for light brown they add back 12% molasses, for dark brown they add back 13% molasses.”

“Organic merchants do not sell brown or ‘raw’ sugar or any products containing brown sugar either, because the plain fact is that brown sugar is a shuck” (phony).

Turbinado and Demarara sugar are similar to brown sugar. So what kind of sugar should we use? The writer recommends following the advice of J.I. Rodale: “So far as we are concerned, the answer is none. If you would be healthy, omit all sugar and just get accustomed to doing without it.” Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210.


• Summary: “Complete macrobiotic supermarket. Direct receivers: Lima [Belgium], Erewhon, Chico-San, Spiral, Infinity, Sun Circle Ranch. Organic grains, flours, beans, specialty foods, books, cooking utensils, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain baked goods, cosmetics and vitamins. Mail order catalog available.” Note: This company was run by Arnie Greenberg. Address: 125 1st Ave., New York, NY 10003. Phone: 212-254-3151.

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Summary: This photo was taken in the summer of 1971. The color photo of Evan Root (left) and Jim Ledbetter was taken somewhere near Kyoto, Japan, in 1971 or 1972. The black and white photo is of Ty Smith.

Evan Root writes (29 Nov. 2010): “Yes, me and Jim Ledbetter in Japan. Jim was over there for at least a couple of years, and, for a period of time, stayed with Alcan Yamaguchi and his family in Kyoto. As you may know, Jim was the editor of The Order of the Universe, a magazine that featured mainly edited transcripts of Michio Kushi’s lectures along with letters and useful contacts around the world. After Erewhon moved up the street half a block (about 390 feet) to 342 Newbury St., Tao Book Store occupied the space 303B Newbury St. with Jim as store keeper.

“I suppose Jim, like many of Michio’s students, was drawn to Japan to get direct knowledge of Japanese life and culture. During the time I was in Japan, quite a few students came over to live there for a while, staying from 6 months to 10 years. David and Cecil Levin, Gary Peacock, and Leonard Carmody were already there when Paul Hawken and I arrived. Arriving during my stay were, Peggy Taylor, Nahum and Beverly Stiskin, Matthew and Helen Sandler, Ty Smith, Bill and Beverly Gleason, Adel Wood, Anne Reigel, Jane Randolph, and a few others whose names escape me. Many more came after I left. I mention this as a way of demonstrating that going to Japan was a kind of pilgrimage, you might call it, for some of Michio’s serious students. A very specific reason for going or mission there was not needed. Spending time in the country that gave rise to the macrobiotic movement was reason enough. That said, some of these people accomplished very specific things, such as Bill Gleason became an Aikido teacher and Nahum wrote the book The Looking Glass God while there.”

As for Ty Smith: “I can’t speak for Ty, but I would say he was over there for the reasons pointed to above, mainly to get an experience of Japan. Ty and I were also close at that time. I originally met him at a lecture I gave on macrobiotics at Paul Hawken and Bill Tara’s warehouse (they lived in a warehouse when they were in the light show business together in San Francisco [California]). He took over my spot at Sanae when I left for Japan. and when I left Japan, he took over my spot at Muso Shokuhin. Later, in the mid-seventies, he was the president of Erewhon. I included his picture in case you wanted to have a picture of Erewhon’s president for that era, and couldn’t find one elsewhere.

Note: This photo was sent by Evan Root to Patricia Smith and by Patricia to Soyinfo Center (Nov. 2010).


Summary: The New York Times Magazine is part of the Sunday New York Times and may be simply listed as such. Discusses: Richard Nixon’s declining health; he is sanpaku. Yin, yang, and the Zen Macrobiotic Diet, which has “something more than 10,000 adherents across the U.S., most of them living in macrobiotic communities—particularly in New York City, Boston [Massachusetts], San Francisco [California], Seattle [Washington] and Los Angeles. David C. Prentice and the Tao Bookstore in Boston. George Ohhsawa. Bruce Gardiner, “the gaunt editor of Order of the Universe, a macrobiotic monthly magazine.” Comments by Huston Smith, a professor of philosophy at MIT, and by Philip Kapleau, spiritual director of the Zen Meditation Center in Rochester, New York. The 1965 death by starvation of Beth Ann Simon, a young woman following a Zen macrobiotic diet in Clifton, New Jersey. Diet No. 7.
Abstinence from marijuana. Attitudes toward sex. Herman Aihara. Vitamin B-12. Dr. Gerald Hass, a Boston pediatrician, who has examined many macrobiotic children and generally found them to be healthy though small in height and weight. Concerns of other pediatricians, incl. Dr. Cyril Ramer of San Francisco—who says that for children the macrobiotic diet is very inadequate in protein, vitamins, and iron.


• Summary: This pocketbook has a color (beige) photo on the cover of ears of wheat, one wooden spoon filled with soybeans and one filled with unpolished rice. It is "A basic introductory guide to cooking and eating the macrobiotic way." The author's interest in macrobiotics began in April 1968. Basic information on soyfoods (especially miso, tamari, and tofu) is given on pages 29, 33-38, 213-14. Soy-related recipes include: Wheat berries and black beans (i.e. black soybeans, p. 78). Sprouts (incl. soy sprouts, p. 82-83). Miso pickles (p. 124-25). Miso soup (p. 128-29). Cream of miso soup (p. 135). Black beans and wheat berries (p. 139).


Miso-vegetable spread. Miso-watercress spread.


• Summary: Erewhon Trading Co. Inc. is making building improvements and alterations on a store at 8001-8003 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. The are “remodeling for the purpose of installing an air conditioning and heating system, with carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, etc.”

Note: LaBel and Izakowitz own this store and are leasing it to Erewhon. Address: Label: 6378 Warner Dr., Los Angeles, California 90048.


• Summary: Discusses natural and organic health foods. There are now “over 2,000 ‘health food’ stores across the United States, doing an estimated $500 million business in azuki soybeans [sic], green lentils, buckwheat, and the like.”

“Erewhon Trading Company of Boston [Massachusetts]—one of the best in the new industry has listed fair ‘organic’ food prices so that the buyer may beware.” Short grain brown rice, says Erewhon, should retail for about 35 cents a pound; yet it has been known to sell for as much as 50 cents.


• Summary: Morris Kirsner is Erewhon’s attorney. Paul has talked with Michio Kushi and the following is agreeable to him. Structure [of Erewhon] before investments: East West Foundation 3,832 shares, 38.3%. Michio Kushi 2,554 shares, 25.5%. Paul Hawken 2,554 shares 25.5%. Employee trust 1,060 shares 10.6%.
Structure after John W. Deming Jr.’s investment of $150,000: East West Foundation 3,832 shares, 35.4%. Michio Kushi 2,554 shares, 23.6%. Paul Hawken 2,554 shares 23.6%. Employee trust 1,060 shares 9.8%. John W. Deming 831 shares 7.7%.

Structure after Advest’s investment of $350,000: East West Foundation 3,832 shares, 30.0%. Michio Kushi 2,554 shares, 20.0%. Paul Hawken 2,554 shares 20.0%. Employee trust 1,060 shares 8.3%. John W. Deming 831 shares 6.5%. Advest 1,939 shares 15.2%.

Both Advest’s and John Deming’s investment is based on their purchasing stock at $18.05 [sic, $180.50].

The officers of the corporation will be as follows: Paul Hawken, president. William Garrison, vice-president. John W. Deming, vice-president. Tomoko Kushi, treasurer. Paul West, general manager. James Gronemeyer, general manager.

The Board of Directors will be as follows: Tomoko Kushi, Michio Kushi, Morris Kirsner, Paul Hawken (Chairman), John Deming, One representative from Advest.

“I hope this supplies you with all the necessary information and that we can bring this to rapid and speedy conclusion.”

Talk with John Deming. 1994. Dec. 28. Neither of the proposed investments by John or by Advest ever happened. Michio Kushi nixed them both. Paul Hawken believed that he owned 25.5% of Erewhon and Michio told him repeatedly that he did, but Michio would never give Paul a document which proved this ownership. John is quite sure that Paul did not actually own any Erewhon stock. Address: President, Erewhon Inc., 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.

68. **Product Name:** Tan Pups (Skewered Seitan Deep-Fried in a Breaded Batter).

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Amartseff (Nik and Joanne).

**Manufacturer’s Address:** 216 Gardner Rd., Brookline, MA 02146.

**Date of Introduction:** 1972. October.

**Ingredients:** High-protein wheat flour. Broth: Water, kombu, sauteed onions, soy sauce, fresh gingerroot. Batter: Pre-ground corn meal, fresh onions, garlic, salt, soy sauce, some of the concentrated liquid in which the seitan had been cooked, and maybe some water.

**How Stored:** Unrefrigerated and perishable.

**New Product–Documentation:** This was probably one of America’s first two commercial seitan products. With this extremely innovative, all-American product, seitan was transformed from a salty black seasoning into a juicy meat substitute, and the pattern was set for most subsequent seitan products in the western world.

Talk with Nik Amartseff (P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2942; by June 20: P.O. Box 135, Chesterfield, New Hampshire 03443. Phone: 603-256-6750). 1992. May 24. Nik created this product. He and his first wife, Joanne Street Amartseff, made this product together out of their home, though they never operated under a company name. Joanne now lives in Mission Hill, near Brookline, Massachusetts. They first made the product at Gardner Road in Brookline. It was sort of the Erewhon executive house. The name was a play on two words: “Tan” came from Seitan, and “Pups” came from Hot Dogs.

Nik thinks he first made seitan at home in Los Altos, California. He learned the process by reading about it, either from an early issue of *East West Journal* (which began publication in Jan. 1971), or from a book. *Order of the Universe* (which he also read later) had started publication by 1967. He and Joanne first moved to 216 Gardner Rd. in Boston in May, 1971, when Paul Hawken invited them to Boston from Los Altos, California, where he and Joanne worked at Fred Rohé’s New Age Natural Foods. Nik immediately began to work at the Erewhon warehouse and to live at the Erewhon executive house together with Paul and Dora Hawken, Bill and Renee Tara, Hy and Laura Lerner, and some single people including Wally Gorell and Bill Garrison. The women did the cooking in the house, but some of them (including his wife) also cooked the lunches for the workers at the Erewhon warehouse.

Before Nik and Joanne arrived, Renee Tara was baking ready-to-eat unyeasted macrobiotic goodies at home on Gardner Road and selling them at the Erewhon retail store. When Bill and Renee left for England, Renee asked Joanne if she would like to continue this little cottage industry. So in the early spring of 1972 Joanne stopped cooking for Erewhon and took over Renee’s business, with the help of Nik’s sister, Vera, baking at the Gardner Road house to supplement the family income. Joanne’s project was quite successful right away, in part because she did not toe the macrobiotic line very strictly. She sweetened up Renee’s strict macrobiotic line and added a number of innovative sweet baked snack foods, which apparently no one else thought of or dared to attempt, such as cookies, yeasted cinnamon-maple nut rolls, fruit tarts, and fig newtons. Nik continued to work full time at Erewhon, but during his time off he experimented with making seitan. He had two ideas: One was to use small pieces of seitan mixed with sauteed vegetables as a filling for piroshki (small cases of dough around the filling; Nik is part Russian), and the other he called Tan Pups—skewered deep-fried seitan on a stick. Joanne recalls that they may have sold these two seitan foods a few times (she is not sure) but they were not regular items. However Nik is quite certain that for at least the last few weeks before he and Joanne moved to New York state, in order to have some extra money, they “baked like crazy” and sold Tan Pups and Piroshki.

In May 1972 Nik quit Erewhon for a while, and he and his wife moved to New York state. They returned to the...
Gardner Road house in Boston in Sept. 1972 and Joanne resumed baking. At this point Nik began baking with Joanne, mainly out of necessity to make some money. Their two lines of baked products were (1) Joanne’s former line of sweet snack foods, and (2) savory products (such as the Piroshki and Tan Pups). Their two seitan products were on the market by about Oct. 1972 and they soon became popular.

They made Tan Pups entirely by hand as follows: The night before make raw wheat gluten from whole wheat flour (which they bought in bulk from Erewhon). The next morning, cook the loaves of gluten in large enamel kettles with water, kombu, sauteed onions, garlic, and freshly grated gingerroot. About half way through the cooking, add soy sauce. Removed the seitan and simmer the liquid until it is reduced to about ¼ its original volume. Slice the seitan into pieces about 3/4 inch square and 3 inches long (like a hot dog with a square cross-section; the traditional New England Corn Dog influenced the product concept). Set aside any scraps or trimmings to use later in making Piroshki. In a blender, prepare a thick batter (having a consistency between crepe and pancake batter) using pre-ground corn meal, fresh onions, garlic, salt, soy sauce, some of the concentrated liquid in which the seitan had been cooked, and perhaps some water. Skewer the seitan pieces from one end, then dip them in the batter (without dusting in a dry breading), and deep-fry, placing them like spokes of a wheel in cast iron pots. When they are crisp and piping hot, deliver to stores.

These savory vegetarian foods (typically 100 Tan Pups and 50 Piroshki) were sold at only two outlets: Most at the Erewhon retail store at 342 Newbury St. in Boston, and the rest at The Organic Food Cellar, also on Newbury St. At Erewhon, they were sold on (or later in) a glass case about 10 feet from the entrance of the store. The products were sold in bulk, without packaging or labels. Nik usually delivered them by 3:00 in the afternoon, which was found to be a prime selling time. Most were sold by 6:00 and almost none were left the next day. He delivered 2-3 times a week. The work was exhausting.

But there was a lot of turmoil at the Gardner Road house, so Nik and Joanne moved in with John Deming in Allston (Massachusetts), then with friends in Saugus, then to Gloucester (27 miles northeast of Boston) by Nov. 1972. At each of the 3 houses they made the Tan Pups, Piroshki, and sweet snack foods.

In early 1973, Kathy and Mike Atherton, friends of Nik and Joanne’s (Mike was employed at the Erewhon warehouse) moved to Boston from New York. Joanne was due to have a child in June 1973. The business was too labor intensive and soon the family would need more money. So the Amartseffs gave their friends the home business (free of charge) and it was moved to the friends’ home in the north end of Boston. Nik gave them the recipes and his two outlets, and showed them how to make all the products. Nik was re-hired to work full time at Erewhon by Bill Garrison. Nik and Joanne’s son was born in June 1973.

The Amartseffs’ friends continued to sell Tan Pups and Piroshki through at least the autumn of 1973, then they moved on—and the products went off the market. The business never did have a real name.

Nik never heard of nor tasted Tan Pops, the successor of Tan Pups, made by John Weissman.

Talk with Joanne Amartseff. 1992. July 8. She just talked with Nik’s sister, Vera, who both Nik and she think has an excellent memory. Vera (who now lives in San Francisco) does not recall them making any seitan products before Nik and Joanne left for New York.

69. Photograph of Evan Root and Jim Gronemeyer standing by the Erewhon Los Angeles macrobiotic retail store. 1972.

**Summary:** This photo was taken in about Oct. 1972. The black and white shows the two at the back of the store, and the color photo shows the outside front of the store. Jim was one of those who built the first Erewhon West at the behest of Aveline Kushi—who was living in Los Angeles at the time. Evan and Jim were old friends from pre-macrobiotic days; Jim showed Evan around.
Note: This photo was sent by Evan Root to Patricia Smith and by Patricia to Soyinfo Center (Nov. 2010).

70. Advest Co. 1972. Private placement $500,400. 1112 shares. No par value common stock. Erewhon Inc. ($450) per share. These are speculative securities. Hartford, Connecticut. 34 p. 28 cm.


Erewhon Trading Company, Inc. is a manufacturer, packager, importer, and distributor of organically grown foods and natural products. Founded in January 1968, the company is a Massachusetts Corporation with its principal offices at 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston. It proposes to issue and sell privately 1112 shares of its common stock at $450 per share. Advest Co., a member of the New York Stock Exchange, has been retained to act as the selling agent. The company reserves the right to approve each investor and to limit the number of investors to 15. The minimum number of shares purchased by any investor will be 55 shares.

“Management: The business of the company may be deemed to be highly dependent upon Paul Hawken, its president and director, and if the company should lose his services, its business may be materially adversely affected.

Use of proceeds: Net proceeds expected to be received by the company from this offering will be approximately $475,000. Approximately $250,000 of the funds raised will be used to pay back loans from the New England Merchants National Bank. An additional $50,000 will be used to pay accounts payable, and the balance ($175,000) will be available for additional working capital, to support new products and expanded sales, and to open a third retail store in Cambridge.

Erewhon’s sales were $491,546 in 1970, then 1,864,833 in 1971, and an estimated $3,160,011 in 1972. Net profit after taxes was $31,709 in 1970, then $84,417 in 1971 and $14,663 in 1972.

Company history: “Erewhon Trading Company, Inc. was organized in May 1965 by Evan Root to sell natural and organic foods. The company’s first store was a small basement level shop on Newbury Street in Boston. Paul Hawken succeeded Mr. Root as manager in August 1967. In November 1969, the company moved its retail shop to 342 Newbury Street where it presently occupies approximately 2,000 square feet of street level space. The store is decorated in a 19th century country store motif and sells a wide range of package and bulk foods products, fresh produce, books, and cooking accessories. Sales from this location exceed $450,000 annually.

“This year (1972) the company also opened a West Coast retail store in Los Angeles, California and a nearby warehouse. This location serves the local retail market and distributes Erewhon labelled packaged foods to the western states. Its retail store has a ‘country store’ decor... This facility is operated under its own general manager.

“The tremendous interest in organic foods, as reflected by growth in the company’s Boston retail store, led to the need to supply a growing number of independent health and organic food retail stores. Consequently the company opened a warehouse in late 1969. Since that time this facility has quadrupled in size and presently occupies 5 floors or 40,000 square feet of two older warehouse buildings at #33 and #29 Farnsworth Street, South Boston.

“This location serves as the company’s headquarters, its processing and packaging plants, and its warehouse. Presently about 500 natural food stores throughout the country are supplied with approximately 300 different items. From its two locations [Boston and Los Angeles] the company shipped approximately 2 million pounds of wheat, 2 million pounds of rice, 50,000 gallons of soy sauce and a million pounds of oil in 1971. By dollar volume importance the ten most important product classifications in fiscal year 1972 were grains 23.7%, nut butters 10.1%, fruits 9.9%, vegetable oils 9.1%, raw seeds 7.5%, soy products 6.9%, roasted seeds 6.2%, shampoos and soap 5.8%, beans 5.3%, and pasta 3.1%. Since that time, the company has introduced its own line of granola and nut butters. Both these products are processed at the South Boston warehouse with equipment owned by the company... The greatest number of customers the company serves are in the northeast, accounting for more than 70% of its total revenues.” The largest single customer is Star Market, a division of Jewel Tea, which is expected to account for about 6% of company sales in fiscal 1972. Star Market, a regional supermarket chain, purchases its organic and natural foods exclusively from Erewhon. It has 100 feet of shelf space in the form of individual gondolas expressly for Erewhon products.

“Supply: Erewhon has been a pioneer in the development of organic foods supply. The company has often encouraged farmers to switch over to organic cultivation by ensuring them a fixed price and quantity order. Erewhon presently has close relations with over 50 farms and has developed a strong reputation and high degree of loyalty among the organic farming community.

“The company purchases a large portion of its grains and oils from one source, Arrowhead Mills, Deaf Smith County, Texas. This grower-processor works closely with Erewhon to plan production and inventory the company’s needs. Arrowhead maintains approximately 30,000 acres under organic cultivation. Rice is purchased from four growers in Louisiana and California.” Erewhon “spends approximately $10,000 annually to have foods verified
organic by two independent testing laboratories... Validity is also sometimes ensured by an independent program conducted by Rodale Press, Inc. Based on soil analysis, independent visit, and quarterly laboratory testing, this program certified 70 farmers on the West Coast in 1971.” Continued.

Note: This is the earliest document seen (Dec. 2001) connected with Erewhon that uses the term “natural food” (or “natural foods”). Address: 6 Central Row, Hartford, Connecticut 06103.


“Employees and facilities: The company maintains a retail store with 2,100 square feet at 342 Newbury Street, Boston, and a second retail store with 2,500 square feet at 8001 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Supporting this store and the Western regional wholesale market is a 14,000 square foot warehouse at 8454 Steller Drive, Culver City, California.

“The company’s headquarters and principal warehousing, packing, and processing facilities are located on 5 floors of two adjoining buildings at 33 Farnsworth Street, South Boston. This location comprises approximately 40,000 square feet. The company presently operates two packaging lines in Boston, 2 shifts daily, and one Packaging line in Los Angeles.” The company employs approximately 40 people.

“The Market” Because it has grown with the organic movement and has followed rigorous standards of food purchase and preparation, the company enjoys an impeccable reputation for integrity in the rapidly growing organic foods market. The company believes it is presently the largest supplier of organic foods in the East.

“The market for natural, organic and health foods is a dynamic and rapidly growing one. A recent Wall Street Journal article named this industry as one of the ten highest growth industries for the 1970s. The National Nutritional Foods Association [NNFA] estimates there are about 250 manufacturers and distributors in the industry whose total sales were estimated by Dr. Dennis Wood, of Arthur D. Little, to have grown from $140 million in 1970 to $200 million in 1971 and possibly $400 million in 1972. These products are sold in over 3000 independent stores and by many food chains. Their level of importance is indicated by the recent printing of a separate Sears & Roebuck catalogue for health and organic foods.”

There is a diversity of motivations underlying consumer demand for organic foods. Three categories of demand appear to exist: Cultural, economic, and taste. Organic foods usually taste better than non-organic foods. “The growing public concern for ecology also lies behind the purchase of these foods. Presently many members of such organizations as the Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, and the Sierra Club purchase organic foods to boycott the farmers and chemical industries whose use of pesticides and artificial fertilizers the groups consider harmful to the environment. The many life styles and philosophies that are loosely grouped as ‘counter culture’ also underlie the motivation to purchase organic foods. Youth predominates in this category, but some spokesmen are such notables as René Dubois and Buckminster Fuller. In its broadest terms, the ‘counter culture’ is a search for a better answer to man’s modern pattern of life. Man’s present life style has led to a dangerous disruption of his environment.”

“In fiscal year 1972 the company attempted a vigorous program of distributor sales aimed principally at broadening its market geographically and increasing sales. This program was successful in increasing sales, but its implementation required a rapid and inefficient expansion...
of the work force and substantial price discounts on distributor products. By consequence, the company’s overall gross margin contracted, while its operating expenses increased, resulting in a 10-month net loss of $50,000 on sales of $2.8 million.” Since that time distributor sales were effectively discontinued and substantial numbers of personnel were laid off. Gross margins have returned to their previous levels.

“Since its founding, the company has never employed a salesman full-time or run a continuous advertising campaign. Sales growth has been largely in response to externally developed demand and limited by capital.”

Photocopies show the following Erewhon-brand labels: Maple granola, Peanut butter, Apple juice, Olive oil, oil of sunflower, corn germ oil, oil of soybean, short grain brown rice (organically grown), whole wheat flour, hacho miso (soybean paste). Photos also show the front and interior of an Erewhon retail store. Address: 6 Central Row, Hartford, Connecticut 06103.

72. Product Name: Oil of soybean.
Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc.
Manufacturer’s Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.
Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price: One quart glass bottle.
How Stored: Refrigerated.
“Private placement $500,400. Erewhon Inc.” On page 29 is a photocopy of the label for this product. The handwritten text reads: “Erewhon oils are pure and complete oils which are freshly pressed from natural vegetable sources. They are absolutely free from any chemical processing or refining. This unique oil contains natural lecithin, vitamin E, and unsaturated fats. Ideal for salads, baking, and sauteing. This oil should be kept in a cool place after opening and used within a reasonable time. Any cloudiness or sediment in the oil should be kept in a cool place after opening and used

At the bottom of the last page: “Thank you very much for your order. We try to get our distributor orders out as quickly as possible, but you should allow seven to ten days to be on the safe side... When placing orders please call Bill Garrison or Paul Hawken and when checking on shipping dates and rates, please check with Doug Bray. Thank you.”

An illustration at the top left corner of the front page is clip-art of a man cutting barley. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.


Summary: These labels (printed black and russet on beige) were used for Erewhon’s first line of large packaged (non-bulk) food products. Wally Gorell designed, hand-lettered, and created these innovative labels (have you ever seen a label with a recipe on the front panel?) in late 1971 or early 1972.

Wally writes: “Each double-cellophane-bagged product had a label slipped in between the two bags. The weights are printed on the labels. The recipes were for the consumers. The idea was to try new ways of using the products. We were aiming to attract new buyers with the packaged line and wanted to provide recipes so that they’d actually like the food when they prepared it so that they’d incorporate it into their diet.”

“I started my college study at the Rhode Island School of Design, intent on a career in graphic- and book-design.
Paul [Hawken] essentially stole the design for our labels from some other company, it may even have been Arrowhead Mills; I can’t recall. I think he may have had someone else do the drawings, though I believe the idea for the line drawings of furrowed fields was my idea. I never noticed that little monogram [at the bottom center of each label] before–looks like KvH to me. Perhaps it’s the signature of whoever executed the drawings.

“Helvetica (the typeface for the word ‘erewhon’ on the labels) was all the rage then and continued to be for years. Using all lower case type was also in fashion. I can’t account for the origin of the style–perhaps it was influenced by e. e. cummings who wrote his poems all in lower-case. Anyway, the lack of capital letters said ‘modern.’

“I would describe the labels as ‘printed on cream-colored parchment paper [meant to resemble real parchment, made from animal skin, in that is stiff and somewhat translucent]; the labels have a russet border and the ‘erewhon’ logo is printed in the same color. The illustration, the product name, and the recipe are printed in black.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WEHAN FARMS ORGANICALLY GROWN RICE, 50 lb. bags</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terms: Cash</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FOB Richvale, California</td>
<td></td>
<td>$17.00/cwt</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>More than 40,000 lb.</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.50/cwt</td>
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<td>20,050 to 40,000 lb.</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.00/cwt</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>10,000 to 20,000 lb.</td>
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<td>FOB Boston</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>More than 40,000 lb.</td>
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<td>19.00/cwt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20,050 to 40,000 lb</td>
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<td>19.50/cwt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10,050 to 20,000 lb</td>
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<td>20.00/cwt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5,000 to 10,000 lb</td>
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<td>20.50/cwt</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for all three varieties grown by the Lundberg brothers:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Colusa&quot; short grain brown rice,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Golden Rose&quot; short grain brown rice, and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Sweet brown rice.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AZUKI BEANS, 100 lb. bags</td>
<td>1-25 bags</td>
<td>40.50/bag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26-50 bags</td>
<td>37.90/bag</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51-100 bags</td>
<td>35.70/bag</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>over 100 bags</td>
<td>34.70/bag</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TAMARI &amp; MISO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamari soy sauce</td>
<td>24/8 oz.</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>23 lb.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12/pts.</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>23 lb.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12/pts.</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>43 lb.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6/1/4 gal.</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>42 lb.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4/gal.</td>
<td>17.95</td>
<td>53 lb.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.7/gal.</td>
<td>16.83</td>
<td>53 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Habcho miso</td>
<td>30/1 lb. pkg.</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>35 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muji miso</td>
<td>44 lb. keg</td>
<td>22.50</td>
<td>48 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kome miso</td>
<td>20/1 lb. pkg.</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>48 lb.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TEA</td>
<td>44 lb. keg</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>48 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mu herbal beverage No. 9</td>
<td>20/8 pkt.</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>3 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. 9</td>
<td>200/8 pkt.</td>
<td>119.00</td>
<td>30 lb.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/1 kg. pkt.</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td>30 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mu herbal beverage No. 16</td>
<td>20/8 pkt.</td>
<td>13.50</td>
<td>3 lb.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. 16</td>
<td>200/8 pkt.</td>
<td>134.00</td>
<td>30 lb.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/1 kg. pkt.</td>
<td>130.00</td>
<td>30 lb.</td>
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<td>PASTA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wholewheat Spaghetti</td>
<td>20/1 lb. (available soon)</td>
<td>6.40/case</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 lb. case, 1-25</td>
<td>6.00/case</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>26-100</td>
<td>5.60/case</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wholewheat Elbows</td>
<td>20/1 lb. (available soon)</td>
<td>6.40/case</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 lb. case, 1-25</td>
<td>6.00/case</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26-100</td>
<td>5.60/case</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wholewheat Flat Noodles</td>
<td>10 lb. case (available soon)</td>
<td>5.60/case</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GRANOLA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maple Granola</td>
<td>12/1 lb. (limited supply)</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>15 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6/3 lb.</td>
<td>7.68</td>
<td>20 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 lb. bag</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>50 lb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Copyright Soyinfo Center 2011
short grain
brown rice

almond fried rice—measure rice into pot. wash and drain. for each cup rice add 2 cups water (1 1/2 cups for a pressure cooker) and a pinch of salt. cover. bring to boil. reduce heat and cook about 1 hour or till all liquid is absorbed. sauté 1 onion, 3 scallions and 1/2 stalk celery (all sliced thinly) in 3 Tbsp virgin sesame oil (stirring constantly) till onions and celery are glossy and just tender. add 1 Tbsp tamari soy sauce and about 3 cups cooked rice. mix in and try for about 5 min. add more tamari if desired. garnish with slivered almonds and chopped green scallions. serves 4 or 5. a delicious meal in itself.

net wt. 64 oz. (4 lb.)

erewhon trading co., boston, 02210 - 1 2 - 90048

organically grown — medium grain
brown rice

baked rice with white curry sauce—wash and drain 2 cups rice. in a dry skillet, toast it (stirring it constantly) till it turns golden and begins to pop. in a caserole combine the rice with 3 cups water, 1/2 tsp salt, and a dash of tamari soy sauce. cover. bake at 350°F for about 45 min. or till all liquid has been absorbed. sauté slowly 1 chopped onion, 1 sliced stalk of celery and a cucumber cut in small cubes in 1/2 cup corn germ oil for 5 min. sprinkle in 3 Tbsp pastry flour and about 2 tsp curry powder and continue to cook about 5 min. without letting it brown. slowly add 1 cup each of plain (unsweetened) yoghurt and soup stock (or water). simmer till well blended. serve over a bed of the baked (or boiled or steamed) rice. serves 5.

net wt. 64 oz. (4 lb.)

erewhon trading co., boston, 02210 - 1 2 - 90048
organically grown - long grain

**brown rice**

spanish rice — in a large skillet, sauté 2 thinly sliced onions till translucent, add 1 cup uncooked (washed and drained) brown rice and stir constantly till it’s golden, add 4 cups soup stock (or water), 2 chopped green peppers, 1 stalk sliced celery and a pinch of basil or savory, cover, cook slowly till all liquid is absorbed (about 45 min), season with about 2 tbsp barley miso softened in a little water, garnish with chopped stalks or sprigs of parsley and shredded carrots, serves 5 or 6.

**net wt.** 64 oz. (4 lb.)

ereewhon trading co., boston, o2290 — 1. 4 . 900 q8

organically grown

**corn meal**

corn dodgers — bring 3 cups water to rapid boil, add 1/2 tsp salt, slowly sprinkle in 1 cup corn meal (stirring constantly) continue to stir till thickened, then remove from heat and blend in 1/4 cup corn germ oil and 1 cup chopped, dried fruit and/or nuts, cool, shape into a 2-inch diameter log and slice into cookies, bake on oiled cookie sheets at 350° f for about 20 min. or till golden and crusty, makes 2 to 3 dozen cookies.

this 100% whole grain corn meal is milled with the germ intact — try it in your favorite corn bread recipe.

**net wt.** 48 oz. (3 lb.)

ereewhon trading co., boston, o2290 — 1. 4 . 900 q8

© Copyright Soyinfo Center 2011
“Note that the short, medium and long grain brown rice labels each have a different recipe.”


These recipes were sent to Soyinfo Center by Wallace Gorell of Berkeley, California, in Dec. 2010. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


• **Summary:** These labels (printed black and russet on beige) were used for Erewhon’s first line of small packaged (non-bulk) food products. Wally Gorell designed, hand-lettered, and created these innovative labels (have you ever seen a label with a recipe on the front panel?) in late 1971 or early 1972. He also created & tested the recipes himself.

Wally writes: “Each double-cellophane-bagged product had a label slipped in between the two bags. The weights are printed on the labels. The recipes were for the consumers. The idea was to get them to try new ways of using the products. We were aiming to attract new buyers with the packaged line and wanted to provide recipes so that they’d actually like the food when they prepared it so that they’d incorporate it into their diet.”


These recipes were sent to Soyinfo Center by Wallace Gorell of Berkeley, California, in Dec. 2010. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


• **Summary:** (1) Wallace Gorell, with beard, smiling. 1971.


Steve Earle recalls in an e-mail to Norio Kushi (in reply to a question from Norio). 2011. Feb. 13. “Norio, I roomed with Peter Bradford for awhile in Brookline and he also spent Christmas with us one time in South Conway. I also visited Erewhon Farms once in the summer of 1971. It only lasted for a couple of years if I remember correctly. I saw Peter Bradford over the years when visiting London with Muso, and he also came to Japan once;... Have lost track of
him though. Have you tried Bill Tara?” Note: Norio knows that Peter Bradford worked at the Erewhon Farm.

(3) L-R: Wally Gorell, Nahum Stiskin, and Beverly Stiskin, in Central Park, New York City, early 1973 (winter).

These three photos were sent to Soyinfo Center by Wallace Gorell of Berkeley, California, in Dec. 2010.


Summary: This photo was sent to Soyinfo Center by Susan Hillyard, a professional photographer in Santa Cruz, California. (Dec. 2010).


Summary: “Soy sauce has been produced in Japan since it was introduced, along with Buddhism and the vegetarian diet, from mainland China over one thousand years ago. Today there are 5000 Japanese companies brewing a total of over 300 million gallons of soy sauce each year.

“One of these companies is Marushima Shoyu, located on Shodoshima Island, four hours by boat from Osaka through the Kii Strait. Marushima is a very old company, using traditional methods of manufacture, and it is here that Erewhon Tamari soy sauce is made. All soybeans used at Marushima are of unusually high quality, and come only from the island of Hokkaido.”

A description of the process for making this soy sauce is then given. Whole soybeans are washed, soaked, then steamed and boiled in a 14-foot-high cooker. Toasted whole wheat is “ground into flour, mixed with the cooked soybeans and placed in a large room, right on the wooden floor, which is kept very clean.” The koji is placed in vats and spring water is added. The soy sauce changes color month by month until, after about one year, it begins to turn very dark and a rich aroma permeates the storage room. It is then poured into cypress-wood tanks and left to age for two more years. Unlike this pure, aged product sold under the Erewhon label, most other brands are aged only one to three months in concrete or metal containers.

“We at Erewhon would like to thank Marushima Shoyu for the wonderful product they make available to us.”

Note: This was written by Paul Hawken. An illustration (line drawing) shows a traditional shoyu keg labeled “Marushima” and a gallon glass jar labeled “Tamari.”

Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


Summary: The number of products in Erewhon’s catalog has increased dramatically during the past year. An illustration at the lower center of the cover is clip-art showing a man cutting barley. A message on the inside front cover is signed “Thank you all, Paul Hawken.” Below his message is a smaller reproduction of the man cutting barley and below it: “Good morning.”

erewhon

SUPPLYING NATURAL FOOD STORES, CO-OPS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES
33 FARNSWORTH STREET,
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02210
(617) 542-1358

APRIL 6, 1973

A long note at the top of this list states: “In our retail store we like to sell ‘bulk’ whenever possible. But we have found that to many new customers coming into our store everyday, pre-packaged foods such as we are presenting here offer a better introduction to the world of whole-grain cookery. Each package has an appealing ‘kitchen-tested’ recipe on the front so that new friends unfamiliar with these foods can give them a try. Furthermore, some people prefer to buy packaged foods because they feel for various reasons that food sold exposed is not as clean or pure. There is some truth to that, of course, depending on the store, but in any case we are happy to offer a complete line of Erewhon grains, cereals and flours in attractive, biodegradable cellophane packages. We will be expanding this line of cereals and grains and welcome your comments and suggestions. Please let us know how we can serve you better.”

This catalog cover was reprinted with permission from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.


• Summary: This lease was executed on 17 April 1973 by and between Murray LaBel and Benjamin Izakowitz (lessors, owners of the building), and Erewhon Trading Company, Inc. (of 8454 Steller Ave., Culver City, California 90230. A Massachusetts Corporation) (Lessees), for the purpose of retail and wholesale groceries, at 8001 and 8003 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles (two separate individual stores). The 7-year lease commences on 1 July 1973 and ends on 30 July 1980. The amount of the lease is $900/month. The lease is signed by the three parties to the agreement. Paul Hawken is President of Erewhon Trading Company, Inc.

Note: The street name, Steller, is spelled like this twice in the lease. Address: Los Angeles, California.


• Summary: The structure and design of this catalog is quite similar to the previous one of April 6, however some new products and sizes have been added. The illustration and note from Paul Hawken are similar. OG = Organically grown. products: Cereals: Soybean flakes (Deaf Smith, OG, 25 lb). Stonerground flours: Soybean flour, full fat, OG, Texas, 50 lb. Beans: Azuki beans (100, 50, or 25 lb). Soybeans (OG, Texas, 50 lb). Tamari & miso: Tamari soy sauce (8 oz, pints, quarts, half gallon, gallon, 4.7 gallon can). Hacho miso soy paste (1 lb or 44 lb keg). Mugi miso barley-soy paste (1 lb or 44 lb keg). Kome miso rice-soy paste (1 lb or 44 lb keg). Pasta: Wholewheat shells (with rice and soy flour, 15 lb). Snacks: Corn munchies (organic corn chips with soy sauce). Hopi Seeds (all dry-roasted with tamari, 1.38 oz or 25 lb): Almonds, cashews, pumpkin seeds, soybeans, sunflower seeds. Vegetable oil, pressed and unrefined: Soybean oil (pint, quart, 5 gallon tin). Condiments: Tekka (vegetable-miso condiment, 3 oz). For cooking: Soy [sauce] dispenser (4½ inch). Packaged in cellophane bags with recipes (1 lb, 1½ lb, and 2 lb): Soybeans (sprouting or cooking, OG, 1 lb or 2 lb) stonerground soybean flour (full fat, OG, 24 oz), soybeans (OG, 2 lb). Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.


• Summary: An early, critical history of Erewhon, written without any capital letters [all lowercase], expressing the
viewpoint of one of its early, important, and very innovative presidents. “Arrogant” is a term often used to describe the attitude of the people running the company. A store by the name of “Erewhon” opened in May 1966 on Newbury St. in Boston, first manned by Evan Root, then Paul Hawken.

Paul “generally worked alone for first year [at Erewhon in Boston] with the exception of occasional help from members of the community—Elaine Sutton, Connie Frank, Peggy Taylor, and even Michio would help bag and clean. At that time I was much more interested in lectures, books, ideas, and more invisible things than food. I had no intention of doing Erewhon for very long, but that was before the remarkable and compelling visitations upon my brain that were precipitated by a five week fast augmented by only [brown] rice and water.” Paul then describes the profound spiritual experience he had in 1966—one of great fight and energy reaching down to the cellular level. “I could fully experience in that one moment the indivisibility of consciousness and body.”

“Since nothing could really change until cells changed, it seemed the most logical thing was to provide the resource for that change to those who were ready for it. Soil and land would have to be found that was rich and uncontaminated... food should contain the life force inherent in natural growth. The problems posed were complex and many but all these questions gave me the answer as to the purpose of Erewhon... for those seeking the unveiling of the spirit, Erewhon would attempt to provide the renewing and cleansing power of the earth.

“This ‘visceral mysticism’ was a turning point for me and my relation to Erewhon. No revelation can arise unless ignorance precedes it, and the greatest lesson from this vision was the realization of how little I really knew or understood. My ignorance in the matters of spirit and consciousness were so great that I felt more at home with more plain and simple matters. Raising the quality of food seemed an area that was neglected, yet vital, in the path to higher consciousness.”

“On Thanksgiving day 1968 we opened a new store down the street [at 342 Newbury St.] which still exists today. At that time we were doing about $250 a day and the rent on the new store, with utilities, totalled over $1,000. It was a chance we took, a big chance, and seemed to set the pattern for many to come. The decision to place our economic life on the line was based on growth. By then Erewhon had grown to be six people, and all of us felt in our bones that we had a tiger by the tail. A sort of giddy optimism pervaded the new store, abetted by all of us working 12 to 20 hours a day—Bruce Macdonald, Jim Docker, Jean Allison, Bill Tara (later to leave for Chicago, Illinois), and Roger Hillyard. The intensity was so thick you could scoop it up and bag it. All of us felt like passengers on a very fast vehicle bound for unknown places. Business was increasing very rapidly and it seemed we could do no wrong. Time moved very quickly and I was soon to leave for Japan to establish a source of imported foods. My position as to coming back was ambivalent, so Roger Hillyard was appointed head in my absence. Bill Tara, who had set up Food for Life in Chicago on the tenth floor of a downtown office building, left for Los Angeles with Aveline [Kushi] and set up another Erewhon due to Aveline’s prodding. It was later to prove to be our worst mistake and almost led us to bankruptcy.

“While I was away, roaming around Japan looking for pure foods and wise men, Roger [Hillyard] and others were busy establishing a wholesale market based primarily on the products that were being sent back from Japan. In retrospect, those times were chaotic, and I do not think the chaos let up until four years later, the spring of 1973. The chaos was (as I think back upon it) caused by thinly veiled ambition clothed in a stylishly cut suit of concern for our biosphere and guts. Perhaps this was a reflection of our urgent need to make up for years of bad living, bad ideas, and trash foods. In any case our actions were hasty, well-intentioned, very salty, and somewhat crude, but like a moldboard plow, we just kept coming.

“Chico-San saw us coming and promptly freaked out. They were very dismayed by their loss of New York business as our wholesale market developed. Chico-San had given us the impression in a number of personal conversations that they encouraged our self-reliance and particularly the importance of Japanese foods. Bob Kennedy, the head of Chico-San, candidly admitted that they lost money on imported items and they were able to stay in business only because they sold rice cakes. So it came as quite a surprise to us when they reversed their attitude. They began to express doubts about our motives and ability to procure good foods. Their attitude seemed to change into one where they were the ‘official’ food company, and that was that—appointed by the crown as it were. I can certainly see now how our brashness and youth did nothing to allay their doubts. In retrospect I have much sympathy, while realizing also that they did little to establish a real dialogue.

“Chico-San was formed by middle-aged people who split from New York City after Ohsawa walked into one of their meetings one night stoned on Scotch [whiskey] and announced the bomb was going to drop. This was during the Cuban [missile] crisis and there were many who shared that fear. They formed a well-organized caravan of families and trekked across the United States in a trip that got national coverage. Their purpose was to find the one place in America that was safest from radioactive fallout and also ideal for growing rice. Eureka! Chico, California. No one was more surprised than the local residents. The rift that opened between Erewhon and Chico-San has never closed. The rift could best be described as an ocean now. Peaceful coexistence. They mainly felt that their maturity and
experience uniquely qualified them to be the best judge of what foods people should or should not eat. They thought that there should be only one 'label' and that we did not know enough about food to promote it... Herman Aihara who worked there then and Bob Kennedy felt that most young people had been ‘ruined’ by drugs and that their ‘judgment’ could never be completely restored,...” Continued. Address: [President, Erewhon].


• Summary: Continued: “Perhaps the incident that best illustrates the conflict, and the one which simultaneously affected the most people, was the incident about the rice. To this day, I very much doubt there is agreement on the incidents leading up to the event, but here is one version anyway which may shed some light for others.

“In the fall of 1969, one Wendell Lundberg came striding into the retail store on Newbury Street and introduced himself as one of four brothers who were going to grow organic rice. He had heard of our company and wondered if we would be interested. We fell off our chairs. It seemed too easy at the time, and later events proved it to be so. A cordial conversation was entered into, addresses were exchanged, and he left. The following spring, I was in California, and a young man, who was on grant-in-aid to study organic farms dropped into our L.A. [Los Angeles] store and told us about these Lundberg brothers. Homer Lundberg and I began a relationship via the phone. I affirmed our desire to buy organic rice while he continued to express the desire to sell it. We set up an appointment in Richvale to discuss matters. Homer met me and told me that in the interim they had signed an exclusive five-year contract with Chico-San but that should be no problem because he had understood that Chico-San would sell the rice to us–wholesale. I explained how difficult it would be for us to buy rice wholesale from Chico-San and then try to redistribute to a hundred stores on the East Coast. He agreed and said that I should go to Bob. And he was sure it would be alright if I bought directly too or maybe paid Bob a small commission. I immediately went to see Bob Kennedy and posed the question to him, and he was simply appalled at the idea. High drama soon to come. I cannot accurately describe how hostile and upset the people at Chico-San were.”

“Bob’s attitude was formed partly because he had worked for years... trying to get a farmer to grow rice for him organically. When he finally found one, he had to just about sign his life away... in order to guarantee that the farmer would not lose money in case of a severely short crop. None of this of course was explained to us at the time. I suppose they just assumed we would know all the history behind it, but no one stopped to ask us or tell us or even show us the contract. We offered to share the risk, but that too was denied.

“The Lundbergs then made us an offer that they would grow a similar rice [in 1970] that was ‘unsprayed’ but which was still grown on ground with synthetic fertilizer. That was done and we were finally in the rice business, albeit second class.

The following year [1971] came quickly, and a new dance competition began to shape up. Bob [Kennedy of Chico-San] offered to sell us a certain number of acres if we would pay $1.50 for every bag we bought. One of the reasons he did this was because he heard rumors of other growers of organic rice [were there other growers?] selling to us. We accepted his offer initially, but I did not stop my search for an organic grower. With the help of Gloria Swanson, I located a group of farmers in Arkansas, and one in particular expressed interest.

“The farmer in Arkansas had fields which had been in soybeans with no fertilizers or pesticides. We tentatively lined up a source of Pfeiffer compost and manure, but as planting time came near it looked as though we were going to get the California rice offer and all the relations with the Arkansas grower were brought to a halt. At the last moment, however, Bob Kennedy reneged on his commitment and decided he would not sell us any rice. He said there just wasn’t enough rice ‘to go around’ and that he was real sorry. (It was ironic because a year later [1972] the Lundbergs almost went out of business trying to get rid of all that organic rice that Chico-San had contracted for but could not buy.)

“We immediately contacted our Arkansas grower and drew up a contract... guaranteeing the farmer a fixed income per acre... [Note: The rice contract with Carl Garrich in Lone Pine, Arkansas, was finalized in March 1971. In April 1971 Garrich planted his organic rice crop on 330 acres]. The rice grew very well there and all was fine except for two things: First, our farmer could not clean the rice very well [seeds of various colors were mixed in with the rice], and second Chico-San had 300-400 acres too much rice, which they had contracted in expectation that they would sell the rice we had originally expected to sell. It did not work out that way so we had organic dirty rice and they had too much organic clean rice.

“Since then, because Chico-San could not meet their contractual obligations, the five-year exclusive had been null and void. Dozens of distributors now buy that rice, including Erewhon, which is now Lundberg’s largest customer.”

“That is the rice saga–the inevitable result of selfishness on everyone’s part. I think one of the things I learned from this is that rice, which most consider inanimate, has a power of its own like water, and seeks its own level... The customer in this case was the victor and beneficiary.
“Bruce [Macdonald] and Roger [Hillyard] were soon to find that there was not enough space in the office for both to operate, so Bruce appointed himself West Coast manager much to Bill Tara’s chagrin, relief, and disgust. Bruce began a very energetic effort to improve the West Coast store. Roger moved to a new fifth floor warehouse on Farnsworth Street overlooking the [Boston] harbor. He found new and dedicated people to help in the move. Richard Menoff, Bill Johnson, Eric Utne, Chris Elbers, Rob Harrison, and Susan Sims. Richard, recently removed from set designing on Broadway [New York City], went to work immediately building the first Erewhon ‘set.’ It was beautiful, and unlike any food warehouse before it. Work had not even been completed when the first railroad car of rice backed into our siding. Aboard was 100,000 pounds of brown rice, and we had not the slightest idea of what to do with or how to unload it. Everyone just started carrying the [50 or 100-lb] bags of rice in on our shoulders as we had always done on Newbury Street. The looks of the warehousemen in the vicinity were incredulous. When they couldn’t stand it any longer, they lent us their pallet jack and some old pallets, and we learned our first warehouse lesson.

“I returned from Japan in December 1969 and went to work with Bruce on the West Coast setting up a wholesale operation: it was Boston all over...” Address: [President, Erewhon].


• Summary: Continued: Hawken returned to Boston in Dec. 1969, then was fired by Aveline Kushi. He left and worked in San Francisco with Fred Rohe at New Age Natural Foods. Hawken returned to Erewhon in Boston in the summer of 1970.

In 1970 the “natural foods boom” started and swept Erewhon along with it. “If there is one person who is ‘most’ responsible for Erewhon being here today and not bankrupt, it is John Deming, who brought a sense of joy and happiness wherever he went in the company. He assumed the manager’s position at the retail store and made it the finest part of the company. His positive attitude was in contrast to the apprehension that all of us shared about the future. He gave Erewhon some money without which we would surely have failed. On his twenty-fifth birthday John came into a trust which sort of blew his mind. He had known nothing about it. He wanted to just give it to Erewhon, but it is on the books as a loan. It came just in time to pay back overdue creditors and panting bank officers.”

A table (p. 16) shows Erewhon, Inc’s. sales and sources of supply in 1966 and then in 1973. In 1966 Erewhon had about 200 retail customers. The company bought Koda rice from Sam Rabinowitz; imports from Chico-San, Infinity Co., Japan Foods Corp., and Wing-Wing; Lima (Belgium) products from Merit; grains and flours from Better Foods; and flour from Walnut Acres [founded by Paul Keene].

In 1973 in Boston the warehouse served about 200,000 customers (incl. 200 retail natural food stores, 43 Star Markets, 50 co-ops, 25 schools, 9 distributors, 10 restaurants, and 5 bakeries), and the store about 10,000 customers. In Los Angeles, the warehouse served about 75,000 customers (incl. 150 retail stores, 20 co-ops. 3 bakeries, and 10 distributors) and the store about 5,000 customers. A produce company in Los Angeles was supplied by about 40 organic farmers, and sold to 20 retail stores. Concerning soy products, Erewhon bought organically grown soybeans from Lone Pine in Arkansas [Carl Garrich of the Lone Pine Rice and Bean Farm], and soy oil from California. From Muso Syokuhin in Japan they imported tamari, and kome and hacho miso [plus azuki and black beans]. From Mitoku, Inc. they imported tamari and mugi miso.


Note 1. This is the earliest document seen (March 2006) that mentions Mitoku, or Muso Shokuhin.

Note 2. This is the earliest document seen (March 2006) that mentions Food for Life (started by Bill Tara in Chicago). Address: [President, Erewhon].


• Summary: Prepared for a job application Address: c/o Shizuko Yamamoto, 14 West 75th, New York, NY.


• Summary: A balance sheet shows that Erewhon’s total assets decreased to $967,959 in 1973 from $1,052,148 in 1972. Sales increased from $3,160,011 in 1972 to $3,475,204 in 1973. Net income before taxes was $47,010, up from $20,095 in 1972. Erewhon owes $411,283 to the New England Merchants National Bank. Note that the Advest stock offering, which was supposed to take place in late 1972, never happened. Address: Fifteen Court Square, Boston, Massachusetts.
possibility of forming a trade association was discussed. Erewhon–Toronto existed by the time of this meeting. The note mentions The Well in San Jose, California. (Erewhon Trading Company, Toronto [Ontario, Canada])." (Ceres Natural Foods, Colorado Springs), Michael Pate–Roger Hillyard–(The Well–San Jose), Frank Calpeno– Rod Coates–(Laurelbrook Foods Inc. Bel Air, Maryland), Tom Swan–(Food for Life. Chicago, Illinois), George Gearhart–(Janus Foods Inc. Seattle, Massachusetts), Tom De Silva [DeSilva]–(Erewhon Inc. Los Angeles), and the new Kikkoman plant in Walworth, Wisconsin, cost $10 million to construct. Address: Toronto, ONT, Canada; Or: P.O. Box 44, Milliken, ONT, Canada. Phone: 416-291-1471.


• Summary: This macrobiotic directory lists names and addresses of macrobiotic people, organizations, food stores and restaurants, and bookstores in the United States (each category broken down by state), Canada, and abroad. The leading states for individuals are California (7.3 pages), New York (1.5 p.), and Massachusetts (1 p.).

There are listings for the following foreign countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Denmark, England, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, South Vietnam.

There are ads for the following companies: Sunflower, The Queensberry Bakery (112 Queensberry St., Boston 02215), East West Foundation Center, Sanae Inc. at 2 locations (Sanae Restaurant at 272A Newbury St., Boston, and The Seventh Inn at 288 Boylston St. in Boston), Prasad (1956 University Ave., Berkeley, California) (p. 0). Eden whole earth grocery and delicatessen, and Sun Bakery (330 Maynard St., Ann Arbor, Michigan) (p. 18). Janus Natural Foods (712 7th Ave. South, Seattle, Washington 98104). Phone: 206-MA4-1084) shows that they distribute (import) tamari and miso, as well as sea vegetables. They carry the following brands: Erewhon, Spiral Foods, Deaf Smith, Pure & Simple, Chico-San, Arrowhead Mills (p. 27). Cliffrrose (129 Coffman, Longmont, Colorado). Ceres Harvest Natural Foods (3632 W. Colorado Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80904; wholesale and retail) (p. 39). The Good Karma Cafe (501 Dolores St., San Francisco), and The Good Earth (123 Bolinas Rd., Fairfax, CA 94930) (p. 50). Greenberg's Natural Foods, Inc. (125 1st Ave., New York, NY 10003).
Page 1

This is a record of the first meeting of a group of friends each representing a company involved in the distribution of natural and organic foods in the United States and Canada. These companies are based in many major centers in the country and the purpose of the meeting was to establish a basis for intercommunication among people and the sharing of a general direction through friendship and knowledge of one another.

The meeting was arranged by Paul Hawken and took place in Toronto, Ontario at the house of Michael Pate on December 7-9, 1973. The people present were:

Paul Hawken
Bill Garrison (Erewhon Inc. Boston),
Tom De Silva (Erewhon Inc. Los Angeles),
George Gearhart - Janus Foods Inc. Seattle
Tom Swan - Food for Life, Chicago
Rod Coates - Laurelbrook Foods Inc. Bel Air, Md.
Roger Hillyard - The Well - San Jose
Frank Calpeno - Ceres Natural Foods, Colorado Springs
Michael Pate - Erewhon Trading Company, Toronto.

Friday December 7th

People arrived at different times during the day and after dinner at the house, the evening was spent in conversation and attunement to one another.

Saturday December 8th

The discussions began on Saturday morning with a brief outline from each person of the present situation of his company and its long range plans and intended direction in the future.
Individuals and organizations interested in macrobiotics in the United States (arranged by state): Massachusetts:
James Silver, Seventh Inn, 288 Boylston St., Boston, 02116.
Erewhon Trading Co., 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, 02210.
Michio Kushi, 440 Boylston St., Brookline, 02146. John Deming, c/o Kushi, 440 Boylston St., Brookline, 02146.
Michigan: Mr. and Mrs. Michael Potter, #1169, 1407 Charlton Ave., Ann Arbor, 48103. Judith A. Bolduc, 822 Brookwood Rd., Ann Arbor, 48104.
The George Ohhsawa Macrobiotic Foundation is a non-
profit organization located at 1471–10th Ave., San Francisco, California 94122. It was founded in 1971. The aim of the Foundation is to spread the teaching of the unifying principle and its practical applications in daily life. Address: San Francisco, California.


• Summary: 1973–Ceres Harvest Natural Foods is located at 3632 West Colorado Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80904. Their ad in Useful Names and Addresses (p. 39), published in 1973 by the George Ohhsawa Macrobiotic Foundation [California], reads: “Open weekdays 9-6, Sundays 12-6. Complete stock of organically grown staples, fresh fruits & vegetables. Bulk purchases–Wholesale & retail. Call (363) 636-2898. They are also listed in the East West Journal of Nov. 1973 (p. 46). According to James Silver (Dec. 1991) Ceres was started by Frank Calpeno. Frank’s sister, Wendy, was known as the “Natural Foods Lady” by all the grocery people.

1973 Dec. 19–Ceres Natural Foods is represented at a meeting of natural food distributors in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, by Frank Calpeno. Frank also attends meetings in March and Nov. 1974, and March and May 1975.

1974–Ceres, Inc. is now located at 2582 Durango Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80910 (According to Marcea Newman’s The Sweet Life, p. 151).

1976 Jan.–Ceres is now a member of the Natural Foods Distributor Association. Ceres is also a major account of Erewhon, with James Silver handling their account. Silver recalls that when Ceres went out of business, Erewhon lost a lot of money. Address: 3632 West Colorado Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80904. Phone: 363-636-2898.


• Summary: This 6-panel leaflet is printed in dark green ink on beige paper. On the front panel is written: “erewhon: The unrefined oil story.” Below that are three golden and green sunflowers. No author is listed, but the text is different from that written earlier by Paul Hawken and Fred Rohé. It begins by stating clearly that the simple term “cold-pressed” can prove very misleading. “We do not sell any cold-pressed oils, having chosen to call our oils simply ‘pressed’ because of the fact that all vegetable oils are heated during the process of pressing. To make this distinction clearer it will be helpful to look closely at two phases of oil processing: extraction and refining—or the lack of it.” Both phases are explained clearly and in detail. Erewhon does not refine its oil.

“If you have any questions about our oils or any Erewhon products, please write us. Erewhon, 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Erewhon, 8454 Steller Drive, Culver City, California 90230.”


• Summary: On Feb. 26 Mr. Kushi, a macrobiotic teacher, lectured on: Tekka—“Tekka is used not only as a condiment, but also for medicinal use. Tekka is made from three different roots–carrots, burdock, and lotus roots.” The “volume of miso is flexible... Homemade tekka is traditionally made in a cast iron frying pan.” The Japanese word “tekka” derives from tetsu (which means iron) and ka (fire). “For medicinal use, yang miso is better.”

Miso and miso manufacturing, including how to make malt (rice koji) (8 pages). Note: This section indicates that Mr. Kushi has some basic knowledge of the subject but there are many errors. 1. Koji is not malt (which refers to soaked, germinated cereal grains), but molded cereal grains or soybeans. 2. Koji kin is not malt bacteria, but koji molds. 3. One does not add enzymes to miso and enzymes do not grow. Even modern miso factories do not add enzymes when making miso. 4. The entire mixture is not stirred after 20-25 days to add oxygen. Kushi says you must keep miso for at least 6 months, but to cure sickness it must be kept for 2-5 years. Miso soup can compensate for the bad qualities of meat and eggs–so everyone should eat miso soup daily. Soup stocks and miso soup.

On Feb. 27 he discussed: General outline for making shoyu–soy sauce (4 p.), including discussions with Kikkoman on making natural shoyu starting with whole soybeans. In the early years after 1973, Kikkoman wanted to make natural shoyu and sent Kushi several samples, but he turned them all down, in large part because Kikkoman wanted to use defatted soybean meal instead of whole soybeans. Erewhon is buying shoyu from 3 companies in Japan. But Kushi says the quality is declining compared to
Japanese and Japanese scientists consider soymilk to be an
alternative to tofu. Soybean milk ("Soy milk is very yin." Note: Most
people refer to dried-frozen tofu. Address: Brookline,
Massachusetts.

Using bean and grain sprouts–moyashi (including soy sprouts). Other soybean products: Fried tofu (two methods for age), Ganmodoki. Kori-tofu or koya-tofu (freeze-dried
sprouts). Other soybean products: Fried tofu (two methods forage). Ganmodoki. Kori-tofu or koya-tofu (freeze-dried
tofu). Soybean milk ("Soy milk is very yin." Note: Most
Japanese and Japanese scientists consider soymilk to be an"alkaline" [arukari-sei] beverage, which therefore promotes
good health). Yuba. In the discussion, soymilk yogurt and
"Chinese fermented tofu... fu nyu" (p. 28) were mentioned.
The U.N. [United Nations] recommendations on food, using
vegetable proteins.

Note: This is the earliest English-language document seen (Feb. 2004) that uses the term "freeze-dried tofu" to refer to dried-frozen tofu. Address: Brookline,
Massachusetts.

93. Gerner, Bob. 1974. Log of trip to study
traditional natural foods, 28 Feb.–2 March 1974. Part I
(Log–unpublished). Westbrae Natural Foods Inc., Berkeley,
CA 94710. 26 p. Unpublished log. Handwritten. 20 x 8 cm.

• Summary: 1974 Feb. 28. Meet Bill Shurtleff and Mr.
Masa Miyashita of Kikkoman export dept. (good man,
speaks fluent English) at the Imperial Hotel
(Teikoku
Hoteru, built in the 1920s by Frank Lloyd Wright) in Tokyo.
Talk for 4 hours. Westbrae hires Shurtleff as an interpreter
and guide.

March 1. Dinner at Sasa-no-Yuki, beautiful old
restaurant that specializes in tofu cuisine.

March 4, Monday. Visit Kikkoman in Noda with
Shurtleff and Miyashita. Tour Plant #7, then Plant #4 (the
Goyo-Gura), which produces the emperor's shoyu in the
traditional, natural way. "Saw 5 batches of moromi mash
from 1 month old to 12 months old, and tasted each one.
Delicious. Great color change between the 1 month and the
12 month moromi. We saw all the traditional tools. The
moromi vats were made of cedar and last approximately 200
years." See a movie on how shoyu is made. Lunch at a sushi
shop. Visit two miso retail shops with Shurtleff near his
home. One had 42-45 types of miso (mostly rice miso, with
1 each Hatcho, barley, and cooked miso), the other 32-35
types. Tasted many and learned the differences. I buy
Saikyo sweet white miso and Hatcho miso.

March 5, Tues. Attend a cooking class at Lima
Ohsawa's house, then have dinner with Lima and the class
members. Sick for the next 2 days.

March 9, Sat. Call then meet Mr. Kazama of Mitoku.
He represents Erewhon. We may import through
Kikkoman's Pacific Trading. Plan trip to Sendai Miso-
Shoyu. Sendai is interested in using organic soybeans to
make shoyu but would like a contract stating that all of it
will be purchased when done. Dinner at the natural foods
restaurant, Hakumon run by a Frenchman named Pierre.

March 11, Mon. Meet Shurtleff early at Tokyo station.
Take bullet train (Shinkansen) to visit two Hatcho miso
plants (Hayakawa Kyuemon Shoten, and Ota Shoten in
Okazaki city, Aichi prefecture). Both plants claim to be over
600 years old. They use modern steamers and koji rooms.
They pile 4-6 tons of rocks atop each large vat of miso, age
it for 2 summers. It becomes very mellow when fully aged.
They also use half of their Hatcho miso to make
Akadashi miso. It also contains caramel coloring, barley
syrup, MSG, shoyu, a white miso, and preservatives. They
sell a lot of Akadashi but only a little Hatcho miso. Lunch at
an udon noodle shop that hand makes and cuts the noodles.
Lots of slurping. Then visit a plant that makes real tamari
and shoyu. All the tamari is mixed with junk. Train to
Kyoto; stay at Friends World College. Note: This is the
earliest English-language document seen (July 2006) that
contains the term "real tamari."

March 12, Tues. Visit a tofu maker, a yuba maker (Yuba
Han), then the company that makes Saikyo sweet white
miso. The owner lies to us initially about his miso aging and
caramel coloring (which tastes and looks like tar). Then he
reverses himself without batting an eye. Lunch at a 300 year
old Zen vegetarian restaurant (Okutan near Nanzenji
temple); so beautiful that I start crying. Fantastic place.
Light snow falling by the pond. Enjoy Simmering Tofu
(Dengaku (skewered and braised with sweet
at a shrine (Gion) for dessert of
amazake and Dengaku (skewered and braised with sweet
miso). On to a second miso factory. It is a bore and the
owner does not seem sincere but he has a great reputation
among macrobiotics. He makes both natural and sweet
white miso. Shurtleff visited him last year. For white miso
the soybeans are boiled; for red miso they are steamed.
Some white miso contains sodium thiosulphate bleach. Visit
another yuba shop. They use granite grinding stones to
make soymilk, cast iron pot to cook it in and copper
skimming tables. A very beautiful place. Meet Ty Smith at a
soba shop. He is a chain smoker, just quit working for
Muso, and promoting a cooperative effort between Janus,
Chico-San, Erewhon, and The Well to import foods from
Japan. Evening at Jittoku coffee house, owned by an
American, in a large old Japanese treasury (kura). Back to
Tokyo by train. Talk until 1:00 A.M.
March 14, Thurs. Meet Kazama and Shurtleff, and take express train to Sendai Miso-Shoyu. We are treated royally by Mr. Muro. Long introduction and discussion. Visit their 2 plants, one modern, one traditional, natural. They make only rice miso. Their production of natural miso is more than all that imported to America by Erewhon and Janus. They age their natural shoyu 18-24 months at the request of Michio Kushi and Erewhon. They have 9 aging vats for the first year, then it is switched to other tanks. They invite us to have a shoyu taste test among 3 products: Kikkoman regular shoyu, Sendai regular, Sendai natural. Both Bill and I choose Kikkoman as best; good aroma, color, and taste. They congratulate us on our good taste. Sendai regular had very strong salty taste. We both liked the Sendai natural least; good color, no aroma, very mild taste. Sendai people say only one year is needed to ferment shoyu naturally. We might sell them organic soybeans (we had purchased 12 truckloads from a farmer) and get shoyu back in 1 year. We meet the president (Sasaki?), born 1928. Elegant geisha-hosted tempura and sushi dinner with president, 2 vice presidents, production manager, and a consulting professor (Shibasaki sensei). After dinner to a traditional bar for doboroku (thick, unrefined sake with a low alcohol content [or was it nigori-zake?]), then a sushi house. Shurtleff leaves for Tokyo on night train.

March 16, Sat. Visit Shurtleff and Aoyagi’s home for lunch. We have dried-frozen tofu main dish, salad with creamy tofu dressing, strawberries with tofu whipped cream. Delicious. Then we learn how to make tofu at home. It’s easy. I’ll make it at home in California, then at our Westbrae Natural Foods retail store on Gilman Street (Note: This led to a long series of tofu classes by Gerner, Liz Horowitz, and later Shurtleff & Aoyagi; the retail store changed its name in late 1976 to Gilman Street Gourmet).

Note: This is the earliest document seen (April 2006) concerning Westbrae Natural Foods. Continued. Address: President & Chairman of the Board, Westbrae Natural Foods Inc., 1224 10th St., Berkeley, California 94710.


• Summary: Continued: March 19, Tues. Take bullet train to Kyoto to meet Steve Earle of Muso Shokuhin. We 3 go to Okayama to see Fuchu Miso, that makes mugi miso (the barley miso sold in our store) and sweet white miso. The president’s wife is the epitome of Japanese woman. For lunch we have tofu burgers with Italian sauce and mushrooms in a bento made by Akiko. Delicious. Take a boat to Shodo-shima where Marushima Shoyu Co. is located. Island is also famous for toasted sesame oil. Arrive at a ryokan at 6:30 P.M. VIP treatment. Bath before dinner and served in private room by geisha. Too much fish! Note: This is the earliest English-language document seen (Jan. 2007) that contains the term “tofu burgers.”

March 20, Wed. Miso soup for breakfast. Visit Marushima Shoyu where Muso gets its “natural” shoyu for export to America. They have the newest wheat roasters (they roast it with sand), biggest presses. We see cement aging tanks in a temperature-controlled room, then onto a large red building with 150 aging tanks. But we see no whole soybeans, only soybean meal (dasashi daizu). “I feel the owner is a liar and this is a bogus operation. The scene gets heavy and ugly. Bill is great and presses on with questions.” The owner claims that 40% of their shoyu is natural, aged for 3 years and made with whole soybeans; 60% made with soybean meal, temperature controlled for 7 months. Thus there should be about 120 vats of natural versus 60 regular. But where is the natural? Their faces turn red. We have caught them red handed. The owner take us to one musty, dirty old building with 25 vats, only 8 of which contain shoyu, some only half full. Lots of cockroaches. Looks like no one ever goes here. Still no sign of a single whole soybean. Uneasy departure. Steve Earle is embarrassed. We take a train to Tokyo. We present Earle/Muso with a list of inconsistencies and ask for a written reply.

March 21, Thurs. Visit Mr. Kazama’s miso factory (Ikeda Kojiro Miso Shoten in Kawaguchi-shi near Tokyo), that makes barley miso, the only brown rice miso in Japan, and shoyu. Call Ty Smith of Muso. He says Muso was very happy with our findings concerning the problems at Marushima, and that they have contacted a new source in Kyushu. Marushima said their president died a year or so ago and his son took over. They have lost the old feeling and tradition.

March 22, Fri. 6:00 A.M. Meet with Bill Shurtleff at his tofu master’s tofu shop (San-Gen-Ya, run by Mr. Toshio Arai). We watch how he makes tofu. Beautiful place (12 feet square) attached to their home. Beautiful people; they don’t speak English. Both make tofu starting early in the morning. He delivers in the afternoon and she sells out of the shop. He gave me hot rich soymilk (from kinugoshi) with wild mountain honey. Both incredible. So sweet and delicious. They also serve us freshly made agé, kinugoshi, and natto. Lunch at Shurtleff and Aoyagi’s home: Noodles and tofu, Chinese fried tofu, tofu pudding, agé, kinugoshi, and mikan orange. We go over my notes from the miso factory. We copy all of his notes. Then I leave, very sad, but the friendship will remain. Akiko is a remarkable lady. Meet Mr. Kazama and go to Pacific Trading. Lousy meeting with Mr. Masaaki Miki (sales manager), and Masa Miyashita (export dept). Go to airport.

Results of the trip: (1) Westbrae started (about 9 months later) to import many varieties of miso, plus shoyu, and other products from Mr. Kazama in Japan. Bob Gerner was the founder, president, and chairman of the board of
Westbrae; (2) Bob Gerner and Liz Horowitz taught “Tofu and Miso Cookery Classes” in Berkeley during 1976; (3) Westbrae published and distributed widely two brochures, What is Miso? (May 1976) and What is Tofu? (July 1976) written by Shurtleff and Aoyagi; (4) In 1976 Westbrae Natural Foods Inc. decided to sell its retail store at 1336 Gilman St. in order to focus on being a distributor and importer. The store had been losing money. Bob Gerner bought it in June 1976 for the low price offered by the highest bidder. He remodeled the store, renamed it Gilman Street Gourmet, and re-opened it in Sept. 1976. In the spring of 1977 Gerner added a deli to the store; there he made and sold Tofu Burgers, Tofu Treasure Balls, and Tofu Steaks Sauteed in Ginger Sauce. The same week that the deli opened, Gerner sold 3,000 to 4,000 of his new Tofu Burgers out of the Westbrae booth at the New Earth Exposition in San Francisco. Bob’s nephew and sister (Margaret) made the tofu burgers. The burgers sold equally well at the same Expo in 1978 and 1979; (5) Shurtleff and Aoyagi wrote The Book of Miso and their New-age Foods Study Center moved toward becoming Soyfoods Center.

Note: In late November 1974 Mr. Kazama came to a meeting at Pajaro Dunes by Santa Cruz, sponsored by The Well. The idea was to set up a natural foods trade association. Erewhon wanted to control all imports of Japanese natural foods from Japan. Janus and The Well both had to import through Erewhon. They said Westbrae must buy through them via The Well (Roger Hillyard/Pure & Simple), and pay a 5% commission. Kazama had to defer to them. Gerner refused and they backed off. Ty Smith, now head of Erewhon, was upset that Westbrae was not paying a commission. Gerner told him “Tough.” So Westbrae ended up importing from Kazama. Address: President & Chairman of the Board, Westbrae Natural Foods Inc., 1224 10th St., Berkeley, California 94710.


• Summary: These photos were sent in 2009 by Patricia Smith, who worked at Erewhon. They are not dated and the names of some people are unknown.

Concerning the date and place: Mark Ripa (Jan. 2011) says: “I think both photos were taken the same day, in the winter of either late 1973 or early 1974. They were taken next to the front windows of the third floor at 31 Farnsworth Street, South Boston (adjacent to the Erewhon warehouse at 33 Farnsworth). 31 Farnsworth was a three floor building adjacent to the six floors of 33 Farnsworth. That floor was used for storage by the Erewhon warehouse. East West Journal occupied multiple floors at 31 Farnsworth at the time. I don’t remember the context other than it was a department photo of the ‘warehouse crew.’ Don’t remember any other department photos. The photos were taken, I think, by Nik Amartseff (responsible for creating Erewhon labels and product development at the time). He may also have worked for EWJ. Last I heard Nik was living in Vermont.”

(1) Photo of Mark Ripa (at Erewhon, Boston), wearing a beard, white suit (top and bottom) and necktie. On the photo, to his right, is written: “I’m Swami Bananananda and I’m here to say”—a take-off of the lyrics to a popular tune advertising Chiquita bananas, which begin: “I am Chiquita banana and I’ve come to say, Bananas have to ripen in a certain way...” Mark notes: “The two lines written on my photo by persons unknown, perhaps inspired by my borrowed white suit”


“I had my hand in a few Erewhon labeled products, most of which were manufactured by copackers, notably organic corn chips, potato chips (I think I was the first to market a tamari potato chip), apple juice and apple juice blends (I remember formulating apple spice juice and apple mint juice on my kitchen stove) and Mark’s Natural Spaghetti Sauce (2 varieties–the first spaghetti sauce to have tamari as an ingredient (Michio Kushi wanted to balance the tomatoes with tamari, which was more workable than miso) and bagels (how could I forget the bagels–but they were discontinued as they molded before their time).”

(2) People who worked at Erewhon, Boston. Mark Ripa is in the 2nd row, far left.

John Fogg, who worked at Erewhon, Boston, identifies the people in this group as follows: Front row (three men, left to right): Dan Seamens, Don Lorenson (great guitar player, supervisor in shipping), and Tony Harnett. Back row (seven men, L-R): Mark Ripa (probably a purchaser by then), Roger, unknown, Bill West (worked in the warehouse or was a truck driver; ended up as Trucking Manager), Warren Murrah (Receiving Manager), Paul Campbell.

Evan Root adds (Jan. 2001). Tony Harnett is now known as Anthony Harnett. “Anthony and Hugo van Seenus bought the small ‘Bread and Circus’ store in Brookline, Massachusetts. Soon after, Anthony bought out Hugo and developed it into a group of big supermarket sized natural food stores, with a very high quality standard. In 1990 Whole Foods bought him out for $26 million.”

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Steve Zoller adds (Jan. 2011): These were all macho warehouse guys who looked down on the “prods” (production guys) upstairs. The main erewhon building was at 33 Farnsworth St. I believe this was taken in the attached building (31 Farnsworth, I think). I base this on what looks like imports that were stored in that building, on the 1st floor. I would definitely date this later than the spring 1975 catalog photo.

Updates (from Steve): Dan Seamens— is at the WF Regional office in Cambridge. Bill West— married someone from erewhon (forget her name) and moved to New Mexico. Late 1980’s I saw him last and he worked for a juice or soda company. Warren Murrah— Married Susan Stamps (David’s sister) and worked at New Balance (maybe 1980?). Diane Markovitz— moved to St. Augustine, Florida, around 1977 to be with Greg Leonard (Tree of Life). Anthony Valenti— Married Carol (a former erewhonian); I last saw him as a waiter at a high class/priced restaurant in Boston.


• Summary: This meeting, a follow-up to the Dec. 1973 meeting in Toronto, Canada, was held at the Janus conference room on 7-8 March 1974, near Seattle, Washington. The meeting began with a brief period of meditation. Those in attendance were: Boyd Foster (Arrowhead Mills), Mike Potter (Eden), Bill Garrison (Erewhon / Boston), Loren Specter and Tom DeSilva (Erewhon / Los Angeles), Michael Pate (Erewhon / Toronto), Tom Swan (Food for Life), Rod & Margy Coates (Laurelbrook), Charlie Smail (Shadowfax), Erwin Caruso [sic, Irwin Carasso] (Tree of Life), Roger Hillyard (The Well), Frank Calpeno (Ceres), George Gearhart (Janus), Tim Hartman (Janus), Blake Rankin (Janus).

George Gearhart was selected chairman. Each company presented a brief report of its current status.

“Eden–Mike Potter. Eden began as a retailer four years ago [i.e. 1970] and eventually borrowed $30,000 to set themselves up as a distributor. Wholesale distribution began with products from Arrowhead Mills and Erewhon. The warehouse physically separated from the retail store and the company has recently begun to make money. The retail store is a complete natural foods center with a bakery and mill in the basement (bakery is a separate enterprise) and a restaurant upstairs. The restaurant presently turns $225 per day. Rent on the retail facilities is $1200 per month. The wholesale operation works out of a warehouse which is shared with Midwest Distributors (a health food jobber).”


Note: This is the earliest document seen (April 2006) concerning Tree of Life.


• Summary: This photograph is from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Reprinted with permission of the Smithsonian.

Letter (e-mail) from Norio Kushi, son of Michio and Aveline Kushi. 2011. Jan. 17. The photograph is taken during the renovation of my parent’s home at 62 Buckminster Rd. in Brookline, Massachusetts. Therefore it would have been sometime in the early months of 1974. I am guessing April 1974 soon after I returned from Japan. It is taken on the 2nd floor in what was to be my parent’s bedroom.

“I only know the names of two of the people, far left is Claude Paeiment, who currently lives in Sutton, Quebec (450-538-8399). After Claude returned to Quebec, where he was from, he opened the natural food store “Tau” and had a “macro” center in the same building.

“The person who is [second from the right], next to my mother [Aveline] is Bill Painter, who passed away many years ago. Bill Painter was close friends with “Uncle Charlie,” Charles Kendall, who married my mother’s sister, Yoko. Charlie and Yoko live in Worthington, MA and they make great natto. “Uncle” Charlie who was actually dating my sister Lily during this time, was part of the scene back during this time so he may know the names of the other two people in the photograph.

“Jimmy Silver of Los Angeles. 2011. Jan. 14. I recognize the faces of all the people but can only identify one by name: Bill Painter is second in from the right. He was also a dedicated shiatsu student of Shizuko Yamamoto and an excellent artist.”

Letter (e-mail) from Evan Root. 2011. Jan. 15. “I believe this to be the renovation of 62 Buckminster Road, probably 1973 or perhaps 1974. Standing second from the right (on Aveline’s left) is Bill Painter. He was the head carpenter for Seventh Inn, Noah Center and Buckminster Road. I think it would be fair to also call him the designer / contractor as well, as he would draw up the plans and assign the tasks, but he was also hands on, and he and the crew were all Kushi’s students.

“As you may know, 62 Buckminster road was part of the former Cardinal Cushing residence and school. When the Kushi’s first bought it, there were huge, real slate blackboards built in, and commercial exit signs and so forth. Though they got it at a good price ($100,000) just before condos were discovered, it required extensive renovation.”
Claude Paeiment (Jan. 2011) was unable to identify the two unknown people. He said: “Those two guys were only helping for a short time at the Buckminster Road house. So many people were coming to help at the time.” Claude lived in Boston for 3 years; he worked as a carpenter. He and Francine directed the study house in Newton, Massachusetts; 30 people lived there at the time. He remembers putting tiles on a low ceiling at Erewhon.

Address: Brookline, Massachusetts.


• Summary: The structure and design of this catalog is quite similar to the previous one of April 6, however four pages of new products and sizes have been added. The background of the illustration has been changed but the foreground is the same; it is now copyrighted by Erewhon. The note from Paul Hawken has been replaced by a similar one signed “the erewhonians.” OG = Organically grown.


This catalog cover (blue on white) was reprinted with permission from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.


• Summary: Concerning Japanese products and our import status: “The basic program that has been finalized with both the Muso and Mitoku companies can be defined in this way: “The Erewhon company is the exclusive representative and agent for the above companies in North America... All product labels will have the Erewhon name. Authorized regional wholesalers may purchase direct from Muso and Mitoku subject to Erewhon’s approval.” Address: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.


• Summary: This book, containing over 250 recipes, describes how to use whole, natural food staples in quick, easy to prepare dishes. By Sept. 1976 this book had become The Simpler Life Cookbook from Arrowhead Mills.

In the introduction, Roger Hillyard (writing in Oct. 1974 from Soquel, California) recalls that in late February of 1969, he and his wife and daughter were returning to Boston from California. They stopped in the small Texas town of Hereford to visit Deaf Smith County and the company that was supplying food to a growing number of natural foods followers and devotees—including Erewhon. Four years later they spent a year in Hereford working with Frank Ford and Arrowhead Mills. “During the five years I have worked with, lived with, and been friends with Frank, I have witnessed one of the most dramatic and beautiful personal unfoldings. Frank never wore that robe of self-righteousness, and he helped me to exchange mine for something more embracing.”


A 2-page directory titled “Some Natural Foods Sources” (p. 153-54) lists 30 of the natural food industry’s pioneers, including Akin Distributors, Inc. (Tulsa, Oklahoma), Arrowhead Mills, Inc. (Hereford, Texas), Basic Needs (Grand Prairie, Texas), Cinagro Distributors, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia), Cliffrose (Longmont, Colorado), Collegerdale Distributors, (Collegerdale, Tennessee), The Concord (Snowflake, Arizona), Deer Valley Farms (Guilford, New York), Eden Organic Foods (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Erewhon Trading Company (33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts 02210, and 8454 Steller Dr., Culver City, California 90320), Food for Health (Phoenix, Arizona), Food for Life (Elmhurst, Illinois), Good Food People (Austin, Texas), Great Plains Distributors (Kansas City, Missouri), Happy Health Products (Miami, Florida), Janus (Seattle, Washington), Laurelbrook Foods (Bel Air, Maryland), Lifestream Natural Foods (Vancouver, BC,
Canada; Ratana and Arran Stephens), Mottel Health Foods (New York, NY), Naturally Good Foods (Hereford, Texas), Nu-Vita Foods Inc. (Portland, Oregon), Organic Foods & Gardens (City of Commerce, California), Shadowfax (Binghamton, New York), Shiloh Farms (Sulphur Springs, Arkansas), Taiyo, Inc. (Honolulu, Hawaii), Tree of Life (St. Augustine, Florida), Vim & Vigor (Honolulu, Hawaii), The Well (San Jose, California), Walnut Acres Inc. (Penns Creek, Pennsylvania).

A small photo on the rear cover shows Frank Ford out hiking, wearing a backpack.

Note: This is the earliest published document seen (Feb. 2010) concerning Lifestream Natural Foods (Vancouver, BC, Canada). Address: Deaf Smith County, Texas.

• Summary: This was the third and most important meeting held by this group of natural food distributors. No known documents remain. But the meeting is referred to in a Steering Committee Report of a meeting held 22-23 March 1975 in San Francisco. The following companies were present at Pajaro Dunes, and appointed a steering committee: Arrowhead Mills, Eden, Erewhon / Boston, Erewhon / Los Angeles, Lifestream, Laurelbrook Foods, Manna, Shadowfax, Tree of Life, The Well, Ceres, Janus, Food for Life, Cliffrose.

Bob Gerner of Westbrae later recalled: In late November 1974 Mr. Kazama of Mitoku came to a meeting at Pajaro Dunes by Santa Cruz, sponsored by The Well. The idea was to set up a natural foods trade association. Erewhon wanted to control all imports of Japanese natural foods from Japan. Janus and The Well both had to import through Erewhon. They said Westbrae must buy through them via The Well (Roger Hillyard / Pure & Simple), and pay a 5% commission. Kazama had to defer to them. Gerner refused and they backed off. Ty Smith, now head of Erewhon, was upset that Westbrae was not paying a commission. Gerner told him “Tough.” So Westbrae ended up importing from Kazama.

102. Product Name: Nik’s Snaks (Tamari-Roasted Seeds, Nuts, Soybeans, and Trail Mixes). 
Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. 
Manufacturer’s Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358. 
Date of Introduction: 1974. 
How Stored: Shelf stable. 

The 1975 Erewhon catalog, titled Erewhon Harvest ‘75, lists an entire page of “Nik’s Snaks,” containing about 30 products. Of these, eleven are tamari-roasted whole-food snacks. The 30 products are sold in 5 sizes: 2.5 oz, 3.5 oz, or 6 oz. pick-up packages, or 25 lb bulk. The soybeans (dry roasted with tamari, no salt) are sold only in 25 lb packs. Other tamari-roasted seeds include: Spanish peanuts, sunflower seeds, roasted almonds (all 2.5 oz or 25 lb), cashews or pumpkin seeds (25 lb). Non tamari-roasted products include: Raisin walnut mix. Roasted mixed nuts. Raw mixed nuts. Raisin nut mix. Peanut raisin mix. Trail mix. Honey almond granola. Chia seeds. Bee pollen. Alfalfa seeds. Date sugar. etc.

• Summary: This early and beautifully presented natural foods cookbook contains very innovative and tasty tofu dessert recipes made with limited natural sweeteners and no dairy products. It discusses the harmful effects of refined and denatured foods, with details on white flour, sugar, oil, salt, eggs, milk, and baking powder [which contains alum, a product of aluminum; “it may even be harmful”].


The inside dust jacket gives a brief biography of the author, who was born and raised in New York. In Berkeley, California, she studied Japanese and natural-food cooking, and helped to start a “noodle bar” where she baked her first dessert. Now she lives in Boston and catsers weddings, parties and school fairs with natural and organic foods and desserts.

An Appendix (p. 151-52) lists the name and address of 39 suppliers of natural foods in the USA (divided into five regions) 2 in Canada. This list includes the following companies. Northeast: Erewhon Trading Co. (33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts 02210), Good Nature Distributing Co. (Box 447, Export, Pennsylvania 15632), Infinity Co. (173 Duane Ave., New York, NY 10005), Shadowfax (25 N. Depot St., Binghamton, NY 13901), Sundance Organic Food (R.D. #1, Box 146A, Coventry, Connecticut).
Connecticut 06238), Walnut Acres (Penns Creek, Pennsylvania 17862; founded by Paul Keene).

Southeast: Collegedale Distributors (Box 492, Collegedale, Tennessee 37315), Laurelbrook Foods (Box 47, Bel Air, Maryland 21014), Tree of Life (Box 1391, St. Augustine, Florida 32084).

Midwest and Mountain States: Ceres, Inc. (2582 Durango Dr., Colorado Springs. Colorado 80910), Cliffrose (129 Coffman St., Longmont, Colorado 80501), Eden Foods (Box 100, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107), Food for Life (420 Wrightwood St., Elmhurst, Illinois 60126).

Southwest: Akin Distributors (Box 2747, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74101), Arrowhead Mills (Box 866, Hereford, Texas 79045), Shiloh Farms (Box 97, Sulphur Springs, Arizona 72768), Sunrise Distributors (Box 5216, Phoenix, Arizona 83010).

West Coast: Erewhon Trading Co. (8454 Steller Dr., Culver City, California 90230), Janus Natural Foods (1523 Airport Way, South, Seattle, Washington 98134), New Day Distributors (1242 S. Berendo St., Los Angeles, CA 90006), The Well / Pure & Simple (795 West Hedding St., San Jose, CA 95126).

Canada: Lifestream Natural Foods, Ltd. (724-26 W. 6th Ave., Vancouver 9, BC), and Natural Foodstuffs (1 Main St., Box 27, Sutton, Quebec).


104. DeSilva, Tom; Hillyard, Roger; Hartman, Tim; Kimbro, Bob. 1975. Steering Committee report, being the result of a meeting held March 22 & 23, 1975 upon the request of 14 companies in the natural food field. Unpublished manuscript.

• Summary: “At Pajaro Dunes, Watsonville, California on November 21-24, 1974 the following companies agreed to pursue the subject of organization and appointed a ‘Steering Committee:’ Arrowhead Mills, Eden, Erewhon/Boston, Erewhon / Los Angeles, Lifestream, Laurelbrook Foods, Manna, Shadowfax, Tree of Life, The Well, Ceres, Janus, Food for Life, Cliffrose.

“This is the report of that committee which met during the days and nights of March 22 and 23, 1975, in San Francisco and was composed of Tim Hartman (Janus), Roger Hillyard (The Well), Tom DeSilva (Erewhon / LA) and Bon Kimbro (Ceres).” Address: 1. Chairman, Erewhon–Los Angeles.


• Summary: The cover shows a family photo in a wooden frame on a goldenrod background. The family is all the Erewhon employees (plus a child, a dog, and a sack of brown rice), in about five rows from front to back, kneeling and standing on a wooden floor.

The first page, from “The people at Erewhon,” begins: “Hi–All of us at Erewhon wanted to give you folks who use our foods a personal greeting. So we rounded ourselves up on snowy Sunday and snapped a picture to give you a glimpse of who we are. The people who make Erewhon live and breathe are really happy to be serving you. The key to reaching out to those friends who use the foods that we are so proud of is through you. We all remember the days when the foods we have now weren’t available to us and know that there are still many people who don’t yet have good food on their table. So, our activity each day centers around passing on to you what you need to turn on your friends to one of the fundamentals of a beautiful life. Thank you. You are giving us an opportunity to work together, learn from each other, and share something that is very important to us.

“As we get to know each other better, our ability to assist you with higher and more various natural food products also increases. The history of Erewhon has been one of movement from discovery to discovery, and it is our intention to do our best to open up the communication between mother earth and the people that whole food provides. We hope you will find that each new catalogue reflects a step towards this goal...”

We will show the catalog cover relatively small, but the photo from which that catalog was made fairly large and attempt to give the names of the people in the photo. Evan Root identifies these people (in the photo supplied by Robert Hanig–who did not shoot it) as follows:

Front Row:
Zolla (Abiel Halla’s wife)
With child
Jean Blyweiss
Michael Kababian
Unknown
Kazuko Awamura
Jean Carter Levine
Unknown
Unknown
Tomoko “Aveline” Kushi
Second row (crouching or sitting, left to right):
Abiel Halla (his wife and child are in front of him)
Tyler (Ty) Smith
David Stamps
Bob Chiampa

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Unknown
Mark Ripa (Erewhon’s brand “Mark’s pasta sauces were named for him. Currently: http://www.cronigsmarket.com/info/index.cfm)
Unknown
David Simon
Unknown (baby)
Unknown
Don Lorenson (holding baby Lao)
Anthony Valenti
Gene Fialkoff (founded and operated New Morning Cereals, sold to US Mills in 2000). Standing, left to right:
Unknown (Bob Spencer thinks this is Susan Munger. I know her and didn’t catch that. Then again, I know Bob Spencer and I didn’t recognize him in this picture. Patricia Smith knew her well, perhaps she can make the call.)
Joanne Amartseff (wife of Nick, holding daughter Misha)
Unknown
Jeff Flasher (currently, VP Traditional Medicinals)
Keith Varnum (currently: http://www.thedream.com/index.php)
A.C. Gallo (currently president and chief operating officer of Whole Foods)
Unknown
Richard Young
Hugo van Seenus (currently with Alfalfas, http://alfalfas.com/about/team/hugo-van-seenus/?iframe=true&width=100%&height=100%)
George Crane (left Erewhon for organic farming in Maine, can’t find anything current)
Phil Levy (http://phillevy.net/default.aspx)
Danny Seaman (Last seen by Evan Root about 5 years ago, managing a Whole Foods Store in Bellingham, Massachusetts, no current data available)
Unknown
Bill West
Unknown
Carl Sauter
Warren Murrah
Paul Campbell
Bob Spencer
Eric Lake
Diane Markowitz
Unknown
Laura Lane
Tony Harnett
Robert “Bobby” Hanig” (without prior experience in IT, studied up on computers from scratch and brought Erewhon into the digital age. Currently, business consulting:
Norio Kushi (Jan. 2011) identifies the people as follows:
Front Row: Zolla (maybe), with child, Mark Ripa’s wife (not the woman who later worked the front desk), Carol ? worked in the office, Unknown man, Unknown man, Unknown lady, Katsuko Awamura (chef, Robert Hanig’s girlfriend), Jean Carter holding rice bag (works at Whole Foods, Brighton, Massachusetts), Unknown man
Unknown man, Unknown lady.
Second Row: Abiel Hallah, Unknown person peeking from behind ?, person with cap facing Ty Smith, Unknown lady, Mark Ripa (508-693-4487) (w), Unknown lady, Unknown man with child, David Simon, Don Lorenson holding child, Anthony Valenti, Gene Fialkoff, Aveline Kushi.
Third Row: Joanne Amartseff, holding child (617-731-5923), Tyler Smith (808-895-3395).
People standing (starting behind Joanne Amartseff):
Unknown man, William Tetmeyer (317-873-4431), Jeff Flasher, Keith Varnum (lives in Arizona), AC Gallo (VP, Whole Foods, Cambridge, MA regional office), Unknown man, George Crane, Dan Seaman, David, (worked in production Dept), Warren Murrah (worked in Shipping Dept), Robert Spencer, Stuart Smith (207-935-3994), Unknown man (maybe Tony Harnett).
People standing starting from behind AC Gallo, Unknown man, Richard Young (passed away in 2006), man peeking behind George Crane is Hugo van Seenus (who, along with Anthony Harnett became owners of Bread & Circus, Hugo later started Hugo’s in Silver Spring, Maryland, and later Lazy Acres in Santa Barbara, California), Phil Levy, Roger (boyfriend of Martha Fielding later owner of Red Wing Books, they were in a motorcycle accident, Martha was hurt fairly seriously but she graciously recovered), Bill West, Carl Sauter, Pat Campbell (standing behind Robert Spencer, married Jean Blyweiss), Eric Lake, Diane Markowitz, Blake Gould (802-888-2858; behind Stuart Smith), Laura Lane (girlfriend of Bill West), Robert Hanig (781-259-1128, the person furthest to the right in the photo).
Norio adds: The rows are not exactly neat so I hope it is clear enough who I am referencing. I believe this photo was taken by Nik Amartseff (who is absent in the photograph), the husband of Joanne Amartseff standing on the left with their baby daughter.
On the Spring 1977 Catalogue picture and missing from Hanig’s photo is Nick Amartseff [mustache] standing between Joanne Amartseff and Jeff Flasher. (Nick’s snacks were named for Nick, he also produced art for labels).
This catalog cover was reprinted with permission from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History,

• Summary: This meeting was held on 1-5 May 1975 at 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts, the residence of Michio Kushi. It was attended by Boyd Foster and Chuck Brockett (Arrowhead Mills Inc., Hereford, Texas), Frank Calpeno and Howie Schickler (Ceres Natural Foods, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado), Tim Redmond (Eden), Tom DeSilva and Ty Smith (Chairmen; Erewhon, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts), Tim Hartmann (Janus Natural Foods, Inc., Seattle, Washington), Rod, Marge and Dan Coates, Frank Mabrey and Dave Raleigh (Laurelbrook Natural Foods, Inc., Bel Air, Maryland), Gene Newman (Manna Foods, Inc., Scarborough, ONT, Canada), Charlie Smal (Shadowfax Whole Foods, Inc., Binghamton, New York), Irwin Carasso (Tree of Life, Inc., St. Augustine, Florida), Roger Hillyard (The Well, San Jose, California), Arran Stevens (Lifestream Natural Foods, Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada).

Companies that were members of the Natural Food Distributors Assoc. in June 1975, but that were not at this meeting were: Cliffrose Natural Foods, Inc. (Longmont, Colorado), Eden Foods Inc. (Ann Arbor, Michigan), and Food for Life, Inc. (Elmhurst, Illinois).

Note 1. This is the earliest document seen (Feb. 2010) concerning Manna Foods, Inc. in Canada.

Note 2. Chico-San, of Chico, California, was not at the meeting, because it was a manufacturer and importer, not a distributor.

Thirteen representatives of 11 natural food distributors came together in May 1975 to form a new organization. At this meeting the goals of the association were discussed and the name Natural Foods Distributors Association was first decided. Mr. Kazama of Mitoku (Japan) was present. Michio Kushi offered to help any company send representatives to Japan to study miso making, etc. “A Harvard study done on 210 local macrobiotic people showed their blood pressure and cholesterol is the lowest in America,” says Michio. Why did this association never happen? The potential members were unwilling to provide the collective funding deemed necessary. And there was a lack of clearly defined goals and projects. Tim Hartman of Janus was chosen the first executive director. Roger does not know if he was ever paid.

On Oct. 9-12, 1975, there was a meeting of distributors at Tree of Life in St. Augustine, Florida. Before that meeting, there was a steering committee meeting in Ithaca, New York. It was determined that it would take $25,000 to implement the employment contract, but members were willing to commit only $7,800. A newsletter was planned.

Note 3. Erewhon was the real pioneer, the first of a new breed of natural food distributors. It was also a pioneer (along with Chico-San) in importing traditional, natural foods from Japan. Address: Erewhon, Boston.


• Summary: People who worked at Erewhon, LA (probably in both the store and warehouse), probably at the Culver City warehouse on Steller Drive. Doug Rauch guesses the photo was taken in winter/spring 1975, based on who is in it and how they are dressed. It was definitely taken before Sept. 1976, which is when Jimmy Silver arrived.

First row (9-10 people squatting, sitting or kneeling on the pavement; left to right): 1. Peter (squatting on the far left–older with white hair; he is the only one we have been able to identify in this row). Peter was from Canada (spoke English), thought to have been connected with the Vedanta Society and here illegally.

2. Greg Merideth.
8. Bill. 9. Sharon Flasher (Vishistha; Jeff Flasher’s wife at the time) with son Yudi.

Second row (10 people, standing; left to right): 1. Unknown. 2. Unknown.
3. Dolores Coffee (short woman). 3A. Tom Bagby is the guy sitting on the truck fender right above Dolores Coffee (with his knees on her shoulders).

6. Dale Turner (played jazz trumpet and got a gig with the Oingo Boingo band, playing on several of their albums and did many tours & performances).
7. Francis Pinto (“Franny,” a composer and follower/practitioner of Reichian therapy).
8. Tom DeSilva (dark haired, stocky). Once a Hollywood entertainment lawyer, Tom found a new life for himself and his two boys starting at the bottom at Erewhon, doing something that he loved. Smart and personable, Tom was for many years the respected president of Erewhon West when it was a distribution and retail operation. He bought the LA retail store when the company was split up, moving and expanding the once-small store into a highly successful operation but true to its origins as a business.


Near the top is a group of 6 people standing or sitting on the hood of the truck (L-R):
1. Joe (he worked for Dolores in the Packaging Dept.).
2. Michael Chernick (standing behind and just to the right, with the bald head, a free lance maintenance man).

6. Loren Spector (guy on the far right of this group, in the black sweater, with his hands clasped around his left knee).

A group of 4 people is sitting on the cab of the truck (highest up, behind the “erewhon” sign) (L-R):

1. Eileen Frankel.
2. Tomi (or Tomei); she was Okinawan, lived in Long Beach, worked in accounts receivable or payable who was married to a guy who allegedly was involved with a gang who hijacked big rigs and heavy equipment in the Midwest; she was involved in her husband’s shenanigans.
4. Eric is the first name of the black guy at the far right top.

Doug Rauch is the tall blonde, bearded guy standing on the running board just below this group and below the “erewhon” sign.

Inserted is a letter on Erewhon letterhead from Loren M. Spector, general manager, dated 1 July 1975. It begins: “Dear customers: Please find enclosed our summer price list.” On the back are “July specials.” Address: 8454 Steller Dr., Culver City, California 90230. Phone: (213) 836-7569.

Summary:

On page 1 is a message from Ty Smith, President, which begins: “As a distributor of natural foods, I am concerned about the quality of life. I create through my activities of business. The primary form is the quality of food itself, and to maintain that at the highest level possible I rely on methods of growing, cleaning, storing, and processing which are inherently upgrading and promoting the life force of the foods. I am concerned that these methods of working with nature also promote the enjoyment and creativity of the people who do them every day.

“There is another form of quality which is important to create and maintain–this is the quality of the method of the doing of business. It is as important to produce and foster high standards for relationships through which the food is distributed as it is to safeguard the quality of the food itself... If there is any aspect of doing business with Erewhon which causes you any form of dissatisfaction, I am the person who is responsible to you.

“The keyword is ‘responsibility,’ in the true sense of the word, ‘the ability to respond.’…”

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Summary:

Pages 3 and 7 state that Erewhon owes $103,800 to the New England Merchants National Bank. This demand note is in default and the bank has declined granting of further credit to the company. The note balance is to be satisfied from the sale of California assets. On 21 Feb. 1974 Erewhon entered into a stock purchase agreement with a stockholder to purchase all of this individual’s 210 common shares within 3 years for $54,000. Erewhon also owes $27,000 to a former stockholder for the purchase of 1,000 shares of common stock. In Massachusetts, the company now is committed to leases at 29 and 33-39 Farnsworth Street, Boston, 342 Newbury St., Boston, and 1731-1737 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. In California there are
leases at 8454 Steller Dr. and 8500 Steller Dr., Culver City, and 8001-8003 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Plus 303 Howe Ave., Passaic, New Jersey.

On 1 Aug. 1975 Erewhon sold substantially all of its assets used in operations in California for $350,000, payable as follows: $100,000 in cash within 15 days of closing, $100,000 due 90 days from Aug. 15, $50,000 due in 3 installments in January, April, and July 1976, and $100,000 due in quarterly installments of $12,500 each from 31 Oct. 1976 to 31 July 1978. The book value of the assets sold was $407,260, subject to liabilities of $204,876.

In 1975 Erewhon had bad debts of $22,706 and interest expense of $28,665. Address: 11 Beacon St., Boston, Massachusetts.


*Summary:* A lengthy description of how traditional miso and tamari (shoyu) are made in Japan and some philosophical reflections on the processes and ancient wisdom that created them. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


*Summary:* On the front cover, a brown and white photo shows a rustic farmer, holding a pitchfork, standing by his horse and hay wagon with wife and child. On the rear cover, Erewhon’s president, Tyler Smith, writes a poetic passage about the beauty of wheat. Products include: Grains: Lone Pine in Arkansas grows organic short grain and long grain brown rice. Wehah Farms in California grows organic short grain brown rice and non-organic sweet brown rice [glutinous rice]. Baker in Louisiana grows organic medium grain brown rice. Organic hard red winter wheat is grown in Nebraska and in Deaf Smith, Texas. Organic hard red spring wheat is grown by Ted Whitmer in Montana and Ricke in Minnesota. Organic hard amber durum wheat is grown by Whitmer in Montana. Organic soft white pastry wheat is grown by Wild Winds in New York. Other organically grown grains are pearl barley (Idaho), whole unhulled buckwheat for sprouting, hybrid yellow or white corn (Deaf Smith), open-pollinated yellow corn (Minnesota), blue corn, whole oats, and rye. Cereals include organic soy flacks from Deaf Smith (25 lb). Flours include organic soybean flour (25 lb, steelground, full-fat). Pasta (packaged or bulk) includes Japanese soba, Soy Rice Shells.

Snacks from “Erewhon L.A.” include Chico-San Yinnies, and Date-Nut Delight. Nik’s Snaks (p. 8): This full page lists about 30 products. Of these, eleven are “tamari-roasted” whole-food snacks. The 30 products are sold in 5 sizes: 2.5 oz, 3.5 oz, or 6 oz. pick-up packages, or 25 lb bulk. The soybeans (dry roasted with tamari, no salt) are sold only in 25 lb packs. Other tamari-roasted seeds include: Spanish peanuts, sunflower seeds, roasted almonds (all 2.5 oz or 25 lb), cashews or pumpkin seeds (25 lb). Non tamari-roasted products include: Raisin walnut mix. Roasted mixed nuts. Raw mixed nuts. Raisin nut mix. Peanut raisin mix.

Trail mix (Honey almond granola, roasted peanuts, raw sunflower seeds, date pieces, raisins, and sea salt). Honey almond granola. Chia seeds. Bee pollen. Alfalfa seeds. Date sugar. etc. Erewhon Aztec organic corn chips. Baked goods from Cable Springs Bakery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fruit juices from Erewhon, Heinke’s, Knudsen, Lehr’s (natural grape juice from Germany), and Biotta (Swiss Vegetable juices).

**Dairy Products:** Cheeses from Alta Dena (also kefir and yogurt) in California, Superior Cheese Co. in Massachusetts, Redwood Natural Cheese Co. in California. Also Favorite Foods yogurt.

Dried fruit, including organically grown Monukka and Thompson raisins, prunes, dates, apricots, apples, Bing cherries, black mission figs, and Calimyrna figs. Peanut-, apple-, sunflower-, and sesame butters. Sesame tahini. Pure & Simple “fruit butters sweetened with honey only; terrific old-fashioned jams (apple, apricot, peach, plum, raspberry, strawberry, grape, cherry). Erewhon apple sauce. “Pumpkin Sour” apple sauce and apple butter made in Plainfield, Vermont. Tree of Life fresh fruit preserves from Florida (8 varieties).


Oils, incl. Arrowhead Mills soybean oil (pints, quarts, or 5-gallon jug). Honey. Baking, incl. Premo barley malt, and Yinnies grain syrup from Chico-San. Tea, incl. 2 pages from Celestial Seasonings, and Erewhon Mu tea (9 or 16 herbs), Lotus root tea, Kukicha-branch twig tea. Springwater.

Tamari & Miso: 4 pages of descriptions and prices for Hacho miso (all misos are sold in 1 lb or 44 lb keg), Mugi miso, Kome mimo, Tamari soy sauce [actually shoyu] (8 oz, pints, quarts, ½ gallons, gallons, or 4.7 gallon tin), Barley koji (1 lb). Specialties, incl. Unrefined sun-dried sea salt with natural trace minerals from the north coast of Brittany in France, Tekka, kuzu, umeboshi, sesame salt, Herbamare salt, nigar, brown rice vinegar, non-alcoholic beer (Birell, Kingsbury), Bambu instant coffee substitute.

Fearn Soya Foods: Soya granules, Soy-O wheat cereal, Soy-O corn bread & muffin mix, Soy-O bran muffin mix,
DELIVERY SCHEDULE

We deliver free of charge within the appropriate areas. For del. outside the designated areas, contact the office for details. Elsewhere specify the delivering carrier. Please include your telephone number and street address; a box number or RFD no. is not sufficient. ALL ORDER DEADLINES ARE 9:00 PM on SPECIFIED DAYS

WEEKLY DELIVERY

WESTERN CONNECTICUT-deadline FRIDAY
del. begins TUESDAY

EASTERN CONNECTICUT-deadline MONDAY
& RHODE ISLAND del. begins TUESDAY

EASTERN MASS.
SOUTHERN MAINE
deadline FRIDAY
& N.Y.C.
del begins MONDAY

N.J. (South to Trenton)

SOUTHERN VERMONT
deadline THURSDAY
& SOUTHERN N.H.
del begins MONDAY

BI-WEEKLY DELIVERY

CAPE COD
deadline FRIDAY
del. begins TUESDAY

WESTERN MASS
NORTHERN MAINE
NORTHERN N.H.
deadline THURSDAY
NORTHERN VERMONT
NEW YORK STATE
del begins MONDAY.
Soy-O pancake mix—buckwheat, Soy-O pancake mix—
wholewheat, Sesame burger mix, Natural soya powder.

Sea vegies: Agar-agar, dulse, hiziki, kombu, wakame, nori seaweeds (a description of each is given).

Erewhon certified organic produce, incl. Daikon grown in California. Soaps, incl. Cattier clay products and Dr.
Bronner’s Peppermint castile soap, Orjene, Nature’s Gate, Tom’s Natural Soap.


A map shows Erewhon’s delivery region (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey) and schedule. The company also has an office near New York City at 303 Howe Ave., Passaic, New Jersey 07055. Phone 212-594-6455.

Note 1. This is the earliest document seen that uses the word “vegies” (spelled as such, one of two documents) to refer to vegetables, or “Sea vegies” to refer to sea vegetables (edible seaweeds).

Note 2. This is the earliest document seen (May 2006) that uses the term “trail mix” to refer to a non-perishable mixture of dried fruits, seeds, nuts, roasted soybeans, granola, etc. to be eaten as a snack, as when hiking or walking. Nik Amartseff coined the term “trail mix” and launched the first commercial trail mix product through Erewhon Trading Co. in 1974. At the time, Nik was studying and practicing macrobiotics in Boston, Massachusetts. By the late 1970s several brands of trail mix were on the market in both natural food stores and supermarkets; by the 1980s there were many, as it became a mainstream American snack.

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• Summary: On the front cover is an illustration (line drawing) of Benjamin Franklin, wearing a fur hat and glasses. Below is a quote from his Poor Richard’s Almanac (1739): “Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee.” Other quotes are scattered throughout the catalog.

Products include: Pasta (packaged and bulk). incl. Soya-Rice Shells (organic) “Eat to live, Live not to eat.”

Bulk staples—Grains (including Sweet Rice from California), flours (freshly milled whole grain), cereals, beans (incl. organic soybeans and soybean flakes from Texas), seeds. “Knowledge like a rich Soil, feeds if not a world of Corn, a world of weeds.” Erewhon packaged staples—Grains, flours, cereals, beans (incl. organic soybeans), seeds. “A long life may not be good Enough, but a good Life is long Enough.”


Potpourri: Condiments (incl. “kuzu arrowroot, umeboshi (plums pickled in brine),” cookware (Quaker City grain mill, Corona stone mill, Mac steel utility knife, Soy sauce dispenser), publications). “Hunger is the best Pickle.” Important stuff (Ordering information). “Drive thy Business, let it not Drive Thee.”

On the last page, John Fountain extends “grateful appreciation to all those whose positive accomplishments have created Erewhon: Lima and George Ohsawa, Aveline and Michio Kushi, Cornellia and Herman Aihara, Michel Abehera, Yvette & Jacques DeLangre, William Dufey, Frank Ford, Paul Hawken, Carolyn Heidenry, Roger Hillyard, Bob Kennedy, Bruce McDonald, Tommy Nakayama, Shane and Lou Olds [sic, Shayne Oles], Fred Rohe, Dr. Pietro Rotundi, Evan Root, Tyler Smith, Bill Tara, our customers, staff, suppliers, and growers, Susan and Lou Remy and all.” Address: 8454 Steller Dr., Culver City, California 90230. Phone: (213) 836-7569.

erewhon

Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.

November, December 1775
Here are scraps from the Table of Wisdom, that will if well digested, yield strong nourishment to thy mind.

From B. Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanac, 1775
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAINS</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED RETAIL</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Grain Brown Rice, ORG</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Farms' finest organically grown brown rice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Grain Brown Rice</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Grain Brown Rice, ORG</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really a &quot;long&quot; short grain brown rice. Great taste and even better price.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Grain Brown Rice, ORG</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>18.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much lighter than the shorter grains. Organically grown from Louisiana.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Rice, CA</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High in gluten – cooks up sweet and sticky. Just right for desserts like rice pudding.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Millet, ORG, ND</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>15.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprouting Buckwheat, ND</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roasted Buckwheat-Kasha, PA</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw Buckwheat, PA</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>26.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Pastry Wheat, ORG, WA</td>
<td>100 lb</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great for that fluffy, light wheat flavor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat, ORG, CA</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry-farmed from the Curriss plains – superb for baking bread or as a separate dish.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye, ORG, MN</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats, MN</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley, ORG, ID</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Corn, ORG, TX</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn, ORG, TX</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FLOURS – FRESHLY MILLED WHOLE GRAINS**

Our flours are freshly milled to insure you of that full robust flavor. We also leave everything in our flours – no sifting, filtering, bleaching or re-mixing of any kind is done. What nature put in the grain we keep in the flour, just for goodness’ sake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLOURS – FRESHLY MILLED WHOLE GRAINS</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED RETAIL</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wholewheat Flour, ORG Stoneground</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholewheat Flour, ORG Stoneground</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholewheat Flour, ORG</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholewheat Pastry Flour, ORG</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholewheat Pastry Flour, ORG</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Corn Meal, ORG Stoneground</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Corn Meal, ORG Stoneground</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye Flour, ORG</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice Flour, ORG Stoneground</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw Buckwheat Flour</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw Soy Flour, ORG</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CEREALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEREALS</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED RETAIL</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rolled Oats, MN</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightly steamed, dried and then rolled – thick, rich “table” grade.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Cut Oats, MN</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Flakes, ORG, TX</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quickly roasted and rolled – as a cooked cereal or with granola it adds that chewy “crunch.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye Flakes, ORG, TX</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulghur, Wheat Pilaf</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarsely cracked, dried and parboiled.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cracked Wheat, ORG, TX</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Bran, TX</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# BULK STAPLES Cont’d.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>SUGG RET</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEANS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chickpeas Garbanzos, GA</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pinto Beans, ORG, CO</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>13.25</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Lentils, ID</td>
<td>100 lb</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Split Peas, ID</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Split Peas, ID</td>
<td>100 lb</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soybeans, ORG, TX</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soybean Flakes, ORG, TX</td>
<td>60 lb</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mung Beans, OK</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>14.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEEDS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alfalfa, CA</td>
<td>5 lb</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>6.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alfalfa, CA</td>
<td>25 lb</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>31.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alfalfa, CA</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High germination, low weed seed – sprouts up quickly creating one of nature’s most refreshing treats.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sesame, Whole Brown</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>32.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunflower Seeds, ND</td>
<td>5 lb</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunflower Seeds, ND</td>
<td>10 lb</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunflower Seeds, ND</td>
<td>50 lb</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>34.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


"Sudden Pow'r is apt to be insolent, sudden liberty saucy; that behaves best which has grown gradually."
• **Summary:** The subtitle states: “Erewhon news from Nowhere is a regular *East West Journal* column providing information about food. We hope that this will be a valuable educational service, enabling readers to select what they eat knowledgeably. If you require more information about food, we invite you to visit us at our retail stores.” Note that though the column is written in the first person, no author is given.

“In my opinion the most fundamental change in the creation of traditional fermented foods occurred with the shift of the Japanese rural-based economy after World War II. The movement of the population to the cities and the emphasis on production and manufacturing by large numbers of city dwellers who consumed increasingly larger amounts of food created a demand for soybeans beyond the capacity of the rural of the rural population’s productivity. The Japanese turned to America for their soybeans and began to use varieties that did not lead to the fine product to which the native beans had formerly contributed. The result was an economic necessity for research, carried out by American and Japanese technicians, and the results created several basic changes in the manufacturing process.

“First, the koji mold was investigated, and out of the hundreds of strains of mold bacteria [sic] present in the traditional mold culture, certain strains were isolated and propagated for their effectiveness to create the fermentation under laboratory conditions. Thus, new strains of ‘hybrid’ cultures were developed that would break down the American beans of inconsistent quality. The technicians failed to see the process as a whole, not realizing that the long-term fermentation and great attention in handling the raw materials at different stages was an art that depended on a great variety of naturally occurring bacteria to produce an environment where natural competition worked to strengthen the culture.”

“Except for the small number of true traditional makers in Japan, I would say that Americans in their own backyards will, within the next ten years, be producing finer miso and tamari than the majority of producers currently working in Japan.” Address: Massachusetts.


• **Summary:** This catalog, largely printed by a computer, contains many ads on unnumbered pages. Contents: Hi! Ordering and service information. Bulk: Whole grains, beans, seeds and nuts, dried fruit, nut butters, etc. Refrigerated and frozen (“Frozen meats {beef}–No DES, steroids, female hormones, antibiotics, or stimulants used in feeding; Chickens–No hormones & antibiotics. Ask for turkeys and hens during Thanksgiving.” “Frozen soy products: soy milk and tofu soybean curd”). Books. Packaged (by company and product category). Index by product. Index by manufacturer.

“We are happy to announce that Midwest and Mountain High are now one entity... We go into the fall and winter seasons with a fall and winter catalog, delivery schedule, and computer system.” For new developments, watch the monthly newsletter and sale sheets. “Your Friends at Midwest.”

Includes the following ads (the number is that of the facing page). Wheat Stalk Soya Burger (Cotati, California, p. 17). Arrowhead Mills (p. 27). Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soap (p. 32). Chico-san (p. 35). Erewhon (p. 41, incl. “Trail Mix Niks”). Fearn Soya Foods (p. 42; shows a package of Fearn Soy/o Buckwheat Pancake Mix). Flavor Tree–Pernut soy beans (p. 42). Hain (p. 49, “Cold pressed safflower oil,” mayonnaise, and margarine). Health Main (p. 54; soy is not mentioned—only natural potato chips and yogurt dressing & dip). Infinity Herbal Products Ltd. (p. 56). Malt-O-Meal–Soy Town (dry roasted soy beans, p. 60). NF Factors (Lafayette, Calif., p. 67. A photo shows a can of Protesoy). Pure & Simple (p. 72, 795 West Hedding St., San Jose, California 95126; mainly fruits, fruit juices, fruit butters, vinegars). Sovex (p. 83–84. “The fastest selling natural cereal line on the market... Here’s the one that started it all, the original Crunchy Granola”). Viobin (wheat germ oil, p. 85F, 89). Tiger’s Milk Products (p. 86).


116. **Product Name:** Wholewheat Soy Elbows, Wholewheat Soy Spaghetti, Soya Rice Shells.

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Midwest Natural Foods Distributors, Inc.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** Ann Arbor, Michigan. Phone: 313-769-8444 or in Area 313 1-800-552-6297.

**Date of Introduction:** 1975. November.

**Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price:** 10 lb.

**How Stored:** Shelf stable.

• Summary: Margy Coates (March 1992) says this leaflet, green ink on tan paper, was probably published in 1974 or 1975. Contents: Our story. Policy. Growing. Our new warehouse. Delivery. “It was thanks to the contagious enthusiasm of our children and their belief in natural foods that the idea of Laurelbrook was formed. We also received encouragement from Erewhon of Boston, Massachusetts, and Arrowhead Mills of Texas, and it was their valuable cooperation and guidance that gave us our start in 1971. It all began with a stock of 76 items, four people, and a used half-ton [Datsun] pickup truck... Our little 18-inch mill had to grind continuously to meet the demand.”

In 1974, we enlarged our Bel Air warehouse, adding three lower level receiving docks and more than doubling our storage space... In the office, hand typing and extending invoices have given way to a mini-computer... There are now 24 people employed at Laurelbrook to keep pace with the growing demand for fine natural products.

The company’s new warehouse at 330 West Davie Street in Raleigh, North Carolina, started with four employees in Dec. 1973. Illustrations show an aerial view of the Laurelbrook facility in Bel Air, and the company’s delivery routes. Address: P.O. Box 47, Bel Air, Maryland 21014. Phone: 301-879-1717.


• Summary: Born on 28 Aug. 1942 in Seattle, Washington, Roger was raised in the San Francisco area. In early 1965 he met Susan, his wife to be, through mutual friends in the Haight-Ashbury district of SF—where he was living. She was a photographer, working as a sort of apprentice with Ruth Bernard, a professional photographer. In June 1965 he [Roger] graduated from San Francisco State College with a degree in language arts. He then became technical director for the San Francisco Mime Troupe, produced an experimental film series, and developed one of the first “light shows” in San Francisco.

In Jan. 1966 he started macrobiotics, then in July 1967 he and Susan left San Francisco and moved to New Mexico, where they lived on a 100-acre farm. They were married on Thanksgiving, 23 Nov. 1967 in Placitas, New Mexico. Their first child, Cyrena, a daughter, was born on 13 July 1968 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In Oct. 1968 they moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where Roger pursued his interest in macrobiotics. He worked at the Erewhon retail store at 303B Newbury St. for 2 weeks, but wasn’t “together” enough, so he worked in a hospital as an operating room orderly for 3 months. In Feb. 1969 he began work at the Erewhon retail store at 342 Newbury St. In Aug. 1969 [actually probably early Oct. 1969] he took over as general manager of Erewhon’s over-all operations. He managed Erewhon-Boston and oversaw the financial aspects of Erewhon Boston and Los Angeles until March 1971. During this period the company grew substantially, wholesale activities were expanded, a warehouse at 33 Farnsworth St. was opened and developed, the staff grew from 6 to 45 members, the retail store’s daily sales grew from $700/day to $2,000/day, and imports from Japan expanded (including the largest American stock of hacho [Hatcho] miso).

Roger and Susan’s 2nd child, Christopher, was born on 24 Dec. 1970 in Somerville, a suburb of Boston, at a Seventh-day Adventist hospital that offered natural childbirth. They were living in Newton at the time. Roger and his family left Boston in mid-1971 and drove to Los Angeles, where he spent 4 months managing Erewhon–Los Angeles. He is currently the manager of Deaf Smith Organic Farms, a joint venture of Erewhon and Arrowhead Mills. He is married, with 2 children. Note: That joint venture, created by Paul Hawken and Frank Ford, never developed.

Note: Roger was a notable independent filmmaker, doing lights / light shows and projections for dances etc.—one of the pioneers in the field. He and his filmmaking partner Ben van Meter were well known on the scene in San Francisco. They are listed as performers at the Doors concert at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco (3-4 March 1967) but that means they did projections. Address: Hereford, Texas.

• Summary: Written on the new letterhead of the Executive Committee, Natural Food Distributor Association, this letter states that membership presently stands at ten companies: Arrowhead Mills, Ceres, Eden, Erewhon, Janus, Laurelbrook, Manna (Canada), Mondo (Erewhon, Los Angeles), Shadowfax, and Tree of Life. Cliffrose has recently dropped its charter membership option. Three other companies have not yet paid their dues: Food for Life, Lifestream, and The Well.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in Seattle, Washington, on 15-17 Jan. 1976. The association officers are presently: Chairman: George Gearhart (Janus Natural Foods). Secretary: Tyler Smith (Erewhon). Treasurer: Tom DeSilva (Mondo Trading Co.). Bi-annual host: Boyd Foster (Arrowhead Mills).

Note: This is the earliest document seen (April 2011) that mentions Mondo, Shadowfax, or Cliffrose. Address:
San Jose, California.


• Summary: The color cover, periwinkle blue and purple, shows many trees growing in shallow show against a white sky.

The first page, titled “Piscean Specials: Specials Effective February 18, 1976,” states: Special intro offer: 3 cases, 5% off Erewhon Natural Cheese.” Note: Erewhon is now selling dairy products.

It also offers specials on: NiksSnacks, Celestial Seasonings tea, OG [Organically Grown] apple juice (Knudsen’s, Heinikes), Tom’s soaps, Fearn Soya Products (Buckwheat pancake mix, Wholewheat pancake mix, Corn bread muffin mix), Yinnie syrup, Erewhon pastas, Rocky Hollow herbs & spices, Edible essential oils.

On the next page, titled “First Class,” a list of “Discontinued items: 10% off regular price” includes: All Nature Born cosmetics. All Sumatra honeys. Tamari ½ gallon size. Bulghur-Soy Grits.

This catalog cover was reprinted with permission from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210; New York City office: 303 Howe Ave., Passaic, New Jersey 07055.

Phone: 617-542-1358 and 212-594-6455.


• Summary: Erewhon catalog’s first full color cover shows the front of a 1-lb. box of “Erewhon Number 9–Salt free granola with bran.” A shiny locomotive, pulling a long train of cars, has the number “9” on its front.

On page 22 is a full page of “Ordering information,” including delivery routes and ordering deadlines, terms, returns and freight claims.

“Erewhon, Inc.” now distributes the following lines:


This catalog cover was reprinted with permission from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210; New York City office: 303 Howe Ave., Passaic, New Jersey 07055.

Phone: 617-542-1358 and 212-594-6455.


• Summary: On the front cover is a photo of six adults and three children standing atop the Erewhon warehouse building at 33 Farnsworth Street in Boston. In the background are many skyscrapers and the Boston skyline. The people are: Front row (left to right): Maureen Trail Young (sister of Rosemary Trail), Richard Young, Holly Young (youngest child), Tansy Young, Lori Young. Back row (left to right): David Simon, Jeanne Bleiweiss, Tom Herzig.

On the first page, Tyler Smith, writes about this catalog and upcoming events. “To help stimulate our customers, in the late Fall, Erewhon will present a lecture and demonstration day in both the New York and Boston areas which will feature as the main teacher, Mr. Bill Shurtleff, author of The Book of Tofu and The Book of Miso. He will be coming to this area on a lecture tour from Japan.”

Discontinued–sale. New products (Bob Swanson was the former owner and creator of Llama, Toucan and Crow, a New England distributor; Chico-San’s organic rice cakes).

Erewhon’s New York / New Jersey office is located at 303 Howe Ave., Passaic, NJ 07055. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: 617-542-1358.


• Summary: On 13 Sept. 1976 the authors bought a large, white 1975 Dodge Tradesman 300 van (used, with 40,000 miles on it). On one side Akiko painted in large, bold letters “Tofu and Miso America Tour 1976-77.” Their Book of Tofu had been published in December 1975 and Book of Miso on 23 Sept. 1976. On Sept. 29 they packed the van full to the ceiling with their books on tofu and miso, plus Larry Needlemen’s tofu kits—and departed.

This trip had four main purposes: (1) To introduce tofu and miso to America; (2) To introduce people to the many benefits of a meatless/vegetarian diet; (3) To encourage people to start soyfoods companies, especially tofu shops; and (4) To promote the authors’ newly-published Book of Tofu and Book of Miso.


1976 Dec. 1–Visit Frances Moore Lappé at her upstairs office in Hudson-on-Hastings, New York. Then visit her large home on the hillside. Dec. 1–5–We missed a program for Annamarie Colbin in New York City (partly because we feared our van would be burglarized on the street) so we stayed Dec. 1–5 at the luxurious home of Leo S. Nikora (Niki; Bobbie’s friend). I work on writing The Book of Kudzu. Dec. 6–7. Program for 40 people (Hosts: Nancy N. Bailey and Robert Rodale) at Rodale Press (Emmaus, Pennsylvania); I am surprised they serve white sugar on their dining tables. Dec. 8–Tim Snyder of Ecology Co-op in Philadelphia. Dec. 9–Stay at home of Sylvia Anderson in Pleasantville, New Jersey and do a program upstairs in a modern university. Study magnificent photos of Native Americans by Edward S. Curtis. Dec. 10–Visit Jay and Freya Dinshah of the North American Vegetarian Society (Malaga, New Jersey); their poor vegan child has bowed legs. Dec. 12–Cindy Blouse in Dallastown, Pennsylvania. Dec. 13–Visit Laurelbrook Foods, a natural foods distributor in Forest Hill, Maryland. We meet Rod and Margie Coates. Dec. 14–Big program hosted by Ella May Stoneburner and Seventh-day Adventists near Washington, DC. Dec. 15–Michael Rosoff (who ran the East West Center in Summertown, Tennessee. Meet Margaret Nofziger and Stephen Gaskin. Stay until 2 Jan. 1977. We stayed most of the time at “Hoot Owl Hollow,” a large community owner-built home with many families; our host was Edward Sierra. During the next few weeks we stayed in a parked mobile home (owned by the Sandlers) in a lovely valley about 1 hour drive away. I worked on The Book of Kudzu final draft. Heavy confrontation with Farm folks—as I am about to start a program—about how they didn’t like my way. Write a 4-page pamphlet titled “What is Tempeh?” jointly with Cynthia Bates. 1976 Dec. 31–This is our first year with significant income ($27,390, mostly from Autumn Press royalties) but no profit. During 1976 thirty articles and book reviews about our work with tofu and miso were published in magazines and newspapers in the USA and Japan.

manuscript of “What is Tempeh?” Jan. 13–Program at a restaurant, The Sunshine Inn (St. Louis). Sponsored by The Ethical Society. Stephen Uprichard, Dale Deraps, and Robert Nissenbaum are there.

Jan. 15–Meet David and Danette Briscoe (Kansas City, Missouri; they soon start publishing Soycraft, a small periodical on soyfoods), dinner with Thom Leonard at his home in Lawrence, Kansas (we have miso soup with miso that Thom made, then do a big program sponsored by the Mercantile Community Co-op in downtown Lawrence at either the Lawrence Library or Community Center—in a big downstairs room. I tape the lecture. Unbeknownst to me, Ken Bader, CEO-to-be of the American Soybean Assoc., is in attendance). Jan. 16–Visit Bob Amelay of the Omaha Food Co-ops in Omaha, Nebraska. Jan. 17–Drive across Nebraska to Denver. Jan. 18–Dave Bolduc and Christie Shurtleff in Boulder, Colorado. The first night we do a big tofu program in the historic Boulder Theater. That afternoon we have an audience with the Karmapa—a high Tibetan spiritual leader, who has diabetes; we give him an inscribed hardcover copy of The Book of Tofu. Akiko recalls cooking tofu burgers for him. That evening in a large, packed hall, we witness his Holiness conduct the Black Crown Ceremony. Jan. 20. Jimmy Carter is inaugurated as president.

Jan. 24–Program for The Colorado Farm in Hotchkiss, Colorado—way out in the boondocks. Jan. 25–Stay with Andrea Chin in Taos, New Mexico. Visit Lama Foundation high above Taos in the snow (Steve Durkee, teacher). They have many small meditation cubicles around the hillside and have just finished a nice adobe meditation hall. Near Durango, Colorado, we visit Ed Tripp, who looks lonely, sad and desolate, farming a little patch of organically grown wheat and living alone in a bare shack on coffee and cigarettes. Jan. 26. We stay somewhere in New Mexico. Jan. 27–Program at the First Unitarian Church in Albuquerque (79 p.m.) hosted by Michele E. Martin of Jemez Bodhi Mandala Zen Center, Jemez Springs, New Mexico. Sit meditation in their cold Rinzai zendo then soak in the hot springs outside in the snow. Their teacher, Sasaki roshi, is not there. Jan. 28–Susan Berry in Silver City is supposed to host a program. We cannot find her house. At one point along in here we do a program in or near Utah in a remote church up on a little bluff. Dinner before at Frosty Hot Dog place. Jan. 29–Long drive across Arizona to San Diego. Jan. 30–Big program in San Diego for 350 people at the Ocean Beach Community School hosted by David and Barbara Salat, publishers of Well Being magazine. Afterwards we stayed overnight on their houseboat in San Diego Bay. Magical. Akiko had a bad cough and was very tired.

In Los Angeles we spend a day (in late January or early February 1977) with Lewis Headrick and Jimmy Silver visiting three small tempeh shops: Bali Foods (in Baldwin Park, run by Mr. Henoch Khooe), Country Store Health Foods (in Sun Valley; Joan Harriman), and Toko Baru (in West Covina; Randy Kohler). One evening we had dinner with Mr. Yamauchi and perhaps Al Jacobson. I gave a presentation on tofu. Afterwards, in the parking lot, Mr. Yamauchi gave me an envelope containing several hundred dollars in bills—his way of saying thank you for the work we were doing on behalf of tofu. Feb. 1. Drive to northern California, then have dinner at the home of Herman and Cornellia Aihara (Oroville, CA). Feb. 2. Last program of the tour for Harold Lockhard of the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op (Sacramento, California; Program is in a modern college building).

On 3 Feb. 1977 arrive home in Lafayette, California.

On this 4-month tour the Shurtleffs, trying to do for soyfoods what Johnny Appleseed did for apples, presented 70 public programs attended by about 3,646 people, did many media interviews and appearances, and travelled 15,000 miles. They had a gross income of $18,020 from honoraria and sales of their books (Book of Tofu, Book of Miso), tofu kits, pamphlets, and nigari. Total trip expenses were about $5,361 plus about $7,200 for books from the publisher, leaving a net income of about $5,459. It was a huge, challenging, and exhausting Odyssey that bore abundant fruit in the founding of a new tofu shop almost everywhere they spoke.

1977 Feb. 9–Meeting in Lafayette (790 Los Palos Dr.) with Robert Dolgin and David Sandler (from the Farm and Farm Foods in San Rafael) and Larry Needleman leads to the establishment of Bean Machines, Inc. (BMI). The Farm places a firm order for a Japan tofu system.


• Summary: The letter begins: “Dear fellow employee.” Laurelbrook management spent a lot of time and money trying to quell a union that one of company’s employees was instigating. This letter encourages employees to think twice before joining that union. Margy Coates adds (March 1992): “I think the union was part of Erewhon’s downfall.” Address: Owner, Laurelbrook Foods, P.O. Box 47, Bel Air, Maryland 21014. Phone: (301) 879-1717.


• Summary: BOT2 = The Book of Tofu, Vol. 2—later titled Tofu & Soymilk Production. BOM = The Book of Miso. BOM2 = The Book of Miso, Vol. 2—later titled Miso
Production. WIT = What is Tofu? pamphlet. WIM = What is Miso? pamphlet. TB = Tofu box. TK = Tofu Kit. NN = Natural nigari. CTE = Catalog of commercial tofu-making equipment. CKS = Catalog of koji starter for miso or shoyu.

November: Evan Root of Erewhon, Inc., 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts 02210 (plus follow-up letter of 15 March 1977 from same address). Alec Evans, Welcome Home Bakery, 231 S.W. 2nd St., Corvallis, Oregon 97330 (BOT2, TK, Tofu Cassette). Ira Leviton, Cornercreek whole grain bakery, 60 Elm St., S. Deerfield, Massachusetts 01378 (100 WIT, 100 WIM, TB). Lulu Yoshihara, General Delivery, Denman Island, BC, V0R 1T0, Canada (BOM2). Jean Celle (According to the Book of Tofu he started a company, however, there is no proof that it exists), Fondation Macrobiotique Vellave, 36 bis, Avenue Charles Du Puy 43700, Brives Charensac, France (BOT2, BOM2, CKS). Frank Konishi, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois 62901 (BOT). Tim Redmond, Eden Foods, 4601 Platt Rd., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 (BOT2, BOM2, CTE, CKS). Bernadette of Lifesstream Natural Food Store, 1813 West 4th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6J 1M4, Canada (50 WIT, 50 WIM). K.K. Fung, 4661 Chancellor Cove, Memphis, Tennessee 38118 (BOM, BOT2, BOM2, NN, CTE, CKS). Dr. Tsutomu Mochizuki, c/o Shinshu Miso Research Institute, 1014 Minamiagata Machi, Nagano City 380 Japan (3 BOM). Max Sprenger, Knorr Research Institute, Leutschenbachstrasse 46, CH 8050 Zurich, Switzerland (BOM, BOT2, BOM2, 3 WIT, 3 WIM, CTE, CKS). Vegetarian, Inc., 1310 W. Main, Urbana, Illinois 61801 (BOT2, 2 BOM2, NN, CTE, CKS). Wholistic Health Education Foundation, 715 Monroe Ave., Rochester, New York 14607 (BOM2, 50 WIT, 50 WIM, NN, CTE, CKS). Bruce Walker, 2131 Red Deer Road, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7K 1C8, Canada (BOT2, BOM).

Note: This is the earliest document seen (July 1999) that contains the word “wholistic.” Address: New-Age Foods Study Center, 790 Los Palos Dr., Lafayette, California 94549. Phone: (415) 283-3161.

128. Product Name: Brown Rice (Genmai) Miso.

Manufacturer’s Name: Erewhon (Importer). Made in Japan by Sendai Miso Shoyu Co.

Manufacturer’s Address: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210.

Date of Introduction: 1976.

Ingredients: Brown rice, soybeans, water, sea salt.

Wt/Vol., Packaging, Price: 16 oz.

How Stored: Refrigerated preferably.

New Product—Documentation: Ad in East West Journal. 1977. “Erewhon: Our traditional foods are the foods of the future.” “Recently a brown rice (genmai) miso has been added to the Erewhon line of imported foods. Based on the traditional techniques and standards, this new variety was two and a half years in development before Mr. Ko Haga, brewmaster of Sendai [Miso Shoyu K.K.] produced what he considered a successful brown rice koji, or starter.” Sendai “produced a huller which merely scratches the bran along the ridges of each grain; even though only 1% of the grain is lost in the process, this is sufficient to permit spores to enter the inner starches. You will find genmai miso much sweeter than the kome [white rice] variety, due to the higher ratio of rice to soybeans in this special product. Sendai uses a regionally grown rice, called Sasaminishi, which is highly regarded in Japan, and the soybeans used are the ‘Prize’ variety grown organically in Minnesota by farmer Ed Ricke. Genmai miso is more expensive than the other varieties Erewhon offers. Besides being the first miso made with organic soybeans, ” it also undergoes an 18-month fermentation.

Shurtleff & Aoyagi. 1983. The Book of Miso. 2nd ed. p. 236. In 1968 Erewhon started to import miso and shoyu from Japan. “A wholesale and distribution company was started that year and soon it was trucking a line of fine Japanese imported red, barley, and Hatcho misos to a growing number of natural food stores.” By 1970 sesame miso and tekka miso were added to the Erewhon line. By 1976 brown rice (genmai) miso was added.

Ad (7.5 by 13 inches, full color) in Natural Foods Merchandiser. 1989. Feb. p. 25. There are now 4 varieties of miso under the Erewhon brand: Hatcho (note new correct spelling), genmai, kome, and mugi. Note that all still use the esoteric Japanese names. Plastic bag packages are colorful and attractive. On each is the prominent endorsement: “Recommended by Michio Kushi. Macrobiotic quality.”


• Summary: “Students at the University of Maine at Orono are eating strange things these days. And they’ve never been healthier. The Office of Dining Services is making available to students a vegetarian menu in addition to the regular meat and potatoes fare served in the campus’ dining halls.” Included on the unique menu are tofu burgers—“a small part of the college’s campaign to get more vegetables and less meat to those students who want it.” Many students who eat at the veggie line do not consider themselves vegetarians; they just like the food. The Bear’s Den, a student restaurant at the Memorial Union, now offers a tofu salad sandwich, as well as a meatless “nutty burger” based on cottage cheese. “According to UMO’s assistant manager of dining services, Anne Johnson, tofu is purchased from Peter and Judy Beane of the No-moo Dairy in South Portland [Maine], the only source north of Boston [Massachusetts]... Some of the other hard-to-find items are bought through a Boston company named Erewhon.”
“The university learned about tofu in a book by Bill Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi, who demonstrated cooking with tofu and miso at the college in November. They showed how to prepare tofu or miso for less than eight-and-a-half cents a pound.”

Contains “veggie” recipes for Nuttyburger, and Maveric Chili (with 1 cup whole soybeans). Five photos show students “dining on the tofuburger,” which contains soybean curd, carrots, onions, and sunflowers. Most said the flavor “was hard to describe. Several said it tasted a lot like a fish sandwich.”

Note: This is the English-language document seen (Jan. 2007) that contains the term “tofuburger” (or “tofuburgers”). Address: Daily News Staff.


• Summary: Discusses payment problem. “Thank you for the information on koji and koji starter supply. I wish you good continued good fortune on your wonderful work.” Address: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: (617) 542-1358.


• Summary: “A Boston health foods distributor has sued at least five state health food retailers, charging them with violating federal antitrust laws by boycotting the distributor for selling to food cooperatives.”

This week, Erewhon filed the suit at the U.S. District Court in Hartford. In a previous action, filed in Boston, Erewhon sued 15 other natural food stores in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

In its lawsuits, Erewhon charges that in about 1975 the retail stores began complaining about Erewhon’s sales to food cooperatives, arguing that a distributor breaches “common basic loyalty” owed to the retailer by “selling directly to customers at wholesale prices.”

Erewhon—a privately owned firm with sales of about $7 million a year—says the boycott started last year and has cost the company about 5% of its market.

Note: Erewhon eventually won this lawsuit, but its legal bills were so high that it could never pay them. This event marked the beginning of Erewhon’s downfall.


• Summary: On the cover are bags, trays, and scoops filled with natural foods. Page 25 states that Eden now sells Tamari Soy Sauce (Eden, or Marushima), plus Hacho, Mugi, and Kome Miso. This is the first catalog in which Erewhon’s name is not listed after any tamari or miso products.

On page 25 is the first record of “Eden Tamari: Natural Shoyu” which is sold in 8 oz, pints, quarts, or 1 gallons cans. A photo shows the quart bottle with label, and the dispenser. It is “made from whole soybeans and naturally fermented in wooden kegs for 30 months...” The Muso Shokuhin Company has been supplying the macrobiotic community of the United States with tamari, miso and sea vegetables for the last ten years. All of Eden’s Japanese imports are supplied by Muso.” Address: Ann Arbor, Michigan. Phone: (313) 973-9400.


• Summary: This informative advertisement is largely about miso. Erewhon imports Hacho [Hatcho] miso from Japan; the source company first made Hacho miso in 1337. “We are grateful to Muso Shokuhin Company of Japan, a macrobiotic natural foods company, for originally distributing hacho miso to the United States through Erewhon and for the work they continue to do in developing sources of high-quality organic foods for Japan and the rest of the world. Erewhon is also grateful to Mr. A. Kazama of Mitoku Company, Ltd., of Tokyo, for encouraging the development of large-scale miso production without the use of chemical additives to speed the aging process. When Mr. Michio Kushi, the founder of Erewhon first convinced Mr. Kazama of the sizable market for naturally produced miso, he initiated a search which resulted in the president of Sendai Miso Company agreeing to produce enough to keep up with the demand.

“Recently a brown rice (genmai) miso has been added to the Erewhon line of imported foods. Based on the traditional techniques and standards, this new variety was two and a half years in development before Mr. Ko Haga, brewmaster of Sendai, produced what he considered a successful brown rice koji, or starter.”

“Sendai uses a regionally grown rice, called Sasanishiki, which is highly regarded in Japan, and the soybeans used are the ‘Prize’ variety grown organically in Minnesota by farmer Ed Ricke.”

Last year 85 tons of traditionally produced miso were imported into the United States from Japan. Erewhon now has 3 locations in the USA, in addition to the headquarters and main warehouse at 33 Farnsworth St.: 342 Newbury St., Boston, Massachusetts 02115; 1731 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138; 1 Civic Center Plaza, Hartford, Connecticut 06103. Address: 33 Farnsworth St., Boston, Massachusetts 02210.


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**Summary:** Many followers of macrobiotics consider this to be the author's classic work on the subject. The preface tells briefly how Mr. Kushi got involved with macrobiotics and came to America. He began to lecture in New York in 1955. His teachings began to spread, especially after 1963. By Feb. 1977 he has conducted 5,000 lectures and seminars in America and Europe. One Appendix is titled “A Historical Review of the Macrobiotic Movement in North America” (p. 168-71).

Concerning soyfoods, the book discusses miso (p. 51-52), protein (p. 69), tamari (p. 51-52, 131-33), tekka (52, 133), and tofu plaster (130; “more effective than an ice pack to draw out fever”). Concerning smoking, the author believes that it “does not contribute to produce lung cancer” if the smoker eats a proper traditional (macrobiotic) diet (p. 115).

“In 1949, Michio Kushi, during his postgraduate studies at Tokyo University, was inspired by the teaching of George Ohsawa. He came to the United States in connection with the World Federalist movement. Besides him, Aveline Tomoko Yokoyama in 1951, Herman Aihara in 1953, Cornellia Chiko Yokota, Romain Noboru Sato and his brothers Junsei Yamazaki, Shizuko Yamamoto, Noboru Muramoto and others came to the United States during the following years. After experience with various enterprises they respectively began to teach macrobiotics, mainly in New York. George and Lima Ohsawa also visited America from Europe to conduct seminars. Macrobiotic summer camps, restaurants, and food stores began to operate on a small scale with many American people. Educational activity was organized as the Ohsawa Foundation at that time. However, on the occasion of the Berlin Crisis in 1961, the major active people related to the macrobiotic movement made an ‘exodus’ to Chico, California. Robert Kennedy, Lou Oles, Herman Aihara and others began Chico San, Inc., as a food manufacturing and distributing company, and established the Ohsawa Foundation in California. Later, the Foundation moved to Los Angeles, its main activity being publishing George Ohsawa’s works. The San Francisco center was established. At a later date, Jacques and Yvette de Langre [DeLangre], Joe and Mimi Arseguel and many others shared educational activities in California and other areas of the West Coast.

“In the meantime, after educational activity in New York, besides several seminars on Martha’s Vineyard and various local colleges, Michio and Aveline Kushi moved to Boston in order to concentrate on education for the younger generations. They organized the East West Institute in Cambridge which later moved to Wellesley and then transferred to Boston. To meet the increasing demand for good food, a small basement food store, Erewhon, was opened. Erewhon was managed and developed over the years by the Kushis, Evan Root, William Tara, Roger Hillyard and Paul Hawken. Erewhon was followed by a small restaurant, Sanae, managed at different times by Evan Root, Tyler Smith, and Richard Sandler. Lectures by Michio Kushi continued for five years in Arlington Street Church, Boston, with repeated visits to many major U.S. cities. Erewhon developed into a larger store, on Newbury Street in Boston, and added its wholesale operation from a warehouse on the South Shore, Boston Wharf, distributing constantly to an increasing number of natural food stores. The warehouse facility has been managed by Paul Hawken, William Garrison, Tyler Smith, and currently Jeff Flasher and other associates as well as the Kushis. Erewhon further established a Los Angeles store which also developed into a wholesale operation—managed over the years by the Kushis, William Tara, Bruce Macdonald, and currently by John Fountain and Thomas DeSilva...

“The East West Journal, a monthly newspaper, established in 1970—managed over the years by Ronald Dobrin, Jack Garvey, Robert Hargrove, and currently Sherman Goldman, Lenny Jacobs and other associates—is continuing to introduce to the wider society, the new vision for the present and future world. Educational activities directly concerned with teaching and other educational projects have been administered since 1973 by the East West Foundation, a nonprofit educational organization managed by the Kushis, Edward Esko, Stephen Uprichard, and other associates.” Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


**Summary:** On the front cover is a color photo of a rose flower and leaves. On the first page, Jeffrey Flasher (apparently the new president) writing about this catalog, notes: “Erewhon’s summer catalog of 1973 listed approximately 450 products, of which 30% were either grown, manufactured, or repackaged in the Northeast. Although last summer’s catalog offered nearly 1,000 products, fully 25% were either grown, manufactured, or repackaged in the Northeast... Between July and December Erewhon will be introducing 50 to 75 new items produced in the Northeast.” “No sugar or preservatives added to any food in this catalog.”

Page 22 is “Ordering information. On the rear cover is another rose, and “How to reach us” information from Maine to New Jersey.

This catalog cover was reprinted with permission from the Michio and Aveline Kushi Macrobiotics Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: 617-542-1358.


*Summary:* In 1972, Laurelbrook purchased $27,753 worth of goods from Erewhon–Los Angeles and $76,685 from Erewhon–Boston, for a total of $104,439. In 1976, Laurelbrook purchased $12,905 worth of goods from Erewhon–Los Angeles and $144,141 from Erewhon–Boston, for a total of $157,046. Address: P.O. Box 47, Bel Air, Maryland 21014.


On 1 Aug. 1975 the Company sold substantially all of its “West Coast Division for cash and notes.” The net gain was $86,872. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


*Summary:* On September 21, 1977, Michio Kushi and several associates, including Dr. Robert Mendelsohn, M.D., met in Washington with members of the White House staff. The meeting, which lasted approximately two hours, began with a 45 minute presentation of a series of recommendations by Michio Kushi, a description of the activities and goals of the East West Foundation (founded 1972), and a history of Erewhon (fiscal 1978 sales estimated at $10 million). An outline of the East West Journal’s position on various political, social, and economic applications of the national food policy was also included in the meeting’s agenda.

Recommendations for seasoning foods and to aid digestion of grains, was traditional foods such as pickled vegetables and naturally fermented soy bean products (such as soy sauce, miso, tempeh, etc.). Note: Dr. Mendelsohn died in about May 1988. Address: Boston, Massachusetts. Phone: 617-536-3360.


*Summary:* On the front cover is a photo of a table dispenser of Erewhon Natural Shoyu (but the neck band reads “Erewhon Tamari Soy Sauce”). On the first page, Jack Garvey (apparently the new president) writes about the meaning of the word “Erewhon,” which derives from a book of that title written by Samuel Butler. Address: 33 Farnsworth Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Phone: 617-542-1358.


*Summary:* “Your letter was extremely flattering and I am so pleased that you found our soynuts of the highest quality. That kind of comment justifies the almost two years we spent in research in and out of Michigan State University... There are many varieties of soybeans. Much of our product development time was spent in testing almost eighty different varieties of soybeans. In addition, we found that there were even distinct differences in the palatability of the same variety grown in different regions of the U.S. based primarily on climatic and soil conditions. We narrowed our varietal selection to a single type grown in a specific area of Michigan.” Good soybeans “must be identity preserved!”

To make good soynuts at home: Select a good variety of whole soybeans that are of uniform size. Rinse the beans and soak them overnight. The volume should have increased approximately 2½ times over the volume of the dry beans. Remove any excess water by spreading the soaked beans on paper or cloth toweling. Heat vegetable oil to 325ºF. Oil roast [deep fry] the soybeans for about 12 minutes. The color should be golden brown, the taste bland, and the texture crunchy without being hard. A well-done soynut should fraction into small pieces without undue jaw pressure.

“Actually, Bill there is very little that is revolutionary about our processing technique. The real secret is varietal selection and careful supervision of roasting technique using lower heat over a longer period of time.

“P.S. We have pretty much confined our marketing efforts to Michigan and now we feel we are ready to expand out. Could you help us by giving us a recommendation to Erewhon and others?”

Note 1. The letterhead reads–Line 1: INARI, Ltd. Line 2: “International Nutrition and Resources Inc.” Note 2. This is the earliest document seen (Dec. 1998) concerning INARI (a manufacturer of soynuts) or the work of Len and Irene Stuttman with soyfoods or soynuts. Address: President, INARI, Ltd., 2331 Forest Rd., Lansing, Michigan 48910. Phone: (517) 882-3323.


*Summary:* Between 1968 and 1973 sales of natural foods in the USA multiplied tenfold, from $60 million to almost $600 million. During the recession of 1974-75 sales slowed somewhat, and many marginal operations went out of business—according to the *Small Business Reporter.*
Midwest Natural Foods in Ann Arbor, Michigan, had sales of roughly $25,000 its first year, but now 5 years later has sales of $6 million annually, with 750 active accounts. Midwest began with 3 employees and now has 65.

Laurelbrook Foods had sales last year of about $3 million. Laurelbrook began with 5 employees in 1971 and now has 44. Margy Coates of Laurelbrook says people in her company are exhausted trying to keep up with the high demand, but everything is going well.

Tree of Life in St. Augustine, Florida, started 5 years ago with a staff of 10, now employs 90 people and reports growth of 20% a year. They originally distributed only in Florida, but now their market has spread to ten southeastern states.

Erewhon is a Boston-based natural foods company that began eleven years ago with a capital investment of $5,000 and one employee. Now the company has 170 employees and sales of nearly $10 million a year. If all continued to go well, the company will move to a new 77,000-square-foot warehouse this year. Jack Garvey, personnel and education manager, says the company has had to hold down growth to a manageable rate of 30% a year. With no public loans, no stock, and no capital source besides sales, they can’t afford to stock as much as they’d like to.

Note: This is the earliest document seen (Dec. 2001) concerning industry and market statistics for the natural foods industry in the USA.

• Summary: Most of the following companies are presently distributing The Book of Tofu, The Book of Miso and The Book of Kudzu published by Autumn Press. For each, the company name (listed alphabetically) and address are given: Large natural food distributors (28): Arrowhead Distributing (Denver, Colorado), Beautiful Foods (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), CC Grains (Seattle, Washington), Chico-San Inc. (Chico, California), Clear Eye (Rochester, New York; $3 million/year in sales), Dari Farms Natural Foods (Tolland, Connecticut), Eden Foods (Ann Arbor, Michigan; Phone: 313-973-9400. Tim Redmond, Michael Potter), Erewhon (Cambridge, Massachusetts; Phone: 617-354-2001. John Fogg, President), Erewhon West (Vernon, California; Phone: 213-582-6144. James Silver), Japan Food Corp. (JFC–South San Francisco, California; also in New York), Laurelbrook Foods (Raleigh, North Carolina), Llama Trading Co. (Greenfield, Massachusetts), Midwest Natural Foods (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Pure and Simple/The Well (San Jose, California; Pure & Simple changed to 1045 Peptone, San Jose, CA 95110; Jon Hoefer), Rainbow Distributing (Denver, Colorado), Reality Natural Foods (Haleiwa, Oahu, Hawaii), Redwood Natural Foods (3245 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa, California; Greg Hartman. Phone: 707-546-5878). Rock Island Foods (Ignacio, California), Shadowfax (Binghamton, New York), Starflower (Eugene, Oregon), Tree of Life (Augustine, Florida), United Naturals (Eureka, California), Westbrae (Emeryville, California), Lifestream Natural Foods (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada), Manna Foods (Scarborough, Ontario, Canada).

Large health food distributors (8–also carry books): Akin (Tulsa, Oklahoma), Akin Southeast (Jacksonville, Florida), Balanced Foods (Bergen, New Jersey), Collegedale Distributors (Collegedale, Tennessee), Foods for Health (Phoenix, Arizona), Health Foods Inc. (Des Plaines, Illinois), Kahan and Lessin (Los Angeles, California), Natures Best (El Segundo, California).

Large booksellers [distributors] (3): Nutribooks Corp. (Denver, Colorado), Bookpeople (Berkeley, California), Landstrom (South San Francisco, California).

• Summary: “Let food be thy medicine and thy medicine be food.” A photo shows a marble bust of Hippocrates. Across the bottom of this full-page black and white ad are the addresses and phone numbers of Erewhon’s four stores: Three in Massachusetts (Boston, Cambridge, and Brookline), and one in Connecticut (Hartford). Address: Boston, Massachusetts.

• Summary: This full-page black and white ad shows a dolphin jumping in front of a wave. It discusses hijiki, a sea vegetable. “Enjoy Erewhon hijiki and also try these other fine Erewhon sea vegetables: Kombu, Wakame, Nori, and Arame.” Gives the addresses and phone numbers of Erewhon’s three stores in Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in Hartford, Connecticut. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.

• Summary: An excellent description, with many technical details of the process and equipment, of how tofu is made and marketed at Laughing Grasshopper. The company is now producing 5,000 to 5,500 lb/week of nigari tofu. They buy nigari from both Erewhon Inc. (a direct importer) and Westbrae. Address: Laughing Grasshopper, 3 Main St., Millers Falls, Massachusetts 01349.

**Summary:** “Have you tried Amasake Rice for breakfast? Amasake Rice is a naturally sweet breakfast cereal that you can make easily at home... Amasake is made by fermenting cooked grain with ‘koji’ spores. Koji, the enzyme-rich culture used to make miso, breaks down the natural carbohydrates in the rice to their simple sugar form. The result is a surprisingly sweet rice porridge that is easily digestible and gives quick and lasting energy to start the day. The recipe for Amasake is quite simple.” This recipe for “Overnight Amasake” calls for 3 cups cooked brown rice, 1 cup water, and ½ handful koji starter.

This newsletter is produced by Joel Wollner (Editor & Assistant Manager), and George Rosendale (Manager). Address: 342 Newbury Street [Boston, Massachusetts]. Phone: 262-3420.

**Summary:** “This weeks marks the twelfth anniversary of Erewhon Natural Foods. It was right here in Newbury Street twelve years ago that Michio and Aveline Kushi, along with a few young friends, bagged the first Brown Rice and bottled the first Tamari that have since become Erewhon standards and the backbone of the Natural Foods movement in America.” Address: 342 Newbury Street [Boston, Massachusetts]. Phone: 262-3420.

**Summary:** Mailing labels (including the company name, purchaser or key contact person, and address) are given for the following companies: Erewhon, Inc. (Cambridge, Massachusetts), Nutri-Books Corp. (Denver, Colorado), Lifestream Natural Foods (Richmond, BC, Canada), Manna Foods (Scarborough, Ontario, Canada), Midwest Natural Foods (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Nature’s Best (Torrance, California), Laurelbrook Foods (Bel Air, Maryland), Feather River (Bellevue, Washington), Arrowhead Mills (Denver, Colorado), Llama Trading Co. (Greenfield, Massachusetts), Reality Natural Foods (Honolulu, Hawaii), Tree of Life (St. Augustine, Florida), Eden Foods (Ann Arbor, Michigan), New Leaf Distributing Co. (Atlanta, Georgia), East West Journal (Brookline, Massachusetts), Mother Earth News (Hendersonville, NC), Bookpeople (Berkeley, California), Landstrom (South San Francisco, California), Health Foods Inc. (Des Plaines, Illinois).

A single-letter code, A through D, appears in the upper right corner of each label. A = Biggest buyer. B = Second biggest buyer, etc. Erewhon and Nutri-Books are the two biggest buyers. Address: Lafayette, California.

**Summary:** Erewhon’s total liabilities increased to $1,852,423 in 1978, from $1,322,099 in 1977. Net sales also increased to $10,155,870 in 1977, from $8,379,860 in 1977. Net income before taxes decreased dramatically to a loss of $200,717 in 1978, from a profit of $244,191 in 1977. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.

**Summary:** Suggests that Mr. Schaller order Cold Mountain Dry Koji from Erewhon Natural Foods. Note: This koji is made by Miyako Oriental Foods, a subsidiary of Mutual Trading Co. Address: Mutual Trading Co., Inc., 431 Crocker St., Los Angeles, California 90013. Phone: 213-626-9458.

**Summary:** For organic foods in Boston, visit Erewhon at 1731 Massachusetts Ave. (including locally grown organic produce), or Cambridge Natural Foods at 1670 Massachusetts Ave., or the Organic Food Cellar at 1050 Massachusetts Ave. Address: Massachusetts.

**Summary:** The Sun Pot, a manual yogurt maker, provides an easy way to make smooth and creamy yogurt at home—with no electricity or timer required. It can be purchased at Erewhon, Inc., 342 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02115. Phone: 262-3420. Or Erewhon, Inc., 1731 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: 492-2599. Address: Massachusetts.

**Summary:** A full-page black and white ad. “Sea vegetables are a truly delicious and versatile food.” Address: 3 East St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141. Phone: (617) 354-2001.

154. Product Name: Wheatmeat (Seitan), and Wheatmeat Sandwiches.

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Kushi House/East West Center. Then Macrobiotic Kitchen Unlimited.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** 708 North Orange Grove Ave., Hollywood, California.

**Date of Introduction:** 1978.

**New Product–Documentation:** Talk with Marijke Steevensz. 1999. July 9. Phone: 213-937-0777 or 213-876-
2813. Pronounced Ma-REE-kuh. She and her husband Roy Steevensz first made seitan (which they always called “Wheatmeat”) and Wheatmeat Sandwiches at their East West Center on [7357] Franklin Ave. in Hollywood. She does not recall where the term “Wheatmeat” came from. They began making it commercially sometime between 1975 and 1978. They sold the plain Wheatmeat only to Erewhon, but they sold the Wheatmeat Sandwiches to many other stores as well. In 1979 they moved their food manufacturing operations into a big commercial kitchen named Macrobiotic Kitchen Unlimited (MKU) at 708 North Orange Grove Ave., Hollywood, California. They discontinued the sandwiches and sold the Wheatmeat in the Los Angeles area, including at their adjacent retail store and restaurant named Grain Country at 787 Melrose Ave. (at Orange Ave.) in Los Angeles. They made seitan at MKU from 1979 to 1984. In 1979 they were the only company making seitan in the Los Angeles area, “but now everybody is doing it.” Marijke learned how to make seitan from Cornelia Aihara in the early 1970s. Cornelia visited their East West Center in Los Angeles, did cooking classes, and made seitan. She also learned part of the process from Jacques Delangre, who also taught cooking classes at their center. Grain Country opened in May 1979. Carlos Richardson of Gold Mine Natural Foods now makes seitan and sells it at Erewhon in Los Angeles. Marijke and Roy taught Carlos how to make seitan in cooking classes when Carlos lived in Hawaii.

Talk with Tom DeSilva, owner of Erewhon Natural Foods in Los Angeles. 1992. July 10. He thinks that the first American-made seitan sold at Erewhon was made by some of the girls at the Kushi House on Franklin Ave. in Hollywood.

155. **Product Name:** Erewhon Natural Shoyu.  
**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon Products [Los Angeles, California]. (Imported). Made in Japan.  
**Manufacturer’s Address:** Los Angeles, California. Phone: (213) 836-7569.  
**Date of Introduction:** 1978. January.  


• **Summary:** “Eleven years ago two of our five daughters, Judy and Dora [Coates], were living in Boston [Massachusetts] with Michio Kushi’s family and working with Erewhon Trading Co. It was Judy who said, ‘Dad, it’s time for you and Mom to change your diet!’ Judy came to cook for us in Maryland and a remarkable change took place after she arrived! No more meat, sugar, alcohol or highly processed foods. Gone were the pies, cakes, candies, cokes and all sweet stuff, both solids and liquids. We began to say, ‘It tastes good, it’s off the diet.’ I must admit, it was tough going for the first few weeks. But from then on we never looked back! In fact we were so impressed with our new ‘Well Being’ that we decided to follow Erewhon’s example and establish a business distributing whole, natural foods to those people concerned with improving their health... Our first suppliers were Arrowhead Mills in Texas and Erewhon in Boston.”

Discusses the work of Paul Hawken and Erewhon to locate and help farmers who “had been growing and would continue to grow their crops organically using the established Rodale standards. During the early years, the Lundberg Brothers, Ted Whitmer and sons, Lewis Cox, Frank Ford, Carl Garrich, John Baker, George Crane, A.P. Thomson (Golden Acres) and others have established methods of improving their soils and producing crops that are grown without the use of chemicals, herbicides or pesticides.” Address: Laurelbrook Foods, P.O. Box 47, Bel Air, Maryland 21014. Phone: (301) 879-1717.


• **Summary:** One the cover are two kites (colored orange and red) flying in the sky. This catalog, largely printed by a computer, contains many ads on numbered pages. Contents: Policies and terms. Catalog information. Packaged. Books. Refrigerated and frozen. Bulk. Literature and flyers. Indexes (3).

“One stop shopping... We are now a Full Line distributor.” List of new lines. List of new products within existing lines. Symbols and abbreviations.
Suppliers are listed alphabetically: Arrowhead Mills, Balanced Brand [Balanced Foods, New Jersey], Bragg’s (Liquid Aminos), Dr. Bronner’s (with full page ad showing the doctor), Carmé (lecithin), Cedar Lakes, Celu (Soy bean flour), Chico-San, A.A. Debole (Spaghetti sauce–soy con), Dragon’s Milk (Aricia), Elam’s (soy flour), El Molino, Energy-Jolly Joan, Erewhon (with “Erewhon West” full-page ad), Family Orchards (Tamari mixes, Trail mix), Fantastic Foods, Fantastic Falafel [Felafel], Fearn Soya Foods, Flavor Tree, Hain Pure Foods (“Cold pressed” vegetable oils, mayonnaise, nut butters), Hansen’s juices, Health Valley (incl. Vegetarian Chili), Hi-Energy Foods (food bars), Hoffman’s (protein powders, snack bars), Lact-Aid (p. 109, ad p. 118), Jack La Lanne, Lange’s, R.G. Lecithin, Lifestyle (p. 113, 251, ads p. 249-50), Malt-O-Meal, Maya Grainburhers (p. 119, ad p. 126–mix with tofu), Midland Lecithin, Miso Cup, Modern Products (Gayelord Hauser), Mus-L-On (MLO), NF Factors, Niblack (“Tamari toasted sunflower seeds,” Tamari pumpkin seeds,” raw or toasted wheat germ, unprocessed miller’s bran), Old Stone Mill (soy), Orjene, Parkelp, Plus Produces (incl. Tiger’s Milk), Richter Bros., Soken, Sovex, Viobin, Waring (blender, juicer), Westbrae.

Books, Talking Foods, Meats (nitrate and nitrite free), Poultry (no hormones or antibiotics), Soy Products (Health Valley soy milk, tofu), Soy Plant Tofu (nigari, and tofu sausage, p. 259-60), Tumaro’s, Willow Run (Soybean spread [margarine]). Bulk–Beans, dry roasted soybeans, fruit & nut mixes (trail mix), nut butters, condiments, vegetable oils, pasta (with nomenclature), granola, teas & herbs. Literature & flyers. Indexes. Note: Many companies have a large selection of herbs. Address: 170 April Dr., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103. Phone: 313-769-8444 or in Area 734-1-800-552-6297.


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**Summary:** The first part of this book (p. 7-49) consists of essays on natural foods and nutrition (some reprinted). Part two is a commercial catalog/directory of natural foods available in 1979; it lists and describes (with may photos and labels) products from most of the major U.S. natural foods manufacturers. An Index (p. 293-308) lists participating companies alphabetically.

Soy-related products include: Hain Super-E Soy Oil and Crude [unrefined] Soy Oil (Los Angeles, California, p. 55). Health Valley Soy Moo (Montebello, California, p. 56). Edward & Sons Miso-Cup (Union, New Jersey, p. 57).


Cashew-Raisin Bran-ola (with okara soy fiber), Happy Trails Mix (with roasted soynuts) (Amherst, Massachusetts, p. 79). Elam’s Soy Flour (Broadview, Illinois, p. 81).


Good Food brand Soy-Millet Bread (Austin, Texas, p. 120). Arrowhead Mills Bulgur-Soy Grits (p. 121). Erewhon Morning Cereal, and Infant Cereal (each containing soy beans). Chico-San Black Soybeans (imported), and Azuki Beans (Dainagon imported small red), and Lima Soy Sauce (Chico, California, p. 126-27). Arrowhead Mills 7 Grain Cereal, and Def Smith Crunch (granola-type cold cereal) (each contains soybeans, p. 130).

The section on pages 188-197 is titled “Soy.” It lists Farm Foods Tempeh Kit, Tempeh Starter, Natural Nigari for Curding Tofu, Soyflour, Whole Cleaned Soybeans, Good for Ya Textured Vegetable Protein (Summertown, Tennessee, p. 189). New England Soy Dairy Tofu (with many tofu recipes, Greenfield, Massachusetts, p. 192-96).

The Redwood Sprouter Co. sprouter containing Soy Sprouts (1976, Austin, Texas, p. 202-04). Worthington Foods (a photo shows their line of 38 products). Millstone Burger-Like (with soy flour and TVP), Wheat Fries (with wheat gluten), Tender Cuts (with wheat protein and soy flour) (Penryn, California, p. 222-23). Sunrise Health Products Lecithin Granules (p. 274-75).


**Summary:** A report on the Second Soycrafters Conference, held 26-29 July 1979 at Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts. Over 50 workshops and lectures were presented on all phases of the soyfoods industry. “Miraculously, the $19,000 conference broke even financially, and attracted significant national press in the following three months.”

The section titled “The view from the guests” (p. 20-23) contains brief statements (all positive) about the conference from the following attendees: Luke Lukoskie (Island Spring), Rebecca Uchida (Mu Tofu Shop), Michelle Ajamian (Amesville, Ohio), Shag Kiefer (Redbud Creek Tofu), Will Truslow (Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts), Dr. Joseph Rakosky (Rakosky Services, Melrose, Illinois), Marvel Huffman (Lecanto Tofu), Francine Watanabe (La Soyarie, Hull, Quebec, Canada), Dr. Charles Howes (Loma Linda Foods, Mt. Vernon, Ohio), Timothy Metzger (Dannon Milk Products, Long Island City, New York), Lee Cunningham (Wonder Life Corp., Des Moines, Iowa), Joseph Jaffer (Waymart, Pennsylvania), Chico Wagner (Yaupon Soyfoods), Dr. Malcolm Bourne, Frank Pilottie (Golden Key Farm, Grant Park, Illinois), David Patten (Brightsong Tofu, {Redwood Valley}, California), Patti Smith (Erewhon, Cambridge, Massachusetts), Larry Needelman (Bean Machines, Bodega, California), Peter Driscoll, Goodhart Foods (Petoskey, Michigan), Bill Shurtleff (New-Age Foods Study Center), George Strayer (Agricultural Exports, Hudson, Iowa), David Blumberg

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Note: This is the earliest publication seen (Feb. 2003) that mentions Brightsong Tofu. Address: Colrain, Massachusetts.


• Summary: “Our miso project is going quite well. This summer I located the remaining equipment in New Jersey and ordered our vats from Arrow Tank Co. in Buffalo [New York]. The owner is stone deaf; it was an interesting afternoon. We are now leveling the site for the miso factory. It’s going to be one of those metal Butler buildings, about 4,000-sq-feet. Besides the miso project, we are working on other projects such as building a structure for summer camps, shiitake mushroom farming, and preparing our land for growing soybeans. There’s just Jan. and I, so our hands are full.”

While in Japan, John noticed that Mr. Onozaki’s wife and most older traditional people never boil their miso soup. “People go out of their way to buy Mr. Onozaki’s unpasteurized miso. These people believe that there is a very beneficial bacteria in miso which is killed by heat. More specifically, old people in rural Japan strongly feel that if you smoke, it is best to drink unpasteurized miso every day.

“On the other hand, the people at Sendai [Miso Shoyu Co.] and Michio [Kushi] believe this is nonsense. I have great faith in the wisdom of tradition. People that live close to the earth do not waste their time if not for good reason. Also, the people at Sendai pasteurize all exported miso, much of which is sold by Erewhon.” John asks Shurtleff’s opinion on these matters.

John would like to sell some of the koji he makes as dry koji. He asks how to dry it and the effect of drying on the enzyme activity of the koji. “Finally, do you know anything about the nutritional benefits of koji in making amasake or pickles?”

Talk with John Belleme. 1980. Oct. 3. The rebuilt cypress vats are 7 feet tall and 5 feet in diameter. Each costs $1,000 with stainless steel hoops. John is deeply interested in macrobiotics. Address: Route 3, Box 541, Rutherfordton, North Carolina. Phone: (704) 287-2940.


• Summary: Section 12 (p. 85-113) of this study is titled “Soyfoods & Other Soy Products.” It consists largely of statistics compiled by the Soyfoods Center and Soycrafters Association of North America. On pages 95-110 is published, without permission, complete lists of all U.S. tofu shops, tempeh shops, and miso and koji manufacturers from books copyrighted by Shurtleff and Aoyagi.

Acknowledgement of the source of all this information is given only at the bottom of tables, on the last page of the plagiarized list of manufacturers, and in Appendix 6, page 234. No permission was obtained from the Soyfoods Center to use any of this material.

On page 113 is a table on U.S. lecithin production from 1976 to 1979, based partly on U.S. Census figures. Production averaged about 60 million lb/year, worth $19 to $23 million. The estimated percentage consumed for health purposes rose from a estimated 2.5% worth $500,000 in 1976 to an estimated 5.5% worth $1.3 million in 1979.

Page 232 lists the largest health food wholesalers in the USA: Balanced Foods Inc. (Ridgefield, New Jersey), Landstrom Distributing (San Francisco, California), Erewhon, Inc. (Cambridge, Massachusetts), Health Foods Inc. (Des Plaines, Illinois), Kahan & Lessin Co. (Compton, California), Nature’s Best (Torrance, California), and Tree of Life Inc. (St. Augustine, Florida). Address: Dix Hills, New York.


• Summary: Willis and Tina Wood make apple cider jelly on their 67-acre farm in Weathersfield, Vermont. They produce 12 tons of the dark, tart-tasting jelly each fall using a 100-year old family recipe. They started making cider jelly on this farm in 1882 and for a while they were the only people in the world making it. Erewhon in Boston is one of their biggest distributors. The product is totally natural, with no additives. It’s just pure, concentrated apple juice. Address: Massachusetts.
**Summary:** These new products are: (1) Crispy Brown Rice Cereal, a blend of organic medium grain brown rice, barley malt, and sea salt. It is ready to eat. (2) Erewhon tofu. “Tofu is one of the health food trade’s big celebrities, and Erewhon’s comes in two organic styles, firm and soft.” (3) Erewhon Bread, a yeasted whole-wheat loaf. (4) Erewhon Pickles and Erewhon Sauerkraut.

Note: This new 8-page typewritten newsletter (with no date or address) is published by Louis Fellman.

**Summary:** “Beginning in the late 60’s in a tiny store in Boston, Erewhon has since grown into a large natural and organic food distributor. Our first wholesale catalog offered food for sale by mail or United Parcel Service; we now deliver food throughout the Northeast in tractor-trailers. In March, 1970 we listed 96 products in our catalog; we currently list approximately 4000 products!”

“Within New England, through increased sales, we provide jobs for over 175 people in our warehouse and retail stores and service over 2,000 customers with 4,000 products. Every person at Erewhon can be proud of the results we’re producing on the planet.” Address: New England Regional Manager, Massachusetts.

**Summary:** The small section titled “Other flour” states: “Gluten flour has practically all starch removed... Other diet flours include potato starch, soybean, oat flour, rice flour, and corn flour. Some brands of diet flours are Cellu Goods, Golden Harvest, and Fearn Soya Foods, available in Chicago health food stores.”

The last section, “Where to get natural flours,” begins: “Stone-ground flour is milled the old-fashioned way, by stone rollers, which are often propelled by water power.” Best to keep refrigerated: The name and address of the following sources is given: Arrowhead Mills (Hereford, Texas), El Molino Mills (City of Industry, California), Erewhon Trading Co. (Cambridge, Massachusetts), Grain Process Enterprises Ltd. (Scarborough, Ontario, Canada), Great Valley Mills (Bucks County, Pennsylvania), Shiloh Farms (Sulphur Springs, Arkansas), Vermont County Store (Weston, Vermont), and Walnut Acres (Penns Creek, Pennsylvania). Address: Chicago.


**Summary:** This is a new mail order catalog, whose prices become effective on 1 May 1981. On the front cover is a woodblock print of a man with a sickle cutting sheaves of grain in a field. He is wearing a hat, and behind him on the ground is a wooden barrel. Erewhon is now located at 26 Washington St. in Brookline Village—also the home of Erewhon Mail Order. There are retail stores at 342 Newbury St. in Boston and 1731 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge. Address: 236 Washington Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-738-4516.

**Summary:** Ereworld is a 14-page in-house newsletter, published for the people who work at Erewhon in Boston—welcoming new employees, congratulating those who have been transferred or promoted, etc. This issue of Ereworld is largely about the visit of John Denver (the popular American singer, songwriter, actor, activist, and poet) to Erewhon. Evan’s article begins: “John Denver made friends with the Macrobiotic community on a visit here last month. Many of us here at Erewhon enjoyed meeting and talking with him.

“John and his friend and cook, Ron Lemire, (Ron introduced John to macrobiotics) arrived in Boston Tuesday night, April 21st following a 10 day brown rice and water purification in the desert. They left the following Friday morning.” A description of what he did during his 2½ day stay is given. On page 1 is a photo of Michio Kushi and John Denver seated at a table, both fastening their Erewhon pins.

“Transcript from John Denver’s talk at the 1st Presbyterian church 4/22/81” [22 April 1981] is on pages 4-7. It is followed by “John Denver comes to Erewhon,” by Mary Estella & Lynn Patterson (p. 8-9) followed by a photo of Lynn Patterson (L) and Mary Estella (R) in the Erewhon kitchen.

On page 13 are 6 photos including: Robert Langone (head of purchasing, top left), Susan Munger (art dep. & product development, top right). Anthony Valenti, Steve Geddes, Bob Spencer, and Steve Zoller (L-R, production dep., center left). On page 14 are 8 more photos including: Robert (Bobby) Hanig (center left), Rhoda Houtz (accounting manager, center, bottom left). Address: Boston, Massachusetts.

**Summary:** “At Erewhon, quality is a tradition. Beginning as a small retail outlet, where education and good food went hand in hand, Erewhon has evolved into a producer and distributor whose standards lead the natural foods industry.

“Since the quality of life is directly influenced by what you eat, Erewhon is committed to developing improved

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HISTORY OF EREWHON

NATURAL FOODS
MAIL ORDER CATALOG

236 WASHINGTON STREET BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146 (617) 738-4516
JOHN'S VISIT
by Evan Root

John Denver made friends with the Macrobiotic community on a visit here last month. Many of us here at Erewhon enjoyed meeting and talking with him.

John and his friend and cook, Rom Leniere, (Rom introduced John to Macrobiotics), arrived in Boston Tuesday night, April 21st following a 10 day brown rice and water purification in the desert. They left the following Friday morning. In the 2½ days that John spent with us, he experienced a lot of our community. His itinerary included dinner at the Seventh Inn, a full tour of the proposed new Kushi College, lunch with representatives from the various Kushi enterprises at the Open Sesame Restaurant (where Erewhon presented him with a gift of hard to find macro specialty items assembled from the stock of the Village Store, a tour of the Macrobiotic enterprises in Brookline Village, dinner at the Kushi house, a welcome reception for him at a church in Brookline, an interview with the East West Journal held in the Arnold Arboretum, lunch, and a tour of Erewhon's 3 East Street headquarters, a visit to Erewhon Newbury, a Buddhist ceremony and a talk with the Kushi Institute students at the Kushi's house.

As a special treat, John reciprocated in song both at the Open Sesame and at the Welcome Evening.

Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, John and Michio met together to discuss the World situation and to align energies to promote transformation and peace in our world. John is tentatively scheduled to perform a benefit concert for the Kushi College sometime in August, and he has invited Michio to join him at a speaking engagement for the Society for Nutritional Education at Berkley where John has been asked to speak to 1000 leaders of Nutrition from the U.S. and Canada on his ideas and interests in the world hunger challenge.

Continued on page 4

John and Michio fasten their Erewhon pins
sources of wholesome products. By promoting the use of traditional staple foods, Erewhon provides the opportunity for an ever-increasing number of people to improve their well being...”


• Summary: “Erewhon Inc., a Cambridge-based natural food store chain, is seeking protection from its creditors while it reorganizes its financial affairs. In a petition filed in federal court here under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Act, Erewhon listed 551 creditors to whom it owes a total of $1.5 million. The firm also said it has $4.4 million in assets and another $3 million in general claims against it.

“...The major creditor is the Commercial Trading Corp., which is owed more than $1 million. Under a factoring agreement Commercial Trading has a secured interest in Erewhon’s inventory and accounts receivable. Judge Harold Lavien granted Erewhon permission to continue paying its 130 employees while the case is pending. The reorganization petition under which Erewhon will continue to operate the business was filed Nov. 10 by Michio Kushi, president of the firm. While it remains under the protection of Chap. 11, Erewhon will be run by Arthur Blasberg Jr., a business consultant and attorney.

“The privately-owned firm has three stores in Massachusetts and distributes its products worldwide... According to company officials, its sales reached about $18 million recently but had been falling off sharply to the point where it now has about $7 million to $8 million in annual sales.

“The firm’s attorney, Frederick G. Fisher of Hale & Dorr, told the bankruptcy court in arguing for Chap. 11 protection that the company’s problems were caused by its expansion ‘beyond its ability to find capital.’ In addition, Fisher said, ‘Mr. Kushi was not able to provide it with day-to-day management. He’s a philosopher, teacher and writer and he was absent from the business on trips.’” Address: Globe staff, Massachusetts.


Conducted by William Shurtleff of Soyfoods Center.

• Summary: Erewhon Trading Co. recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. They are in receivership and on the verge of bankruptcy; they are no longer delivering products to stores, only manufacturing. Erewhon owes Mr. Kazama of Mitoku $400,000 plus the shipments on the docks.

John plans to sell a miso fermentation kit, consisting of koji plus instructions for making miso at home. Address: Route 5, Box 258, Rutherfordton, North Carolina 28139. Phone: 704-749-9537.


• Summary: An excellent, in-depth history by a very knowledgeable source, who occasionally teaches a course in Boston on the history of macrobiotics in the USA. With numerous fond personal recollections and character sketch of Ohsawa. 1959 Dec.–Ohsawa first visited the USA. 1960 Jan.–He published, in mimeograph form, his astonishing book Zen Macrobiotics in English in New York City.

“Although not in great detail, here he introduced miso, tamari, and tofu to the general public. The first two especially quickly become essential ingredients in the diet of almost all macrobiotic people in the US.

“During January, February, and March [1960] he lectured extensively at the Buddhist Academy in New York City. He returned to the US in July and lectured at the First American Summer Camp on Long Island daily for two months.

“The Second American Summer Camp was held in July and August of 1961. I am not sure whether he was present or not. This was in Wortsboro, New York. In that year also, thirteen macrobiotic families left New York and moved to Chico, California on his advice. The next year, 1962, they founded the first American macrobiotic food distribution and processing center in this country.

“In 1963, in the summer he came to the US again and lectured in Boston, NYC, and at the Chico Summer Camp.

“In 1964, he lectured at the Big Sur Summer Camp.

“In 1965, he lectured at Mayoro Lodge near Pulga, California.

“In 1966, on April 24th he died in Japan.

“All in all, George Ohsawa visited this country either five or six times, each time lecturing, and speaking to the people individually without rest. He was ceaselessly active. I have heard many anecdotes concerning him during that period. As best I can determine, his affect on people was quite simply shattering–they had never seen anything like it.

“According to Madame Ogawa (who spoke in great and loving detail of him at the 1981 French Meadows Summer Camp) he was a very sharp dresser and had quite an eye for...”
beauty in the female of the species. She was so obviously still in love with this ‘terrible man.’

“Jacques DeLangre... never tires of telling about the time when they were descending the mountain after a long and intensely yangizing summer camp. Their car rounded a bend and there!, suddenly!, was a huge patch of luscious juicy blackberries! The car as though it had a mind of its own, screeched to a halt, all the doors flew open, and all the passengers were catapulted into the middle of that patch. It would be hard to imagine a clearer, cleaner-cut example of the attraction of yang to yin. Their ecstatic reverie was broken, a few moments later, by the sound of another car coming around the bend. ‘Oh my God, it’s Ohsawa himself; what will he say?’ (In those days people were, understandably, a little naive in their application of yin and yang.) Well, that second car did just exactly what the first one had done—the screeching halt, the doors flying open, and of a sudden there was George Ohsawa right in the middle of that patch too, crying out in his basso profundo voice, ‘Oh blackberries, they are sooo delicious!’

“That voice—possibly there is the key to understanding Ohsawa’s impact in this country; I didn’t personally meet him; he died about a month after I began macrobiotics in 1966. But I have heard him on many tapes, poorly-recorded as most of than were. And I have spoken to others who did know him personally, and sooner or later they get around to mentioning his voice. Peter Magnusson here in Boston describes it as the kind of voice that rattled the windows. I have done a course here in Boston I call ‘The Healing Power of the Spoken Word,’ and for that course I have listened to all the recordings of the great speakers of this era that I can get my hands on—Kennedy, Churchill, Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, John L. Lewis, etc. Probably the best orator in the world today (or was anyway, I haven’t heard him lately) is Fidel Castro. His is a warm, rich, full voice, capable of a startling range of thoroughly human emotions—from the righteous indignation and anger of an oppressed people through endless shades and nuances to a profoundly warm and compassionate voice that might be that of your very best friend. Take that voice in account and you can understand Castro’s success against seemingly insurmountable odds in Cuba. Well, I can tell you of an outrageous ‘lifestyles.’ They must have thought Americans were very strange people, indeed, (At least the ones they knew.) But if they didn’t, their neighbors sure did. By some

Ohsawa and his impact on this country have centered on what he said and not how he said it. Otherwise, how are we to explain how he was able to inspire so many people, along than Michio and Aveline Kushi, Herman and Cornellia Aihara to literally give up everything and come to a strange land to struggle against apparently insurmountable odds. Because that’s what they did, arriving here penniless, operating on a wing and a prayer so to speak. And it is to them that we must go in the next chapter of this little story:"

Note: People were also attracted to the great sense of happiness, vitality, love of life (joie de vivre), and purpose that Ohsawa radiated. Continued. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


• Summary: Continued: “Michio Kushi, giving up a promising career in some area of international politics, arrived in New York in 1949. Still a little uncertain, and actually quite new to the macrobiotic way of life, himself, he did not immediately begin to teach the macrobiotic way of life on a full-time basis. Besides, his English wasn’t sufficient, and he had to work full-time to support himself. To do this he engaged in many types of work such as managing a department store, elevator operator, and other types of odd jobs. Also, at this time, he had some connection with Columbia University. (Whether as a student or as a teacher or both, I am not quite sure. Maybe, if this is important, you could contact him, but I don’t know if he would have the time to answer you.)

“In 1951, he was joined by Aveline (Tomoko) Kushi who had lived for a year and a half in Ohsawa’s school ‘Maison Ignoramus’ near Tokyo. In 1961, instead of going to Chico as many other macrobiotic families did on the advice of George Ohsawa, they stayed in New York, not long afterward finding their way to Boston. Just how this happened I am a little uncertain. According to Peter Magnusson whom I have mentioned above, there was a certain fellow, whose name is probably forever lost, who was from this area and who convinced them that this was where they would have their greatest success. After all, the great ideological movements, the ones that had affected this country must profoundly, had come, mainly, out of New England.

“So, it was in 1963, I think, they arrived here, living successively in Cambridge, Wellesley, and Brookline. From this time dates the tradition of study house—always they had a full complement of ‘students’ with them—many of whom were withdrawing from psychedelic drugs and perfectly outrageous ‘lifestyles.’ They must have thought Americans were very strange people, indeed, (At least the ones they knew.) But if they didn’t, their neighbors sure did. By some

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magic or sleight-of-hand, they always managed to end up in some rather elegant houses in some rather elegant neighborhoods. Thus, in one or more cases, they were asked by the authorities to move.

“But, sure enough, it was here in the Boston area that they had found a medium in which they could really function well. Not long after, regular lectures were started in the Arlington Street Church where we would troop dutifully and eagerly in under the watchful eyes of a bust of William Ellery Channing, one of the founders of American Unitarianism. In the beginning, there weren’t many people present at these talks—maybe six, eight or ten. (And even in the spring of 1967 when my wife and I arrived after spending a year in Detroit knocking our heads against this strange thing called ‘macrobiotics’ there might be only twelve, fourteen or sixteen.)

“But the spirit of adventure and camaraderie was simply exquisite. And the lectures were tremendously exciting—one moment we would be on the outer rim of the Milky Way Galaxy, examining its structure, and the next moment we would be examining the spirals on our fingertips. People who were here when we got here and whose names you may have heard were Evan Root, Bill Gleason, and Paul Hawken (and by the way, I think Paul Hawken has a company out there in your area—maybe you can contact him). Also Joe Leis and Jim Gronemeyer whose whereabouts I don’t know. Not long afterward came Bill Tara and Ron Kotzsch who are still active in macrobiotics. The Word was out and people were coming from everywhere.

“In 1965 Erewhon was started, also on a wing and a prayer, right in the Kushi’s home in Brookline. It moved in 1966, I think to a location on Newbury Street [April 1966 to 303-B Newbury St., below street level] where I used to see Mr. Kushi putting rice and aduki beans in little white paper bags. Evan Root and Paul Hawken originally managed the store [Evan first, then Paul Hawken more than a year later] and later on Bill Tara also had a hand in it. But it was definitely Paul Hawken who set his stamp on the store, and who had the most to do with it becoming what it eventually became—the largest handler of macrobiotic and natural foods in the country. At present there is a little difficulty there, but if you know the history of Erewhon, you cannot help but be convinced, as am I, that everything will come out all right.

“Also in 1965, certainly in 1966, Mr. Kushi began to travel around the country giving talks on macrobiotics as well as consultations. I wonder if his experience in other cities was anything like his experience in Detroit. It simply never dawned on us that he might need any money for traveling expenses, etc. I wouldn’t be surprised if on a lot of these tours Michio Kushi didn’t arrive back home with a lot less money than he started out with.

“But now I must get down to the gist, the ‘nitty-gritty’ of this story. There is something that is not explained here. The tremendous success of macrobiotics in this country is not really explained here. Of course some people will say that macrobiotics has not been a tremendous success. But I say it has. If you will look at its history from beginning to end, noting that it has never received any funding or any support from powerful organizations, that it has always operated on a wing and a prayer (I’ll use that phrase again), then I think you can agree with me that its success has been miraculous.

“Well, one of the chief reasons for that is to be found in the behaviour of Mr. Kushi. Over the years he has literally given himself away, literally used himself up so many times over that you would swear there is simply nothing left to use up anymore. He has seen hundreds of thousands of people in formal consultations and as many more in informal consultations. And an awesomely large percentage of these consultations have been with crazy, sick, and desperate people anywhere and any time of the day or night. (And I ought to know, I was one of them.) I am not being overly sentimental here, nor am I stretching anything to make something seem true that isn’t true. As a matter of fact, for various reasons I sometimes wish it weren’t true, because for some people it has led to a ‘cult of the personality’ that limits their own development.

“To round out the list of macrobiotic developments that are more or less Boston based: The East West Journal commenced publication in January of 1971, its purpose being ‘to explore the unity underlying apparently opposite values: Oriental and Occidental, traditional and modern, visionary and practical.’ I think that’s pretty well what it has done; and in the process it has helped more people to substantially change their lives than any publication I know of. Although many dedicated and talented people have been involved with it over the years, the two people who have had the most to do with creating and directing the East West Journal have been Lennie Jacobs and Sherman Goldman.” Continued. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.


• Summary: “Dear Friends–We at The American Miso Company are proud to announce the opening of our miso shop in Western North Carolina. This long awaited dream of making American miso has evolved from a genuine need here in the United States for an unpasteurized miso made with organic ingredients and fermented under natural conditions in large wooden vats.”

“Through the joint efforts of producer John Belleme and his teacher, Takamichi Onozaki from Yaita, Japan, we are now making absolutely delicious miso that will strengthen the body and delight the palate.
“The Lindenself Foundation, doing their business as Linden’s Elf Works, located in Piedmont, North Carolina, has been appointed as the sole agent in marketing and distribution of The American Miso Company brand products... Their address is Route 1, Box 43-D, Rougemont, North Carolina. Your phone contact is John Troy at... 919/364-2723. Enclosed is the Linden’s Elf Works distributor price sheet which includes all the pertinent information for your upcoming Spring catalogue. With kindest regards, Barry Evans, President.”

Note 1. This letter was precipitated by Erewhon Trading Company’s announcement in Nov. 1981 that it was filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Note 2. This is the earliest document seen (June 2000) that mentions the company’s new name, “The American Miso Company.” Note 3. This is the earliest document seen (July 2000) that John Troy of Elf Works in connection with miso or soy.

Note 4. Talk with Barry Evans, owner of American Miso Co. 2000. June 29. Linden’s Elf Works never distributed any miso made by AMC; Great Eastern Sun, Barry’s new company, was the distributor. During the first year or two, John Troy purchased a significant percentage of the miso made by AMC for his sauces and dressings. To this day, he remains an important friend and advisor, but the percentage of miso he buys is now quite small. Joel Dee, a pioneer with his Miso Cup, worked with John Troy. Joel lived in the little town Saluda, North Carolina, where John Bellerme lives today. Last year, Joel introduced Organic Miso Cup using miso from AMC; he is now a significant customer. Address: President, The American Miso Company, Rutherfordton, North Carolina.


• Summary: Evan Root was the first attendant at the Erewhon retail store, below street level at 303-B Newbury Street. He lacquered the walls with Michio. Evan is a great storyteller, very intelligent. The initial store was just one room, about 10 by 20 feet. Very few people came in to buy food, so it was more like a stock room than a store. Some evenings there were lectures there. Redwing Books now occupies that space. Most of the food (a tin of miso, a keg of tamari) was just being sent by the Kushis’ friends from Japan as gifts; it didn’t go through customs.

The Kushis got nigari and made tofu at home. It was not for sale, but for dinner guests and cooking classes. Joel made some tofu using lemon juice when nigari was not available.

As tofu started to become more popular, Erewhon started to buy it from a tofu maker in Boston’s Chinatown. First they just bought and sold that tofu, but before long (in about 1973-74) they convinced him to start making nigari tofu for them. They guaranteed to buy what he made, and they sold him the nigari at cost. This might have been the first nigari tofu made in USA. A lot of nigari tofu is still made in Boston’s Chinatown. Joel thinks the tofu maker was located on Tyler, Street, perhaps Yah Kee. Nigari came in 66 pound sacks from Japan. Erewhon also sold small quantities of nigari in the retail store. Chinatown was Erewhon’s main source of tofu until Laughing Grasshopper appeared.

What was the macrobiotic movement’s contribution to the history of soyfoods in the United States? Macrobiotic teachers and students talked and wrote about them, ate them, and sold them. They felt soyfoods were an important part of a good diet. They educated people and developed a market for soyfoods Few Americans had eaten miso and tofu at home before 1966—the year Erewhon started. Macrobiotics were the first Caucasian Americans to really use soyfoods regularly. Before that, soyfoods (except perhaps soy sauce) were just interesting oddities. Once could say that the macrobiotic movement introduced soyfoods to America.

As for tofu, Joel thinks that Michio Kushi’s students misinterpreted his remarks about tofu being yin.

Macrobiotics now eat tofu regularly, 3-4 times a week. There are endless ways to prepare it. It’s been years since Joel has heard that tofu is “too yin.”

What did The Book of Tofu (published in Dec. 1975) do for tofu? It expanded its relevance for the Western diet. Before that book, most of the tofu in the United States was consumed by people of East Asian ancestry.

Charles Kendall played a key role in making and introducing natto, mochi, and amazake to Caucasian Americans. He made these foods in his home and sold them locally. Initially, it was not a formal / legal business. But today his business, Kendall Foods, sells $500 a week of these three foods. He has been making natto for 4-5 years. He was America’s first Caucasian natto maker. Natto was served in macrobiotic restaurants in Boston.

The latest soyfood to hit Boston has been tempeh. It’s been a phenomenal success. Macrobiotics are going crazy over it. Thom Leonard has been giving lots of tempeh classes for the past 1½ years. For more than a year, lots of sandwich makers in Boston have been making and selling tempeh sandwiches. Tempeh is made into cutlets, burgers, tempeh mock-tuna salad. Why is it so popular? Because it is rich and meaty in texture and flavor—the opposite of rice. Most macrobiotics crave rich, meaty foods.

Ron Kotzsch is very close to the Kushis. A very unpretentious person with a wonderful sense of humor, he is now teaching in North Carolina. He is friends with Helen and Scott Nearing. He toured China and Japan with John Denver, the singer and songwriter—who did a benefit for Michio’s new college.
How does Joes see the future of Erewhon? He thinks the company will focus on manufacturing only. Now is the critical time. He’d give Erewhon a 30-70% chance of survival. Address: Boston, Massachusetts.

• Summary: Roger got involved with macrobiotics in San Francisco in about 1965. He lived in San Francisco, was doing light shows at the Avalon Ballroom, read the book You are All Sanpaku [by Sakurazawa Nyotii (George Ohswata); English version by William Dufty], and got involved. Also in about 1965, Herman Aihara and Bob Kennedy used to come to town to lecture in a church on Oak Street. Bill Tara and Paul Hawken, who were filmmakers, lived in a warehouse on lower Mission St. described in the Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, by Tom Wolfe (largely about Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters). “A little macro scene started. We heard that Boston was macro Mecca.”

Roger arrived in Boston in Oct. 1969. Erewhon started when Michio and Aveline Kushi were living in Cambridge, Massachusetts; in their basement they had a little food, which they would sell to people who came to hear Michio lecture. “The food was but a vehicle to the larger teaching. The food is like an asana or yoga posture, but the goal is enlightenment. You can get stuck on the food. That is why Michio had very, very little involvement in Erewhon’s food business. His focus was on the philosophy of macrobiotics and spreading it.”

The Erewhon store was (at the time) in the basement of today’s Redwing Books. Evan Root started the store, but he wanted to get out of it into a restaurant. Paul Hawken took over the sleepy little store. Bill Tara (who was from Santa Cruz) also worked there for a while. The tiny store had few customers, a very limited selection of products, and a little mail order business. Shortly after Roger arrived, the Erewhon store at 342 Newbury Street opened—in Nov. or Dec. 1969. Bruce Macdonald and Jim Docker helped to renovate the new store. The whole thing was called Erewhon Trading Co. In Feb. 1970 Roger started to work in this retail store.

Shortly thereafter, Paul Hawken went to Japan. At that time the only companies importing food from Japan were Chico-San and Infinity Foods in New York; both were macrobiotic. Erewhon bought from them, and then started doing a little wholesaling. After Paul went to Japan, Erewhon started importing directly from Japan. Paul got in touch with Mr. Kazama and helped to get Mitoku into the natural food export business. Kazama was an old friend of Obiyashi, who was an old friend of Michio Kushi’s from Columbia University. Muso was shipping to Chico-San and Infinity. Erewhon imported from Muso and Kazama. Roger thinks Mitoku started in about 1970-71. Before that they sold soccer shoes and cranes. The fact that Paul was in Japan was instrumental in getting Erewhon’s imports started.

The Erewhon retail store would sometimes get huge shipments, such as a 40-foot-long truck of rice that filled up the whole Erewhon storeroom. It was something like Kokuho Rose [a brand of short grain brown rice grown by Koda Bros. in Dos Palos, California]; it was not organically grown. There was really no room for it, and no refrigeration. At about this time the Lundberg Brothers in California started growing brown rice organically. At one time a boxcar of 100,000 lb of Lundberg rice arrived, so Erewhon needed more warehouse space. Also involved were Jean Allison (from California) and Wally Gorell (from the San Francisco Calliope Company). In about mid-1970 Erewhon leased a 10,000 square foot warehouse space on the 5th floor of 33 Farnsworth St. [a big brick warehouse] in Boston, overlooking the harbor. The space had a nice milling room. Then the wholesale business took off. Roger left Boston in April 1971. He had been running both the distributing company and the wholesale company, but there was a store manager. The retail store expanded into its back room. Then the wholesale business grew like mad. Orders came from non-macro natural foods stores, from new macro groups, etc.

How did the natural food movement get started? As Roger recalls, it was not started by macros. In about 1966 or 1967 Sunset Natural Foods became New Age Foods, an early natural foods store run by Fred Rohe. The natural food movement sprung out of the new consciousness—the counterculture—as did macrobiotics. The macrobiotic movement fed the natural foods movement. One Erewhon customer was Mr. Natural in Carbondale, Illinois. Although he was not a macro, he bought miso, tamari, rice, etc. There were lots of other non-macro stores like that too. But there were also lots of macro stores. Bill Tara opened a store and macro center on the 14th floor of a downtown building in Chicago; out of that grew Food for Life. Tom Waxman started Essene in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These were two mini-Erewhons. Each started as a small retail store, then became a wholesaler. Erewhon provided the model.

Erewhon set up a branch distributor in Canada, which later became Manna Foods, with Gene Newman, a macro. Westbrae was a Berkeley political organization started by Bob Gerner, making granola. Erewhon West was connected with Bruce Macdonald. Bill Tara, with Aveline Kushi’s prodding, started the Erewhon store in Los Angeles; it did a little distributing. Bruce Macdonald went to Los Angeles, then Bill Tara left for England—Roger doesn’t know why. Erewhon West started growing. Jimmy Silver ran the Big Sanae, which became the Seventh Inn. Roger then went to Texas and in Jan. 1972 he worked with Deaf Smith for
about a year. Later Erewhon West was sold to John Fountain, but really to John Demming—as a separate business from Erewhon.

The Well [a wholesale and distribution company in San Jose, California] was an offshoot of Fred Rohe’s New Age Foods, ca. 1969-1970. It was never macrobiotic. Fred sold stock in his business, had 2 stores in San Francisco, then opened a big natural foods store [actually a supermarket] named New Age Natural Foods on California Street in Palo Alto. The whole thing was a fiasco; the Palo Alto store never made money.

Deaf Smith Farms was established as a joint venture between Erewhon and Arrowhead Mills; it never worked out. In April 1971 Bruce Macdonald started a marketing company named Pure & Simple. In March 1972 Roger started working at the Well in San Jose. Bruce went to Green Mountain Grinery in Boulder, Colorado. Gradually The Well became Pure & Simple, and started importing from Mr. Kazama and Muso.

Paul Hawken was the first person to work with farmers to get them to grow grain organically for Erewhon. One of these was Carl Garrich of Lone Pine, Arkansas—after Erewhon moved to 33 Farnsworth Street. Roger did a lot of work with farmers at Arrowhead Mills, but not connected with macrobiotics. Major macrobiotic wholesale distributors: Erewhon East and West, Laurelbrook (later), Food for Health, Essene, Manna in Canada (later). Llama (later) was not macro.

Macrobiotics played the major, primary role in introducing soyfoods to America. A little was also coming through Japan Foods [San Francisco] and Nishimoto [Trading Co., Los Angeles]. The macros made these foods available, but don’t overcredit it; the time was ripe and it just happened. The main contribution of macrobiotics was simply making these foods available and teaching about them. Michio always said that macrobiotics is not just about food and the diet.

“It was frightening when we stopped to think about it. The business was doubling and tripling at a crazy rate.” Roger does not know why so many people left Erewhon. Maybe Michio Kushi planned it that way. He does not know why Erewhon went bankrupt; maybe it was because the company was undercapitalized, there was no worker equity, and Michio did not know American business. “Maybe Michio did not care so much. Distributing foods was always a minor focus for Michio.”

Other macrobiotic food distributors outside the U.S. were Lima in Belgium (by far the earliest), Harmony and Sunwheel in England, and some company in Italy. Address: California.


• Summary: While Roger was in Boston, no tofu was sold at the Erewhon retail store at 342 Newbury St.—since there was no refrigeration and no room. He thinks tofu was introduced after Erewhon got 33 Farnsworth St.

The trickiest question, which has no place in this book, is about work as a disciple / discipline vs. for money / as business. Work can be a spiritual practice (karma yoga), and that is how many of the early workers at Erewhon viewed it.
agreement with the bank, filed for protection of its assets under bankruptcy law...

‘It all comes down to management,’ confided one insider. ‘Erewhon was horribly mishandled.’

“It’s difficult to lay the blame squarely on the shoulders of any one individual and, in fact, the people remaining at Erewhon are understandably reluctant to discuss their problems, but the two names which most commonly do come up are Mishio [sic, Michio] Kushi and Tom Williams.

“Williams, the company president, was brought into the organization a little less than a year ago to ‘straighten things up,’ but he’s now missing and nobody knows where to contact him. Mishio Kushi, the man who introduced America to macrobiotic principles and who also founded and owns Erewhon, has been criticized for holding the company too tightly. It is rumored that Mishio Kushi tried to sell shares in the company in an effort to raise capital, but that he was too inflexible in his business dealings to interest investors.”


• Summary: “We got a really good response from our light miso. People reported using it for dressings, dips and even desserts. We have decided to market our white miso through our wholesale company in bulk only during the winter. We also plan to market a mellow barley and a mellow rice miso, both of which should have a good shelflife.

“Mr. Onozaki just visited our factory for two weeks. He said our koji is some of the best he has ever seen. I was really worried about our koji and his comments settled my anxious mind. He also said our long-term miso is developing fine.

“The ownership of our factory is finally settled. The following will not be participating: Erewhon, Michio [Kushi], Mitoku, Johsen, Oak Feed and Sandy Pukel. This leaves only Barry Evans and myself, we are now the sole owners.”

“I am sending you 10 pounds of Mr. Onozaki’s rice miso. It is hopefully just like the miso we are making. We are getting a really good response from the East Coast macros; they love Mr. Onozaki’s miso. Last year we imported 20,000 pounds.

“Barry and I are starting a wholesale company in Asheville. It’s tentatively called Great Eastern Sun Trading Company. We are specializing in hard-to-get macrobiotic foods–will send you a catalog in a few weeks.”

Note 1. This is the earliest document seen (March 2006) that mentions Great Eastern Sun, a macrobiotic trading company in North Carolina.

Note 2. On 31 May 1982 John wrote a 2-page typed letter to Dr. Hiroshi Ito at the National Food Research Institute asking for help in making a white miso. Address: Route 3, Box 541, Rutherfordton, North Carolina. Phone: (704) 287-2940.


• Summary: “Here is my reply to your questionnaire.”

Discusses Sanae, Erewhon, Paul Hawken, Michio Kushi.

The original Erewhon store started in April 1966 at 303-B Newbury St. Prior to that, some food sales were done from the Kushi’s home on a very small scale.

In Oct. 1967, Paul Hawken took over the management of Evan Root moved up the street to commence renovations for Sanae Restaurant. Paul was the main force in expanding and developing Erewhon in the early days. Prior to him it was mainly a cracker barrel style store where people came in to talk philosophy and swap recipes, whether or not they bought anything.

Sanae opened its doors to the public in Feb. 1968.

In the early days of Erewhon one of the suppliers not to be overlooked is Japan Food Corporation. From them we bought seaweeds, fish flakes, gourd strips, and most importantly from your point of view, Hatcho miso. Chico-San and Infinity Foods were in operation before Erewhon and we got most of the Japanese items from them except for a couple of kegs of miso that Junsei Yamaguchi put up in the Kushi’s basement.

I do not know this for a fact, but I have speculated that the early tamari that was available when I first got into macrobiotics in 1964 may have been, in fact, real tamari as I distinctly remember that it was thicker and richer than what became available a little later. Address: Relationships, 39 Harvard St., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-739-3300.


• Summary: These are answers (dictated to a typist) to a list of questions sent by William Shurtleff of Soyfoods Center.

1. Why were George Ohsawa’s students given Western names? “Right after the second world war, and after the Americans took over Japan, George Ohsawa wanted everyone to speed up their lifestyle. For this reason he gave Western names to his students, taking those names from Western heroes born in the same month. We think that perhaps it was his intention to have them go to America to spread macrobiotics. As a teacher, George Ohsawa adopted the western style of having his students call him by his first name, George. Almost all his students were given new names.”

5. Prior to 1959, which macrobiotic teachers were in New York? “Michio Kushi was lecturing and giving
seminars in New York at that time, along with other friends.”

9. When was the Ohsawa Foundation in New York City established? By whom? “The Ohsawa Foundation was founded in 1960 or 1961, by Michio, Irma Paule and other friends. Michio was the first President of the 2nd Avenue location. The Musubi Restaurant was by Mr. Sato, Alcan Yamaguchi, and Junsei Yamazaki. Irma Paule was later to take over the East West Foundation and set up the 2nd Avenue location.

10. When and where were Michio and Aveline married? They were “married in 1953 in New York. They [first] met in New York but had been corresponding from Japan through George Ohsawa’s study house [Maison Ignoramus?] before that time.

11. Cornelia and Herman [Aihara] were married in New York and had also been corresponding from Japan.

12. When was Erewhon in New York City? Erewhon “was a restaurant and food store but not a gift shop. They sold miso and shoyu from Japan the George Ohsawa had sent.”


14. When did Michio organize the first East West Institute? “1965.”

15. When did the Kushis move from New York to the Boston area? What prompted this? “In 1963 Aveline and the children moved to Martha’s Vineyard [an island off the south of Cape Cod in Massachusetts] for 6 months because it was a much better environment for natural living. Michio was still working in New York. In September 1963 they moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts with Michio, who at that time stopped all business and put all his efforts toward macrobiotic education. The death of Beth Ann Simon and the FDA crackdown came after Erewhon was established.


17. When did Sendai Miso Shoyu start making natural shoyu. Who set this up? When did they start to sell it? “Mr. Kazama set it up” and would know the answers to the other questions. Address: 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146.


• Summary: “Erewhon Inc., which is attempting to reorganize under Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy code, yesterday reported that it had liabilities of about $3.9 million and assets of slightly more than $1 million, exclusive of its three retail stores.

“At the same time, parties to the reorganization announced that Ronald L. Rossetti, president of a Wilmington [Massachusetts] firm that operates 86 health food and vitamin stores, had been named president and chief executive officer of Erewhon.

“Rossetti, 38, was associated with the accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand for six years before joining Nature Food Centres Inc., which he now owns and runs. In a news release distributed yesterday, those involved in the reorganization of Cambridge-based Erewhon said that, under a proposed reorganization plan, all ‘administrative and priority claims’ against Erewhon would be paid in full once the plan is approved.

“Further, unsecured claims of more than $800 would be settled by a payment of about 18 percent of the claim, 6 percent payable in cash and the balance in four annual installments of 3 percent each. Unsecured claims of $800 or less would be settled with a 15 percent cash payment.

Finally, holders of Erewhon’s $560,000 in subordinated debentures would receive 3 percent of their claims, as full payment.

“In its statement, the company’s financial difficulties were attributed to a shortage of equity capital ‘to finance and sustain its operations and growth,’ costs ‘greatly exceeding’ the firm’s estimates for its move to Cambridge in 1978, and ‘intense competition’ in the health foods field.

“Rossetti, in attempting to bring the company back to profitability, ‘will attempt to increase sales growth by expanding distribution of Erewhon products nationwide,’ the firm said. The operation of its three retail stores will be continued under Erewhon’s name.” Address: Globe staff, Massachusetts.


• Summary: Hawken played a very important and innovative role in establishing the natural foods industry in America and in building Erewhon into a major distributor of macrobiotic and natural foods.

Chico-San imported foods from Tokyo CI (Centre Ignoramus); Muso didn’t exist at that time.

The Kushis never made tofu or nigari tofu. They were not big tofu eaters, largely because tofu was considered too yin–ridiculous. Then people started craving it, and buying it from Chinatown. But the tofu they bought was not made with nigari.

By the mid-1960s there were roughly 300 to 2,000 people actively involved with macrobiotics in the USA— including Michio Kushi’s students, Herman Aihara’s students, and those in New York and Boston.

Beth Ann Simon had started using heroin again before she died [on her No. 7 macrobiotic diet]. The family covered it up, blaming Japanese and tamari. But she was not the only one who died. George and Lima Ohsawa’s only
A child died within a year of being born in Tokyo (according to Lima) from excess salt.

Erewhon was started by Aveline Kushi, not by Evan Root. Paul does not know who gave Erewhon its name [it was Aveline Kushi]; of course, it is “Nowhere” scrambled, as in the title of the famous 1872 novel by Samuel Butler about a utopian island divested of machinery. Originally various people would drive to Pennsylvania to see the Mennonites and Walnut Acres. It was a buying club for students who lived in the Kushi’s house in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Foods such as wheat, [whole-wheat] flour, oatmeal. Nothing imported from Japan. It was started with $500 cash in the basement of the Kushi’s house. It backed into being a store since it was cheaper to buy larger quantities. The food was divided up into little bags and a price was written on each. It was sort of a way of buying food for people at the Kushi’s house, like Aveline doing her shopping for 10-12 people in the first big macrobiotic study house. It began to outgrow the house and outside students wanted good food. It was never seen as a business or a money-making venture. Good food was so difficult to get in those days.

Another source of good food was Infinity Foods in New York City, started and owned by Howard Rower; they had a warehouse and were wholesaling by mid-1965. Soon Howard was importing miso and tamari (shoyu / soy sauce) from Tokyo CI. “This ‘guaranteed’ its quasi-medicinal effects. Otherwise it didn’t work. It was actually the best food–really.” Then Howard started to import directly from the manufacturers of miso and shoyu in Japan: Hatcho miso and Marushima shoyu (whose owner knew Ohsawa intimately). Paul visited Marushima in 1969. Paul thinks Marushima bought their shoyu from other shoyu factories on the island, or maybe they made it in the early days. Paul thinks there is a big difference in taste between shoyu made from whole soybeans and that made from defatted soybean meal (dasshi daizu). Paul was suspicious of Marushima shoyu in 1970; he demanded that Muso Shokuhin change to Johsen [Sendai Miso Shoyu] as their source; Johsen has a long history and the owner was also one of Ohsawa’s cronies.

Paul left Erewhon in 1973. He went to Japan three times. The first trip was in March 1969, when he set up Mitoku in the natural foods business; before that they were an importer of hockey equipment. Muso was called Osaka CI; neither of those two companies were exporters before that time.

In the early days of the below-ground store in Boston, more of the foods came from Lima Foods in Belgium than from Japan. The miso and shoyu in those day came from Infinity Foods in New York City. They did not carry tofu because there was no refrigeration. None of the food was sent by the Kushis’ friends.

In the early days of that store, Evan Root just tended the store, which had sales of about $20–$30 a day. The store was Aveline’s idea. Evan was Aveline’s lover–and not the only one. The store was originally called simply “Erewhon.” Paul later added the words “Trading Co.” when he incorporated it in the late fall of 1967. Paul and Aveline each owned 50% of the corporation. During its first year as a corporation, sales went from $1,000/month to $9,000/month–and not because it was macrobiotic. Erewhon was the first natural food store (as opposed to health food store) in America. It sold no pills. Many of the customers were not macros; they wanted whole foods. In mid-1968, as Paul was ready to leave Erewhon, someone came into the store and asked: “How do you know the oil is cold-pressed? And how do you know the grains are organically grown? He couldn’t answer. So he wrote letters and found out that most were not what they claimed to be. Then Paul decided to use Erewhon to create a true food supply. He went directly to farmers. He didn’t trust anyone. The idea was to know where the food came from and to have no middlemen between Erewhon and the producers.

In Oct. 1968 the little Erewhon retail store moved up and across the street to a new location at 342 Newbury Street. At that time they began to sell wholesale and to import from Japan, by correspondence with Mr. Kazama. The first import order from Japan, dated Aug. 1968, was aka miso (red rice miso–superb) from Sendai Miso Shoyu and Marushima shoyu. Soon customers who used to drive
400 miles to buy staples from Erewhon started to open their own stores. The natural foods business mushroomed. Erewhon started selling tofu in 1968 at 342 Newbury; they got it from a Chinese tofu maker in Boston. Nigari came in much later, after 1973. Neither Evan nor anyone else wanted to work at or run Erewhon; they all wanted to teach macrobiotics.

Paul was selling whole dry soybeans at that time, but mostly non-macros were eating those soybeans. Erewhon’s first supplier, in mid-1968, was a wheat grower in North Dakota. Carl Garrich in Lone Pine, Arkansas, was much later. Paul got his first soybeans from a guy in a boxcar who was an insurance salesman, but who worked one day a week selling soybeans and wheat. Paul also bought soybeans from Deaf Smith County, Texas. Paul knew Frank Ford of Deaf Smith County in the early days. Paul was vice president of Arrowhead Mills before Roger Hillyard even worked for them. He ground his flour in a boxcar.

Paul wrote a long and detailed article about the early history of Erewhon titled “Erewhon: A Biography. The view within,” published in the Aug. 1973 issue of East West Journal. He was upset at the time. It was critical of the Kushis, and Paul explained why he was about to leave Erewhon. Robert Hargrove, editor of the journal, ran it anyway. Since then, Erewhon’s history has been sanitized. Continued. Address: California.

• Summary: Continued: Erewhon grew rapidly. One year after moving to the new location they had sales of $35,000 to $40,000 a month, both wholesale and retail. Paul thinks Erewhon had a retail catalog from 1967 to 1970. Paul was president (until 1973, when he left) and half owner. Then he left for Japan. Before leaving he made a great error, by signing over his half of the stock to the corporation in case something happened to him. It was put in escrow, but he could never get it back. When Paul left for Japan, Roger Hillyard, Bill Tara, Bruce Macdonald, and Jim Docker were all working for Erewhon. He had hired many or all of them, and everything was in place for takeoff. Erewhon did not get its big brick warehouse until July 1970.

When Paul first went to Japan in the spring of 1969, he traveled with Mr. Kazama of Mitoku, visited many factories, and set up sources. He tried to find out where Tokyo CI and Osaka CI were getting their foods. He was in Japan for about 9 months, from March to December.

When he returned, he opened [sic] Erewhon in Los Angeles; Roger Hillyard was still in charge of Erewhon in Boston. Then he moved to San Francisco and started Organic Merchants with Fred Rohe, and started writing “The Sugar Story,” “The Oil Story,” and other leaflets. His main interest was now in providing accurate information about foods. In mid-1970 Erewhon stopped its mail order catalog and business when it moved into the brick warehouse.

Originally Erewhon West (Los Angeles) and Erewhon Boston were one; about 4 years later they split in two.

When Paul left in 1973, Erewhon was contracting directly with something like 57 farms in 35 states producing organically grown foods, including lots of produce. This program began in 1968, included the Lundberg Brothers (who grew brown rice organically in Northern California), and led to the wholesale business. Paul and Erewhon helped many other natural food companies to get started.

The Natural Food Distributors Association [Organic Merchants] was not successful because it was Paul’s idea and he left. Lack of money and fundraising were secondary. His goal was to see cooperation in the industry.

In conclusion Paul says: “Read the article [in East West Journal] and then we should talk again. You’ll have a lot more questions.” He asks Shurtleff to send him a photocopy of the article as well as the final draft of the chapter on the history of macrobiotics (including Erewhon); he’ll be glad to recheck it. Address: California.

• Summary: This ad is a combination of black-and-white and color. In black-and-white are 5 quarts of so-called tamari under the following brands: Westbrae, Erewhon (2), Llama, and Pure & Simple. In color are 2 bottles of San-J Tamari (wheat free, in 5.7 oz refillable dispenser and 20 oz glass bottle). The text explains that this real tamari is: Made only from soybeans. Mellower, smoother, richer than regular soy sauce. More protein than regular soy sauce. San-J Tamari will enhance any dish. A concentrated, economical product.

• Summary: A $1.3 million offer by Ronald Rossetti, president of Nature Food Centres, has been accepted as the reorganization plan in the Erewhon, Inc. bankruptcy. On 10 Nov. 1981 Erewhon, a Boston-based natural foods wholesaler, was forced to file for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the U.S. bankruptcy laws because of debts totaling $4.3 million. Then on 15 Feb. 1982 Laurelbrook Foods also filed a Chapter 11. Richard Curry was president. The company didn’t have the capital to finance growth.

• Summary: “Laurelbrook Foods, Inc., a major East Coast natural foods distributor [in Bel Air, Maryland], filed Feb. 15 for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S.
bankruptcy laws, and was scheduled to submit a repayment plan to its creditors by March 10. This is the second East Coast distributor which has recently filed a bankruptcy petition. Last January, Erewhon, Inc., a Boston-based natural foods wholesaler, was forced to file a Chapter 11 because of debts totalling $4.3 million. Laurelbrook president Richard Curry declined to comment on the subject.”

“One large East Coast-based supplier, who spoke with Natural Foods Merchandiser off the record said, ‘This is another example of a company which didn’t have the capital to finance its growth, or the management strength to attract new capital. Many of us felt with Laurelbrook that it was just a matter of time. The distribution business today is tough. You’ve got increased energy costs, high interest rates and a tough economy. This year will be a real test for many companies.’”


• Summary: Erewhon, one of the oldest and best known natural foods manufacturers in the U.S., was sold on April 2 to Nature Food Centers, which operates a chain of 85 health food stores primarily devoted to marketing vitamin pills and other dietary supplements. Erewhon had sales of $17 million a year. The company has been plagued throughout its history by financial and labor crises (see “From Alternative to Big Business,” New Age, Nov. 1979). In 1981 alone Erewhon’s losses amounted to more than $1 million.


• Summary: Erewhon, which filed for bankruptcy last November, has announced the appointment of Ronald L. Rossetti and its new president and CEO. Rosset, age 38, is currently head of Nature Food Centers, Wilmington, Massachusetts. It is anticipated that Michio and Tomoko Kushi will continue to be involved with the company.


• Summary: “Erewhon Inc., the Cambridge-based health food retailer, has been purchased by the owner of Nature Food Centers Inc. for an undisclosed sum. The company, which had been trying to reorganize under the federal bankruptcy laws, was purchased by Ronald L. Rossetti, 38, who had been named president and chief executive officer in April after Erewhon filed for protection under Chapter 11.”

“The health food company will remain as a separate entity from Nature Food Centres but Erewhon products will be marketed in Nature Food Centres stores, according to Anthony Barber, vice president of finance for Nature Food Centers. Nature Food Centres, based in Wilmington (Massachusetts), operates 86 vitamin and health food stores in the United States.” Address: Globe staff, Massachusetts.


• Summary: This ad is a combination of black-and-white and color. In black-and-white are 5 quarts of so-called tamari under the following brands: Westbrae, Erewhon (2), Llama, and Pure & Simple. In color are 2 bottles of San-J Tamari (wheat free, in 5.7 oz refillable dispenser and 20 oz glass bottle). The text explains that this real tamari is: Made only from soybeans. Mellower, smoother, richer than regular soy sauce. More protein than regular soy sauce. San-J Tamari will enhance any dish. A concentrated, economical product. Address: 250 Newport Center, Newport Beach, California 92660. Phone: (714) 760-1076.


• Summary: Contents: I. Existing domestic markets. Overview of the existing domestic natural foods market. Overview of the existing domestic shoyu and tamari market (sources are cited). II. Market survey results. Background information on the survey. Survey questions and results (1,190 respondents in Oct. 1982 at Pearl Street Market, in Boulder, Colorado, at Rainbow Grocery in Denver, and via a mail-in questionnaire from random natural food consumers around the USA). 1. Have you ever used shoyu? (9.2%), tamari? (70.6%), soy sauce? (12.6%), none of these? (7.6%). 2. How did you first learn of the product? Friend (52.7%). Family (10.9%). 3. What size do you usually purchase? 16 oz (33.6%). 4. Which brand do you purchase? Private label (40.8%). Kikkoman (11.8%). Erewhon (9.1%). 5. If you heard about a new brand that was low in salt and naturally fermented, how likely would you be to try it? Definitely (36.4%). Probably (35.5%). 6. How important are the following items to you when you evaluate your product? Price (#3), company rep., bottle shape, package, label, advertising, aroma (#2), taste (#1). 7. Are
you a vegetarian? Yes (33.6%). No (35.3%). Partially (31.3%). What is your age (25-34 = 50.4%). 9. What occupational category describes you best? 10. What is your average annual household income? (Under $5,000 = 18.5%). 11. Sex? Male (53.8%). Female (46.2%). 12. How many people do you shop for? (1 other = 44.3%; Yourself = 29.5%). 13. How many years of school have you attended? (16 years = 41.6%).

Summary of the market survey results. III Market strategy. Address: Colorado.

• Summary: This interview was conducted after Erewhon declared bankruptcy. What caused Erewhon’s demise? The main reason was that the company grew too rapidly. Erewhon was distributing many products that were taboo for macrobiotics, such as frozen meat and vitamins. Erewhon was selling the very foods they advised people not to eat. The company lost integrity. She does not think that poor management was a major cause. Erewhon was a social, philosophical, and economic experiment. One reason the company had to grow was to pay for the move to the large and very expensive warehouse at 3 East Street in early 1978. No single factor caused Erewhon’s demise. By 1982 Erewhon was located at 5 Waltham St., Wilmington, Massachusetts. Patti went to Boston in 1977, after working for Erewhon–Los Angeles, in California.

Erewhon failed on one level but on another it succeeded because of the many people in other companies who are still carrying on the ideas that it started. Erewhon pioneered in developing quality foods and maintaining standards, until near the end.

Note (based on a talk with Patricia on 28 May 1996): She was in Los Angeles from 1970-1974 (not with Erewhon), then in Los Angeles affiliated with Erewhon from Aug. 1974 to Aug. 1977. Then she lived in Boston from 1977-82. She lived and studied with the Kushis for 2 years in Boston. She feels extremely close to Aveline and Michio, as if they were her parents.

Enclosed is a color copy of a pin Patricia made for Erewhon folks and friends. Address: New England Regional Manager, Erewhon Inc., 3 East St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141. Phone: (617) 354-2001.

• Summary: Ronald Rossetti, owner of Nature Food Centers, bought Erewhon (including the 3 Erewhon retail stores in the Boston [Massachusetts] area–Newbury, Brookline, and Cambridge) and filed a reorganization plan with the court. He is now the owner of Erewhon Inc., which is a separate and independent company from Nature Food Centers; there is no affiliation between the two. Michio Kushi transferred his Erewhon stock to Mr. Rossetti. The plan Rossetti filed offers to pay creditors 18% (18 cents on each dollar owed) over 5 years.

Erewhon is no longer manufacturing any of its own products, is also no longer a distributor, and has totally moved out of the warehouse at 3 East Street. The Erewhon brand products are now being manufactured by subcontractors with careful quality control. Michio has been retained as a consultant. He is on the board of directors of the new Erewhon but is not chairman of the board.

Erewhon Inc. does not presently sell to any retail outlets, only to master distributors and a chosen few distributors. Nature Food Centers owns retail stores; it is not a master distributor. Stores by the name of Erewhon in Los Angeles, California, are not connected with Erewhon Inc. Address: Nature Food Centers.

• Summary: Lenny is absolutely certain that when Paul Hawken left Erewhon, other people had to purchase his stock. Paul had and apparently still has a lot of bitterness about this. The guy at the branch of Erewhon in Toronto, Canada, was extorting a lot of money from the company. There was also a scam with a guy from Free State of the Arc; he took lots of money and ran, then later wanted to give it to Erewhon. Paul used that as a reason for quitting Erewhon; he may not have known that the money was dirty money.

When he resigned, Paul Hawken called a public meeting. It was a big event, with many people in attendance. Paul was very bitter and he aired lots of “dirty linen.” It may be that later the Kushis gave him another 25% of the Erewhon stock; Lenny is not sure. Lenny is planning to do a story on Erewhon. People can still trust the Erewhon label for quality. Address: Publisher, East West Journal, Brookline, Massachusetts.


**203. Product Name:** Amazake.

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Infinity.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** Jamaica Way, Boston, Massachusetts.

**Date of Introduction:** 1982.

**Ingredients:** Incl. rice, water.

**How Stored:** Refrigerated.

**New Product–Documentation:** Talk with José Antunes, owner of Smoke & Fire Natural Foods, Inc. in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. 1998. July 14 and Sept. 16. He began studying macrobiotics in 1974 in Portugal. After he got out of the air force (in Africa), while he was sick with typhus and in the hospital for several months, he read a book by Georges Ohsawa. He continued his studies at the Community Health Foundations and Kushi Institute in London, England, in 1974-76 with Bill Tara; there he first learned about tofu and amazake. Then he studied in Boston. Being very independent, he wanted to create his own business. He had learned how to make amazake at cooking classes in the Kushi Institute in Boston. So in about 1981 or 1982 in Boston, he and his ex-wife, Melissa Crane Morehouse, started making amazake at their home on Jamaica Way and selling it at the first Erewhon store and the first Bread and Circus store. Their amazake business was named Infinity, and it lasted for only about eight months. The product sold well, but the process was very labor intensive.


**Summary:** Rice cake production started in Canada.

The following are not that important: (1) The conflict over Erewhon buying organic brown rice from the Lundbergs. (2) Erewhon taking away Chico-San’s New York market (Bob didn’t even know this). (3) Lawsuit (that never went to court) between Chico-San and Lundberg.

The initial contract with the Lundbergs to grow brown rice exclusively for Chico-San was risky for Chico-San; they agreed to pay higher prices if the yield was low. Michio and Paul Hawken tried to get the Lundbergs to break the contract. Bob does not know who went to who. Did the Lundbergs go to Erewhon or vice versa? Why did this happen? Problems arose in the third year of the contract. The first year, the Lundbergs grew only 67-70 acres of brown rice, which Chico-San sold by the end of January. The second year, Chico-San also sold all the rice that the Lundbergs grew. The third year was the fire at Chico-San, and Chico-San was unable to sell all the rice they had agreed to sell. Michio came to California with Aveline and they tried to talk the Lundbergs into selling some organic brown rice to Erewhon. But there was no conflict. Michio used to phone Bob Kennedy at nights in those days asking if Erewhon could buy organic brown rice at no profit to Chico-San. Bob said “no.” That is not a conflict, and there were no bad feelings.

There was no lawsuit between the Lundbergs and Chico-San—just some litigation prior to what could have been a lawsuit, concerning the third year and the fire. Chico-San was out of business for almost a year because of that fire, and could not sell all the rice they had contracted to sell that year. The litigation led to changes in the original contract: (1) Chico-San could and would pay for the rice over an extended schedule. (2) The Lundbergs could sell the organic brown rice to other customers.

Why is Chico-San a loner in the natural food industry? They are a manufacturer and importer which uses other distributors; they do not generally distribute themselves—unlike Erewhon. However now they have some big trucks, used to distribute their own products in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Erewhon was able to take away Chico-San’s New York market because Erewhon was price cutting; Kennedy refused to cut prices. Also, Erewhon sold direct to some markets, delivering their own products in their own trucks—unlike Chico-San which generally used other distributors. Many other companies besides Erewhon did this too. Most of those companies are gone now, but Chico-San remains!

Whenever Paul Hawken would talk to Bob Kennedy he always seemed to have a chip on his shoulder [a sort of grievance].

Initially Chico-San had an exclusive agreement with Ohsawa. Chico-San broke that in deference to Michio when
Aveline set up Erewhon. This is a big, important point that should not be forgotten.

Ohsawa’s first lectures in the USA, in early 1960, were at the Buddhist Academy in New York City.

There were two main reasons the group that formed Chico-San left New York and traveled to California: Rice (most important) and nuclear safety. Ohsawa strongly supported the group’s efforts. Ohsawa tried to set up Japanese companies to supply Chico-San, but it was difficult. Then Muso Shokuhin [Muso Foods], in Osaka, came into the picture, and Chico-San started to order from them. Then they went back to ordering from Tokyo. There were some problems between the export companies in Tokyo and Osaka. Ohsawa Japan was the export company and Nippon CI was the educational arm.

The amount of miso and shoyu that Chico-San sells today is proprietary [confidential] information. Chico-San is now in serious talks with some manufacturers in Japan. Chico-San started to make rice syrup in 1972. Bob traveled to Japan twice, visited some amé [rice syrup] makers, and got information on quantities, temperatures, etc. It’s a fermentation process.

Chico-San expects to have a new rice cake plant in New Jersey in operation by December 1981. The plant will make only rice cakes but Chico-San will store/warehouse some of its Japanese foods in the plant. The next plant after that will be in Canada, then one in Europe after that. If these are successful, Chico-San will add distribution of Japanese products. They will sell both organic brown rice (from the Lundbergs and from Arkansas) and non-organic commercial brown rice—each clearly labeled.

What are Chico-San’s plans concerning miso and shoyu? In collaboration with Ohsawa Japan, two Japanese makers of miso and shoyu are very interested in coming to the U.S. and helping Chico-San to set up a plant in the U.S. They would provide technical assistance and be part shareholders / investors. Junsei Yamazaki plans to return to the Chico area, possibly this spring. He studied fermentationology, so he may be the process overseer.

In 1961 Chico-San received its first imports from Japan, from Tokyo, from George Ohsawa himself. Previously Herman Aihara in New York had ordered these imports from George Ohsawa. He had received 2-3 shipments before Chico-San was incorporated. George Ohsawa encouraged Muso to get started. Three companies tried to get started and folded before Muso took root. Bob will try to find the details (date and products) of Chico-San’s first shipment from Muso. Bob also has George Ohsawa’s early correspondence.

Bob would like to read the final draft of Shurtleff’s History of Macrobiotics. Peter Milbury will look at it too. Address: Chico, California.
Chico-San had been putting out the word in the rice valley of northern California that they wanted to buy organic rice. It was the Lundbergs, however, who developed a very clever method for growing the rice to Chico-San’s basic specifications–no chemicals. The Lundbergs came to Erewhon before actually growing the rice, or at least before harvesting it.

Paul was shocked when he first heard of the contract between Chico-San and Lundberg. By trying to control this rice, Bob Kennedy blew it. Chico-San had an exclusive for only 2 years; it probably expired at the end of the 2nd year, before the fire. Erewhon was definitely buying rice from the Lundbergs before Chico-San burned down.

Chico-San was upset at all the natural food companies up and down the East Coast and even in California–Food for Life, Janus, and others. Erewhon’s whole mission was to get good food to the people. Chico-Sans rice was expensive because it underwent so many mark-ups. Chico-San had antipathy to all macrobiotics other than their own version. Paul had no antipathy for Chico-San. The Lundbergs deserve the credit.

The issue of Paul’s losing his Erewhon stock. This is not correct as written. The macrobiotic movement has a huge gap between the stated goal and the reality. The falling out in which Paul was involved concerned what he viewed as Michio’s dishonesty. When Paul came back from Japan, he did not realize that the stock was no longer his. A year later, when he drew up a stock ownership plan, he said that he wanted his stock back. Michio said he would give it back later, when he drew up a stock ownership plan, he said that it was our responsibility to those that had come to depend on Chico-San for quality, however by this time there were several companies [including Erewhon] competing for the sale of the Japanese products. Through their price cutting policies a market was created that was not profitable, consequently they had to lower their costs by buying products from dubious sources. Many such companies have since gone bankrupt.
“Twenty years ago when Ohsawa’s macrobiotic diet was new to America it was taken with scepticism but now that there have been many dramatic cures accorded to it, its popularity is gaining by great strides. This makes Chico-San’s responsibility greater than it has ever been because more and more people are being attracted to the Ohsawa regimen.

“Since Chico-San started it has always been the Oshawas, both Lima and George, who have given Chico-San its quality control regarding the Japanese imports. We have only carried products recommended to us by them and chosen by them for their own use. Since Mr. Ohsawa’s death several years ago Mrs. Ohsawa was given the recognition by people world-wide for being the most knowledgeable person in regard to her husband’s work.

“Chico-San uses Ohsawa Japan, Inc. in Tokyo as its only supplier for its imports, This is a company started by George Ohsawa and now run by Lima Ohsawa’s sister, Flora Tanaka. The very strict supervision of the company and the uncompromising attitude of its employees comes from years of collective study under Ohsawa.

“Jun Makino, a representative to Chico-San, Inc. from Ohsawa Japan, Inc. in Tokyo, has recently joined us in Chico. He is now busily engaged in translating hordes of material being sent to us from Ohsawa Japan, pertaining to macrobiotic foods and how they have traditionally been used.

“This additional information will appear in our newsletters; it will also be included in our pamphlets and catalog as space and time permit.

“Jun will be in charge of our Japanese imports and will also take over our mail order department.

“Peter Milbury is back with us to help with our expanded efforts. Peter is our operations director, a job designed to assist me as president in the performance of executive duties.

“We have added several others to our complement, so that we can increase our effectiveness as a macrobiotic foods supplier. We’ll introduce them to you in future issues of the newsletter because we would like you to get to know the people that supply your food.

“Our excitement on our 20th anniversary is genuine as we confirm our dedication of 20 years ago, to bring you the best quality available.”

Also includes articles on imports from Japan and winter recipes using miso and soy sauce. Address: Chico-San, Inc., P.O. Box 810, Chico, California 95927.


• Summary: In the early days, the first Erewhon retail store (located downstairs) got miso from Infinity (in New York City), Chico-San, and perhaps a little from Lima in Belgium, plus Hatcho miso from a Japanese trading company (perhaps JFC or Nishimoto).

Paul doesn’t know of any early Caucasian miso makers. Address: California.


• Summary: Junsei arrived in the U.S. in May 1963. He first went to Chico, California, to help with the installation of small rice cake machines. After the July 1963 summer camp at French Meadows, California, he went to New York, arriving in August. Initially, he did nothing with soyfoods in New York. But there was a group in New York, composed or a woman or women; he can’t recall the name. It was not Irma Paule, but rather some woman whose husband had died in a car accident. They asked him to teach them how to make miso, and he taught her how to make miso.

Initially Herman Aihara (pronounced Ai-ha-ra) had to work as a guard to earn money in Chico; the macrobiotic group in Chico had no income. Some group raised money for him to do something in New York or Chico.

In about Nov. 1963 Michio Kushi opened the Genpei restaurant on the first floor of the Diamond Jim Building on 46th Street in New York City. In the basement Junsei made koji, then about 100 pounds of miso. He showed the process to a Caucasian woman and child. The miso was not used in the restaurant. Junsei took it to Boston, Massachusetts, where it was used by Michio and Aveline Kushi themselves.

In March 1964 Junsei went to Chico-San in Chico, California. While making rice cakes there, he made miso in the interim. Starting in about 1965, when Chico moved to a bigger place, he made about 20 whiskey barrels full of miso; each barrel held 320 lbs of miso. He did not really teach miso making to anyone. The real teacher of miso among macrobiotics was Mr. Noboru Muramoto.

In Boston, Erewhon wanted to make miso within their building. They asked Yamazaki to tell them the best place, so he went to Boston. He did not teach any classes to students then, unlike what Aveline recalled.

In 1980 Junsei and his wife bought land in Orland, in northern California (Zip code 95963). He wants to make miso using good ingredients, either cooperatively or in individual homes. He is now working as a guard for a construction firm. He also wants to grow ume plum trees for making umeboshi [salt plums]; he tried this in Washington state but failed. Address: Orland, California.


• Summary: In about 1974 Charlie heard that someone up at Erewhon Farms in New Hampshire, a macrobiotic community, had made miso. That person was part of a group
of people who tried to start a farm in New Hampshire. In 1976 Charles made a batch of miso at home using ready-made store-bought koji and following instructions from one of Michio Kushi’s lectures.

Note: At Tassajara Zen Mountain Center (in the Santa Lucia Mountains, California), the students made miso long before 1974. The method was transmitted by Zen priests from Japan. Ask Loring Palmer and Ed Brown for more details. Address: Ashburnham, Massachusetts.


• Summary: “I would check the reference to Paul Hawken owning 50% of the stock in Erewhon. My reason for this is as follows: During this period of time there were many discussions which took place between myself, Paul, the Kushi’s and others regarding an equitable distribution of stocks in the company to the management. No plan was ever finalized. Paul’s desire was 50% for himself. Michio and Aveline were hesitant since that would have meant that future stock participation by management would be severely limited. It was my understanding that the upshot of these discussions was that Aveline would hold the shares in her name in trust until such time that an equitable proposal was put forward by management. In lieu of stock participation, many employees including Paul, myself & Roger Hillyard were given cash bonuses and extensive time off from our work to pursue our own travels and study. (Paul went to Japan under such an arrangement, Roger traveled through the U.S. and I traveled through Europe.)”

“Paul did not ‘set-up’ Mitoku & Muso. They were already in operation and exporting. Paul did however, cement a good relationship with these companies and make more efficient arrangements for shipping and quality control.

“As per Paul’s shock regarding the shares. I can only say as stated above, plus the fact that what you want and what you have are two different things, if the shares had been legally his, they could not have been taken away and Paul could never be accused of having been ignorant of the law in business matters.”

“Erewhon in Los Angeles was started by myself and Aveline Kushi. I had moved to Los Angeles to set up a center there immediately after establishing a center in Chicago [Illinois] and getting the shop opened. The shop was opened in 1970 and our original purchase of miso and tamari were made through Chico-San. We later received our first direct shipment from Japan prior to Paul’s arrival. I was joined by Bruce Macdonald and we began distribution up the California coast as far north as San Francisco, distributing miso and tamari as well as some Japanese condiments and seaweeds to small co-ops and natural food shops. Our biggest customers were the co-ops in Berkeley and Fred Rohe in San Francisco.”

“What can I say regarding Paul’s impression of Erewhon in 1970? We were all younger then. My impression was that Erewhon was a very happy place to work at Farnsworth Street. There was a high degree of comradery [camaraderie] and a poor understanding of business. The words arrogant and dogmatic were words often used to describe Paul–rightly or not.

“Bill, I hope these comments are not in any way taken to be disparaging of Paul and his involvement in the natural foods movement. His energy and vitality combined with his sharp business sense was one of the main driving forces behind the wide distribution of Japanese foods. Combined with Michio’s educational work, this forged the beginning of the wide acceptance that we are now seeing for many of the traditional food items. It would be sad, I think, to allow Paul’s own personal frustrations to overly color what was an exciting and adventurous experience for all involved.”

Address: The Kushi Institute, P.O. Box 1100, Brookline, Massachusetts 02147. Phone: (617) 731-0564.


• Summary: Mr. Kazama worked for a German export company named Ravenna; he ran their Tokyo branch office, exporting machines, cameras, transistors, etc. That company started in 1959.

He first heard of macrobiotics (before Paul Hawken arrived in Japan) from Mr. Shin Obayashi, a friend of his from Waseda University. Obayashi and Michio Kushi (from Tokyo Univ.) had won Japanese government scholarships to study in the United States. Both studied at Columbia University. Obayashi is no longer living. Mr. Kushi asked Obayashi to help him find a company in Japan from which Kushi could import Japanese natural foods. Before that, Kushi had to buy such foods from Chico-San at very high prices, like medicine. Mr. Obayashi contacted Mr. Kazama. Mr. Kushi found out the names of Chico-San’s sources by reading the Japanese labels on their products. He sent these names to Mr. Kazama, who in turn bought the foods from Chico-San’s sources. Evan Root and Paul Hawken suggested that Kushi and Erewhon should buy directly from Japan.

Mr. Kazama was accustomed from his office machines business to taking a low markup, so he charged Erewhon a commission of only 10%. Thus Erewhon got low prices, which was a key to their success. Mr. Kazama shipped the first order to Erewhon 3-4 months before Hawken arrived in Japan. Hawken’s brother-in-law, a lawyer, helped provide the funds for opening the first letter of credit. In about 1969
Mr. Kazama established a new company named Mitoku, which he owned. It was independent of Ravenna.

Originally Mr. Kazama had bought his shoyu from Marushima, but Muso objected, saying it was their exclusive source. Muso asked Marushima to stop selling to Kazama, which Marushima did. Kazama then searched the length of Japan to try to find a company that still made shoyu in the traditional way. He finally located Sendai Miso Shoyu. Sasaki Jube, the 7th generation owner, made both traditional and modern shoyu products. He set aside a warehouse for only his traditional products, and insisted that all his brewmasters should master the traditional process first. Sasaki eats brown rice. Mr. Kazama found Sendai by himself and first went there alone. Sendai first sold its existing traditional product to Kazama in about 1970, then they expanded their production by adding on new fermentation rooms as orders increased.

Sendai has a special process for keeping a large amount of shoyu moromi in a huge vat; they then use half of this in each new batch, so that part of each batch is old and part new. Thus the finished product is not clearly 2 years old but maybe an average of 2 summers old. Thus in each bottle, there may be some shoyu that is 3 or 4 years old. Sendai gets very consistent quality. They still use well water, but the maximum amount they can use is limited by the government.

Today Mitoku’s biggest customer is Westbrae, followed by Erewhon. Address: President, Mitoku Co., Tokyo, Japan. Phone: 03-201-6706.


• Summary: Soyfoods magazine recently interviewed 50 restaurants around the country to learn how they were serving tofu, the amount of tofu they used each week, and their prognosis for tofu’s future in restaurants. The interviews focused on natural foods and macrobiotic style restaurants—where much of the current use and innovation is taking place. The 50 restaurants represent an estimated 8% of America’s estimated 600 natural foods restaurants. The 50 restaurants interviewed purchase about 111 tons of tofu yearly; by extrapolation, all natural foods restaurants would purchase a total of 611.5 tons of tofu yearly, or 2.25% of current tofu production. Asian restaurants are estimated to use an additional 3,822 tons, or 14% of total production. Many restaurants prefer to buy their tofu in bulk directly from the manufacturer. Leading centers for tofu innovation in restaurants are Boston (from the macrobiotic community), New York, then San Francisco and Los Angeles (which have large numbers of Asian-Americans and tofu manufacturers). Open Sesame, one of Boston’s foremost macrobiotic restaurants, uses 350 pounds/week of tofu according to owner Gary Welkin. Also discusses tofu use and dishes served at various natural food vegetarian restaurants: Lotos/Lotus Cafe (Rochester, New York; owner Greg Weaver), Woodlands (Vancouver, BC, Canada), Blair Island (Eugene, Oregon), Meyera (Santa Monica, California), Penthouse Garden (New York City; chef George Roeger), Greens (San Francisco, California; run by Zen Center, head chef Jim Phalon), Sojourner Coffee House (Santa Barbara, California), Amazing Grace (San Francisco), Blue Heron (Minneapolis, Minnesota), Sunshine Inn (St. Louis, Missouri), Pachamama (Boulder, Colorado), Brownies (New York City), Moosewood Restaurant (Ithaca, New York), Latacarta (Boston), Blind Faith (Evanston, Illinois), Whole Wheat ‘N’ Wild Berries (New York City), Earth Angel (New York City), Green River Cafe (Greenfield, Massachusetts), The Garland (Tucson, Arizona), Cafe Shalom (Boston). At macrobiotic restaurants: L'Odeon (Boston), George’s (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Grain Country (Hollywood, California), Paul & Elizabeth’s (Northampton, Massachusetts), Five Seasons (Jamaica Plain, near Boston; owner John Pelli), The Caldron (New York City; they have been open since 1970, and making their own tofu since 1975), Angelica’s Kitchen (New York), Seventh Inn (Boston), Harvest Cafe (Washington, DC). At mixed cuisine natural foods restaurants: The Unicorn (North Miami Beach, Florida; Terry Dalton, owner, opened in late 1979, uses 335 lb/week of tofu), Nature’s Oven (Miami), The Natural Cafe (Santa Fe, New Mexico), The Eatery Amulette (Monmouth Junction, near Princeton, New Jersey), The Haven (Santa Fe, New Mexico), The Copper Star (Tucson, Arizona). At tofu fast food takeout restaurants and delis: The Unicorn (Florida), Erewhon Healthycatessen (Los Angeles), The Patisserie (Boulder), Golden Temple (St. Louis). Natural foods Oriental restaurants: The Wok (Greenfield, Massachusetts), Real Good Karma (San Francisco; has served tofu since 1976), Souen (New York City), Golden Horde (Cambridge, Massachusetts), Plum Tree (New York City), Shangrilka (San Francisco), Inaka (Los Angeles), Fuji-Ya (Minneapolis). Specialty atmosphere white tablecloth restaurants: Trader Vic’s (San Francisco), Cambridge Crossing (Salt Lake City, Utah), The Good Earth (chain of 30 restaurants owned by General Mills). Address: 100 Heath Rd., Colrain, Massachusetts 01340. Phone: 413-624-5591.


• Summary: A black-and-white photo shows Charles T. Verde (Erewhon’s president and CEO) and Cynthia C. Davis (vice president of marketing). “Today’s Erewhon has evolved from a cupboard in Michio Kushi’s kitchen in 1966, into a $17 million modern corporate manufacturing concern in 1981, through Chapter 11 Federal Bankruptcy reorganization in late 1981, and on to new ownership in 1982.” Erewhon has three retail stores and the company...
now manufactures and markets a line of more than 100 natural food products including cereals, nut butters, granolas, Japanese imports, oils, and snacks.

"Erewhon defines ‘natural’ to mean without chemical additives or preservatives; no artificial colorings or flavorings; no refined sugar (the only sweeteners used are honey, pure maple syrup, and barley malt); and products which contain no hydrogenated oils (only cold pressed rather than chemically extracted)."


• **Summary:** This is a new mail order catalog, whose prices are effective from 1 Nov. 1983. On the front cover is a woodblock print of two wooden barrels, a wooden tub, two sacks of corn, a sheaf of wheat, several ears of corn, and a scythe. Erewhon is located at 26 Washington St. in Brookline Village—also the home of Erewhon Mail Order. There are retail stores at 342 Newbury St. in Boston and 1731 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge. Products grown organically, without chemicals, are marked with the code “OG.”


• **Summary:** A comprehensive history of the subject.


“Definition: The Soy Sauce Council of North America (commonly referred to as the “Soy Sauce Council”) is an organization within the Soyfoods Association of North America.” This idea was proposed by the authors, a cover letter, questionnaire (containing 10 questions, mostly related to terminology), and 4-page list of potential members were drafted, and a mailing was done to all potential members. Eleven companies responded to the questionnaire and their responses were tabulated. The respondents were: Chico-San, Erewhon, Granum, Kikkoman-Wisconsin, Kikkoman-International, Mandarin Soy Sauce, Mountain Ark, Pure Sales, San-Jirushi, Westbrae, and Mark Fruin.

But Michael Austin and at least one other leader of the Soyfoods Association did not like the idea, so it was never implemented. Address: 1. Director, Soyfoods Center, Lafayette, California; President, Westbrae Natural Foods.

217. **Product Name:** Erewhon Shoyu Tamari.

**Manufacturer’s Name:** Erewhon, Inc. (Imported). Made in Japan.

**Manufacturer’s Address:** Boston, Massachusetts.

**Date of Introduction:** 1983. December.

**New Product—Documentation:** Ad in Whole Foods. 1983. Dec. p. 51. “The look is new but the flavor is still aged.” “Our look may be new. But all 150 Erewhon Natural Food products are still made the same quality way.”


**Summary:** A half page black-and-white ad. “Erewhon’s mail order natural food brings the highest quality natural and organically grown products right to your mailbox. Shopping for macrobiotic food, all natural cosmetics and body care products has never been so convenient.” An illustration shows a mailbox full of Erewhon brand products. Address: 236 Washington St., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 1-800-222-8028.


**Summary:** This is a compilation of various early published and unpublished documents relating to George Ohsawa and macrobiotics.


**Summary:** Thom was surprised and pleased to see the “Ohio Miso” logo in the history chapter of the new second edition of *The Book of Miso.* “I, too, have found it strange that many influential people in the macrobiotic community have such resistance to the use of the English language in describing the varieties of miso.” Thom prefers the terms “brown rice” and “barley” to *genmai* and *mugi.* “Last spring I was asked to give a miso workshop to employees of Erewhon’s retail division. I stressed the importance of demystifying miso, including the use of English variety names. A beginning (belated) at least.

Next month, in Ireland, Thom will “begin making miso on a small scale, 800 pounds a week. My shop space is small, my finances smaller... I don’t have a company name yet, but favor The Irish Miso Company, trade name of Eire Miso.” “We are renting a beautifully re-done cottage on a south-facing hillside above the River Nore, and will be here at least a year.”

Update: Talk with Thom. 1984. Sept. 24. He was in Ireland for a year, but he couldn’t raise the money he needed. He planned to export miso to the USA. The Irish economy was slow and the UK market was small. He is planning another miso company. His wife is in Dublin, Ireland. He will go back to meet her there, and then perhaps on to Japan. He is now staying with Jim Hemminger, Remelle Road, Monroeville, Ohio 44847. Address: Kilkieran, Inistioge, Co. Kilkeeny, Ireland.


**Summary:** This 8½ by 11 inch ad begins: “To the ancient Japanese shoyu masters, making the finest possible soy sauce was more than just a matter of pride. It was a matter of necessity. Because, in medieval Japan, no one served inferior shoyu to a shogun twice.” “Our great taste comes of necessity. Because, in medieval Japan, no one served inferior shoyu to a shogun twice.” “Our great taste comes of necessity. Because, in medieval Japan, no one served inferior shoyu to a shogun twice.” “Our great taste comes of necessity. Because, in medieval Japan, no one served inferior shoyu to a shogun twice.”

The full-page color photo shows the tips of two chopsticks on the edge of a small bowl containing shoyu for dipping sauce. Above that are sliced fish and orange fish eggs. In the lower left a bottled labeled (confusingly) “Erewhon Shoyu Tamari.” Note: Shoyu and tamari are different types of soy sauce.

**Summary:** Contains large color ads by Legume Inc. (6 frozen tofu entrees), Erewhon, Inc. (shoyu tamari), Vitasoy (USA), Inc. (natural and coconut soy drink, sweetened with maple syrup), San-J International, Inc. (tamari, teriyaki sauce, tamari crackers, teriyaki crakers), Tofu-Time, Inc. (Tofutti “nondairy tofu frozen dessert”), Eden Foods, Inc. (Edensoy soy beverage in plain and carob flavors, retort pouch), and Westbrae Natural Foods (natural ramen in 100% whole-wheat, buckwheat, brown rice, mushroom, seaweed, miso, 5-spice, and curry flavors).

Contains black-and-white ads by Westbrae Natural Foods (shoyu, tamari, and soy sauce), Chico-San, Inc. (imported miso and soysauce), Fantastic Foods, Inc. (tofu burger mix), Penguin’s, Inc. (dairly-free frozen dessert), Nasoya Foods (Firm Style Tofu, Soft Style Tofu, Marinated & Broiled Tofu, Tofu Burgers, Tempeh, Tempeh Burgers, Tofu Vegi-Dip [Creamy Dill, Soyannaise, Bleu Cheese, Onion, Creamy Garlic], Corn Cakes [Plain with Bran, Blueberry, Cranberry]; Non-soy products in the “Oriental Cuisine” line include Fresh Noodles, Wonton Skins, Egg Roll Wrappers), Hinode Tofu Co. and Azumaya, Inc. (“The #1 and #2 tofu producers in America”).

The only article, whose author is not given, is titled “Soyfoods Pavilion debuts at Natural Foods Expo ’84.” On the front cover of the insert is a list of members of the Soyfoods Association of America (formed in Feb. 1983) that participated in Natural Foods Expo ‘84. In addition to the advertisers mentioned above, they include: Farm Foods, Laughing Moon Food Co., Paradise Distributors, Inc., Soyfoods Magazine, Tempeh Works, Inc., and White Wave, Inc. Address: 526 East 20th St., New York, NY 10009.


**Summary:** A very well written and accurate history of Erewhon from its founding in 1966, to its declaration of Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the fall of 1981. The company was able to clear its $3 million indebtedness by paying 11 cents for each dollar owed. In early 1982 “the company was sold by the Kushis to Ron Rossetti, owner of the Nature Food Centres retail chain. Later that year [in July] Rossetti accepted as financial partners Charles T. Verde and Cynthia C. Davis, who became respectively president and vice president of marketing. Since then the operation has been totally in their hands. Erewhon has a production facility at Natick, Massachusetts.” A photo shows Davis and Verde with 5 Erewhon products.

“The story of Erewhon is a dramatic one. Founded in Boston in 1966 on the thinnest of shoestrings it soon began to grow at a phenomenal rate. By the mid ’70s it was the most powerful force in the burgeoning natural foods industry, respected as a leader and innovator, with annual sales of over ten million dollars. Several troubled years culminated, however, in 1981 with a petition for protection under the Chapter Eleven ‘bankruptcy’ statute. Only a change in ownership and management prevented the disappearance of the company altogether. Phoenix-like, it has continued but is substantially changed. Erewhon’s history is instructive as well as dramatic. It reveals something basic about the nature of ‘new age’ or idealistic, service-oriented business, and the perils of success, as well as failure, for those who practice it.

“In 1965 Michio and Aveline Kushi, a Japanese couple in their forties, moved to Boston. Their purpose was to teach macrobiotics, the philosophy, way of life, and diet formulated by their mentor, Georges Ohsawa. They rented a house on a side street in North Cambridge. Michio began to lecture in the evenings, and Aveline prepared meals for the lecture guests and gave cooking classes.

“The core of their message was simple. Food is a primary factor in physical health, and also in emotional, psychological, and even spiritual well-being. The key to health and happiness is a proper diet, based on whole cereal grains, beans, and indigenous vegetables and fruits. As Ohsawa had written: ‘Food is the basis of life. If food is good then all else will be good as well.’

“Those who came and were convinced wished, of course, to follow the recommended diet. Its elements however were difficult or impossible to obtain. One could no more buy organically grown brown rice in Boston in 1965, than one could purchase samples of the British crown jewels. So the Kushis ordered extra sacksful of rice, oats, wheat flour, and kgs of miso and tamari, stashed them in their hall closet, and began to sell to students.

“In April, 1966, with the help of young former actor Evan Root, the Kushis rented a small basement store on Newbury Street in Boston. With shelving and counters made from planking and cinder blocks, they began to sell a modest array of whole foods. These were macrobiotic staples, with an occasional jar of sesame or apple butter thrown in for excitement. Root and the Kushis decided to name the store ‘Erewhon’ after the utopia in Samuel Butler’s novel, an imaginary place where people had to take responsibility for their own health and where it was a crime to get sick.

“Erewhon was a company therefore founded not on the profit motive but out of a desire to serve the public. From the outset it had two primary aims: to make available the highest quality natural whole foods, and to educate the public in the importance and proper use of these foods. The store was a natural and necessary extension of the educational activities of the Kushis, and their hope to effect positive healthful change in individual lives and in the
society as a whole. At base, it was a kind of missionary enterprise.

“Root managed the tiny business for about a year, then left to start Boston’s first macrobiotic restaurant. Shortly thereafter, Paul Hawken and Bill Tara arrived from the never-never land of San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury to study with the Kushis. Bright, energetic, gifted with business sense and intuition and committed to the Kushis and their ideas, the two took over and began to develop Erewhon. They moved the store to a larger, more attractive site, greatly expanded the product offering, and began a mail order department. The business began to take off rapidly—more rapidly perhaps than anyone anticipated or hoped.

“The next decade was a period of headlong and often dizzying growth for Erewhon; It began to manufacture and distribute its own product line. It opened retail outlets in Los Angeles, Hartford, Cambridge, and Brookline. In a short time it had grown into a large, influential and respected corporation. Throughout, it strove to remain true to its ideals of quality and education. Rather than merely responding to consumer demand the company sought to help the public understand the importance of quality food products. It succeeded to a remarkable degree. Erewhon’s most impressive accomplishments were that it:

“+ originated and developed the term and concept of ‘natural foods’ (a direct translation of the Japanese shizenshoku) to distinguish its products from the pills and elixirs of the older ‘health food’ industry.

“+ manufactured, or contracted manufacturing, according to strict specifications a product line that set industry standards for purity and quality.

“+ developed new sources of quality commodities. For example, it encouraged a farm in Arkansas to grow organic rice, promising to then buy and market the crop.

“+ established the ‘down-home country store’ ambiance as a model for natural foods stores. The plain wood floors and panelling, the bulk bins and indirect lighting, influenced scores of new businesses.

“+ showed broad ecological and social concern: in its retail outlets it encouraged bulk sales to avoid wasteful packaging; it began to use biodegradable cellophane for its packaged foods; it supported coops and communes through direct wholesale transactions; and it began to distribute to supermarkets in order to reach the general public.

“+ published educational flyers and pamphlets on food and nutrition, and used its packaging to provide information to the consumer.” Continued.


• Summary: Continued: “In these years the company was unique not only in its activity in the marketplace but in its internal organization as well. Erewhon was basically an extended family, held together not by blood bonds but by common beliefs and aspirations. The Kushis, ‘Mom and Pop,’ exercised an ultimate but benevolent authority. Day to day management and much long term policy making was in the hands of a succession of young, idealistic ‘adopted sons,’ Hawken and Tara, followed by Roger Hillyard, Bruce MacDonald, Ty Smith, Bill Garrison, Jeff Flasher, and others. Most of the employees at all levels were macrobiotic and were committed to the Erewhon mission. Hence there was little or no gulf between managers and workers. All wore the same outfit of jeans and vests, and went to the same lectures and parties. All ate their macrobiotic lunch provided free in the company luncheon. People worked hard for modest wages but were recompensed by a clean, harmonious environment, and by job security. One could leave for an extended period and return assured of a position. The company took care of its own.

“There were of course tensions, but they were minor and in retrospect seem almost humorous. There was the great debate, for example, over whether the retail store should carry tomatoes, potatoes, bananas, and other reasonably wholesome but not strictly macrobiotic foods. The decision in the end was ‘yes,’ the rationale being that if people wanted these foods, Erewhon should give them the best available. It couldn’t expect every customer to be macrobiotic. In general it was a heady, idyllic period.

“Somewhere, somehow, though, things began to go wrong. A decision was made to move the factory and warehouse to a large facility in East Cambridge and to expand the product line and the distribution network. The transfer and expansion took much more time, energy, and money than anyone expected. Large bank loans were made just when interest rates were skyrocketing. Suddenly the company found itself deeply in debt, struggling to keep up repayment schedules. Meanwhile, because of rising production costs, smaller profit margins, and increased competition, revenue from sales decreased. Anxious to generate more cash, Erewhon expanded its product line even more, including yogurt and cheeses, vitamins and supplements. Amid an atmosphere of ideological compromise there were more loans, more interest, more pressure.

“Within the company serious problems of morale and loyalty were developing. At the new expanded facility the family model of organization ceased to pertain. Fewer and fewer of the employees were actually macrobiotic. It was growth and size that led to difficulties among the lower echelons, the people roasting granola and loading rice on trucks. Doing dull work for a large impersonal company, even when it has a grand, altruistic design, is still doing dull work for a large impersonal company.

“There were indications of theft, waste, malingering, and abuse of privilege throughout the company. Between
the managers and the workers a perceivable gap opened. Separation was followed by resentment and discontent. There was a unionization initiative, a strike, and then a movement to ‘de-unionize’ the company. In the end the union was voted out. The cost, in legal fees, was a quarter of a million dollars, and in time, energy, and harmony, almost incalculable.

“As a result of these various pressures the company became less and less able to pay its bills. Finally, in the fall of 1981, it filed for bankruptcy under Chapter Eleven—a movement to ‘de-unionize’ the company. In the end the operation was totally in their hands.

“Recently I met with Verde and Davis, who were accompanied by Jeanne Bock, a pre-Chapter Eleven employee of Erewhon who now handles public relations for the company. Verde, an affable, energetic man in his forties, has a master’s degree in marketing, and worked for years in management and marketing at Mennon and Gillette. Davis is a tall, articulate, business-like woman with a Harvard MBA and also with experience at Gillette. We sat in a plush meeting room at Erewhon’s production facility in Natick, Massachusetts and discussed the company’s recent past, its present, and its future.”

The rest of the article is about plans for Erewhon’s future.


• Summary: “Paul Hawken was just 21 when he started Erewhon, a health foods retailer in Cambridge, in 1967 with $500 in cash. He built it into a big little business, sold it in 1973, moved to California from Boston and undertook a series of turn-arounds, ‘to see,’ he says, ‘if I really knew something about business.’

“He did. When he decided that the mesquite charcoal that one little company sold to restaurants was an ingredient instead of a fuel, he doubled the price, and also doubled the demand. Suddenly a charcoal stove was a status symbol. You can’t go into a California restaurant without being offered mesquite-flavored chicken, mesquite-flavored fish.

“Today Hawken runs Smith and Hawken, a beautiful little mail-order tool business with $5 million in sales. ‘What I’m good at is seeing how markets change. I could probably start a conceptually sound business a week,’ he says, ‘but I lose interest after a certain point. I don’t have an instinct for the jugular.’

Hawken is in Boston promoting the paperback edition of his new book, “The Next Economy: What to do With Your Money and Your Life in the Coming Decade.” It is about the coming information-based economy. He is already at work on another book to be called “Corporate Courage.”

Its about what corporations really are and how they function. “It will open with a history of their development from what he calls ‘the original sin’–the invention of limited liability in the last century.

“I learned my lesson at Erewhon, the hard way, very early on,’ says Hawken. ‘One day a customer came into the Newbury street store and said, “How do you know these products are really as pure as you say they are?” So I began investigating my suppliers, going out to their farms, and what I found was outrageous. Half of them were lying to me about not using chemicals. In the end I had to put the entire system together myself.’ Address: Globe staff, Massachusetts.
Muso, which is now owned by more than fifty investors, was able to survive the failed Erewhon. (Muso had credits of about $200,000 when its chief customer failed, and lost over $150,000 of that.) Muso, which is now owned by more than fifty investors, was able to survive the failed Erewhon. (Muso had credits of about $200,000 when its chief customer failed, and lost over $150,000 of that.)

Today “the company has gross annual sales of over $25 million and employs over 120 people. In addition to the Osaka headquarters, built at a cost of over $1 million, it has an 18,000-square-foot production and warehouse facility in Osaka, as well as branch offices in six other cities. It wholesales over 1,800 products in the domestic market... Muso has accounts with nearly half of Japan’s 3,400 natural food outlets. In addition, it has developed a rapidly growing franchise chain of fifty-two stores, mostly in the Kansai area...

“About $5 million a year comes from international sales... Growth in the international sector has been steady despite the blow of the 1981 Erewhon bankruptcy. (Muso had credits of about $200,000 when its chief customer failed, and lost over $150,000 of that.) Muso, which is now owned by more than fifty investors, was able to survive the shock. Muso exports about 270 different products...

“At present a runaway best seller is a soybean drink made of soybeans, pearl barley, kombu sea vegetable, and malt sweetener. Marketed in North America as Edensoy it has proven an excellent dairy substitute.”

There follows a description of the Nanki Umeboshi Co., Muso’s principal supplier, and then of the Kanemitsu Miso Co. (in Fuchu City, Hiroshima prefecture) which has been in business for 300 years. “While it once made sake and soy sauce as well, it now produces only miso—1,300 tons a year.” There are now some 2,000 miso makers in Japan and Kanemitsu is one of only 200 which produce more than 1,000 tons annually. It is one of a very few which produce miso according to traditional methods... It is aged in natural temperatures for two years, run through a masher, then packed in either 40-pound wooden kegs or 1-pound plastic pouches. “All the miso going into the pouches is pasteurized by 84ºC heat. If it were not, gases produced by the continuing fermentation would burst the bags. Kegs may or may not be pasteurized.”

Photos show Yuko Okada.


• Summary: “Great Britain is one of the few European countries which had little or no macrobiotic activity during the Ohsawa years. The first signs of life were in the late 1960s when Greg and Craig Sams began to promote macrobiotics in London. Of Anglo-American parentage, they had learned of the movement while in the States. The brothers started a food company, Harmony Foods, and opened a small restaurant in the Portobello Road section of London. While there was little formal [macrobiotic] teaching done, macrobiotic food and literature were made available. The warmest reception was in the emerging counterculture...

“In 1970 Bill Tara, then a manager of Erewhon [he had studied with the Kushis in Boston and Los Angeles], passed through on a longer trip eastward and gave several talks. Two years later he returned to look into the possibility of opening an Erewhon operation somewhere in Europe. When the plan fell through, Tara decided to stay on and began to manage Ceres, the Sams brothers’ food shop. Well-spoken and with experience in teaching macrobiotics in Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, Tara started to hold public meetings and talks in his home. In 1974, working with Peter Bradford, a Britisher just returned from a period of study in Boston, Tara set up Sunwheel Foods. This was a macrobiotic food company modeled after Erewhon. It dealt in macrobiotic staples including imported specialty items from Japan. It also produced and distributed more generally popular items like peanut butter and granola. That same year Tara, Bradford and others organized the Self Health Center to promote macrobiotics and other holistic and spiritually-oriented teachings.”

In 1975 Tara helped arrange a seminar for Michio Kushi in London, followed by Kushi’s first European tour.
“With this visit began a new era of macrobiotics in Europe...”

By 1976 the group which had grown up around the Self Health Center in London felt ready for a major expansion. They organized the Community Health Foundation and rented a large, five-story Victorian school in East London. A restaurant and bookshop were opened on the ground floor. The first Kushi Institute, earlier than even the Boston school, was established in the upper level... The CHF was among the first self-supporting centers of macrobiotic activity. It served as a model for macrobiotic groups in other countries including Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland.

“As interest [in macrobiotics] developed on the continent, Tara traveled widely and lectured in Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Scandinavia. Also, many aspiring teachers and leaders went from other countries to the Kushi Institute in London. Thus Tara and the London center played a major role in the development of macrobiotics throughout Europe... In 1981 Tara returned to the United States to become director of the Kushi Institute of Boston. Denny Waxman, head of the Philadelphia East West Center, went to London to run the CHF and the Kushi Institute. He stayed two years. Since then the operations have been run by Kenyan born Jon Sandifer and others.” Address: The New North Church, Hingham, Massachusetts (18 Mar 1985).


*Summary:* In 1969, while a student at UCLA, Blake Rankin came in contact with Erewhon–Los Angeles. After graduation from UCLA he and several friends set up a small health food store in Victoria, BC, and Canada. Then he spent 3 months in Boston living in a Kushi study house and working in an Erewhon warehouse. Back in Seattle, he worked at Spiral Foods, an offshoot of Chico-San. Shortly after that he and George Gearhart, the proprietor, closed the store and in 1972 opened a wholesale company, Janus Foods. It was successful. [Note: Miso and shoyu, imported from Japan, were among the company’s best-selling products.] After 2 years Rankin left and went to Japan for 6 months, where he traveled with Mitoku and Muso. Mr. Kazama, a friend of Aveline Kushi’s brother, had not been in the food business before starting Mitoku. Then he went to Nepal and India on a spiritual search. In late 1973 he returned to Seattle and worked for Janus. Then he returned to Japan where he worked for Mitoku and studied calligraphy. In Japan he met his future wife, Yoko. Returning to Seattle, Rankin started Granum in 1981 as a distributor and importer for Mitoku products from Japan. Now the import company has a small retail store and a 10,000 square foot warehouse. Expected 1985 gross is more than $500,000.

This article contains numerous photos of Blake and Yoko Rankin, and their two children. Address: GOMF, Box 426, Oroville, California 95965.


*Summary:* Mitoku “has been and (at present) remains the larger of the two main exporters of natural foods from Japan. With its chief competitor, Muso Shokuhin (see Sept. 1984 EWJ), it shares the bulk of a $14-million-a-year market for superior Japanese food products.

“The central office of Mitoku is located in the prestigious Marunouchi building, in front of Tokyo Central Station... There is a staff of six Japanese and two foreigners (Christopher Dawson, a New Zealander, and Robbie Swinnerton, an Englishman)...”

“The founder, sole owner, and guiding spirit of Mitoku is Akiyoshi Kazama, now fifty-five years old... A graduate of Waseda University in Tokyo, Kazama was selected in 1956 to study business in the United States... He became the first Japanese national to serve in the American Army following World War II. After two years as an American GI in Korea and Japan, Kazama returned to Japan and settled in Tokyo. He became an import-export agent for a German company dealing in optics and electronics. Then in 1967 he got involved in the emerging natural foods business...

“At the time the newly formed Erewhon Trading Company of Boston was trying to import foods directly from Japan. Its owner, macrobiotic teacher Michio Kushi, was introduced to Kazama by letter through a mutual friend. Kazama agreed to use his trade expertise to ship $3,000 worth of high-quality Japanese foods, selected by Kushi, to Boston...

“In 1969 Kazama formed a separate company to handle steadily increasing shipments, and called it Mitoku. Through the 1970s Mitoku continued to grow. It remained the principal supplier of Erewhon, which had become a leader of America’s natural foods industry. Also, it played an important role in the development of other companies such as Janus, Laurelbrook, and Oak Feed... The company moved into the European market as well, becoming a major supplier of Lima of Belgium, Sunwheel of England, and other major distributors...

“When in the fall of 1981 Erewhon finally collapsed, Mitoku was its largest creditor and took a $300,000 loss. Erewhon’s demise nearly destroyed Mitoku... Mitoku has become a major supplier to Westbrae, Great Eastern Sun, Tree of Life, and the reborn Erewhon, all vigorous American firms...

“Over the last five years, Mitoku’s annual sales have grown at about 20 percent a year. During the 1984-85 fiscal
year gross sales were about $7.5 million. During that period Mitoku bought some 300 food products from eighty-three producers... It sold to fifty-six customers around the world, including ten in North America and about thirty in Europe...

“Just this past month, Mitoku has introduced a line of especially high quality products under its own label.”

The author and Mr. Kazama visited a number of Mitoku’s suppliers. Descriptions are given of Mansan Company Ltd. (making tamari and soybean miso since 1895), Sendai Miso Shoyu Co. Ltd. (the Sasaki family which runs the company started making miso in 1853), Fukaya Honten Shoyu (a small maker of organic shoyu).


• Summary: Wilmington, Massachusetts–An anagram of Erewhon is “nowhere.” And that appeared to be where natural foods manufacturer Erewhon Inc. was going in November 1981 when it filed for reorganization under Chapter 11.

Today Erewhon is going somewhere. To Charles T. Verde, president and chief executive officer, that means the company is on the way to a successful restructuring. “All our creditors have now been paid,” said Verde, 44, explaining that previous claims against Erewhon of $4.8 million have been settled for $1.5 million. Last month Erewhon acquired a small cereal manufacturer, US Mills Inc. of Omaha [Nebraska], for about $5 million, Verde said. In addition to its own mass-market cereals, the Omaha facility will also produce the nine new cereal products that Erewhon plans to introduce in the next year.

“We will be profitable because we’re going to focus on cereals, the largest category—$75 million to $90 million annually—in the natural foods industry,” said Verde. For the fiscal year ended last June 30, though, Erewhon lost “just under $500,000” on revenues of $3 million, he said. This year Erewhon will report sales of $3.3 million, while its three retail stores, which are accounted for as subsidiaries, will have total sales of $4.2 million, up 200,000 from a year ago...

“In April 1966 Michio Kushi opened an Erewhon Trading Co. store on Newbury Street in Boston to serve those espousing macrobiotics (the promotion of longevity through diet). ‘Kushi was one of the forces behind the macrobiotics movement in this country,’ said Verde, adding that Kushi’s popularity prompted the opening of a Cambridge store in 1976 and a Brookline outlet in 1978. And then the troubles began... “In November 1981 the manufacturing and distribution operations went into Chapter 11. Yearly sales were about $15 million, but there were also losses of $2 million,” he said. Kushi gave up control of the company (he is on retainer now as a quality adviser), which was then acquired by Ronald Rossetti, owner of Nature Food Centres Inc., whose Wilmington offices Erewhon now shares.

Verde was named president of Erewhon in the fall of 1982 and he, in turn, hired a former Gillette marketing colleague, Cynthia C. Davis, as vice president of marketing the following spring. First, the distribution operation was disbanded... “When Cynthia Davis, now executive vice president came in, she gave the packaging a contemporary look and weeded out the unprofitable products. Some 200 items were reduced by half.”

Rossetti sold his stock last year for an undisclosed amount to a person Verde describes as “an East Coast investor.” Verde said that he and Davis, 35, also have equity positions in Erewhon. Sixty-five percent of Erewhon’s sales now come from the Northeast, 20 percent from California and the remainder from the Southwest and Southeast. Three years ago, said Verde, distributors wouldn’t return phone calls because they had the attitude, “Who needs Erewhon?”

Today, 40 distributors serve the company.

The Boston Globe (19 April 1987) notes that “Erewhon is the title of a satirical romance published in 1873 by English author Samuel Butler. In the mid-19th century, Butler went to New Zealand, where he became a successful sheep farmer. The narrator of his book finds a remote mountain colony in New Zealand where many institutions and attitudes are the opposite of conventional ones.”

Address: Globe staff, Massachusetts.

• **Summary:** Both photos, taken in Oct. 1986, were sent to Soyinfo Center by Carl Ferré who adds: (1) At the Ohsawa America office. “If memory serves, he was rarely in the office at this point in his life. He is sitting at Lane Seiger’s desk–Lane was the manager of the operation. (2) At his home office.” The photo on the wall directly behind his chair is of the youthful couple, Lima and George Ohsawa. Carl adds: “Interesting to see his trumpet in the photo–I only heard him play a few times–he was a real pro.”


  • **Summary:** “Erewhon Inc., located in Wilmington, Massachusetts, will change its corporate name to U.S. Mills Inc. Erewhon acquired U.S. Mills in April of 1986.

  “We are completely merging the operations of the two companies, and this created the need for a single corporate identity,’ said Charles T. Verde, president of the new U.S. Mills Inc. The company will continue to use Erewhon as a brand name.”

234. Hawken, Paul. 1987. Truth or consequences: The best way to differentiate your company from competitors, says the author, is to tell customers the simple truth about your products or services. Inc. Aug. p. 48-50, 52.
  • **Summary:** Twenty years ago Hawken, suffering from asthma, was trying to restore his health. He began to experiment with diet and discovered that when he stopped eating the normal American diet of sugar, fats, alcohol, chemicals, and additives, he felt better and could breathe freely. So he “started the first natural food store in Boston, one of the first in the country. In the beginning it was a modest operation, grossing $300 a day. When I finally sold the business after about seven years, Erewhon Trading Co. was grossing more than $25,000 a day. That was in 1973. I went abroad to write a book about a community in Scotland [Findhorn].” With Erewhon, Hawken had helped to launch a new industry.

  “A couple years later, I returned to America and discovered another reason to go into business for myself: I was unemployable. I had not held a salaried job in my adult life. I had no college degree... I spent the next 3 years consulting for various companies, doing three turn-arounds for companies in deep trouble, and writing another book. Then, in 1979 my friend Dave Smith and I founded Smith & Hawken, an importer and direct marketer of high-quality garden tools.” Today Smith & Hawken has gross sales of $20 million.

  “With a truly original product, you must, in effect, create a new market, as opposed to establishing a new niche in an existing market. You’re competing not against other products, but against the inertia of the marketplace.

  “At Erewhon, we started out as absolute food geeks: our foods were so far outside the mainstream that people couldn’t pronounce half the names. We were treated with suspicion or derision. A trucker unloading some millet asked us if we ate this bird food. By about 1970, however, we knew we had located the center of the stream. Natural food stores were opening as quickly as they could line up vendors. We had already added a wholesale operation to our retail business, and we were landing a hundred new accounts a month, on top of expanded resales to existing customers. We were gliding.” Address: Mill Valley, California.


  • **Summary:** This is the companion volume to the 17-part PBS series. In this book the author claims that he started
and sold Erewhon. In fact he did neither. The book begins: “When I started my first company in Boston twenty years ago, I had little interest in business. I was just trying to restore my health... Tired of spending so much time shopping, I started the first natural foods store in Boston [Massachusetts] and one of the first in the country. In the first year of operation on Newbury Street, it grossed about $300 a day and I had fun doing it... When I sold the business after seven years, Erewhon Trading Co. was grossing $25,000 a day. That was in 1973.”

Erewhon Trading Co. was started by Aveline Kushi. Paul Hawken was the second person to manage the small retail store, but he did not own the company. He never sold it because he never owned it.


• Summary: “The American Miso Co. was begun in 1979 by Barry Evans, Sandy Pukel, Joe Carpenter, John Belleme, Michio Kushi, James Kenney, and several other partners. It was arranged for John Belleme and his wife to travel to Japan and study for 7-8 months with the Onozaki family of traditional miso makers. John Belleme returned and began making traditional miso for the then named Oak Feed Miso, Inc., previously called the Erewhon Miso Co., and presently the American Miso Co.”

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“Meanwhile, Barry Evans began a new company in order to distribute our miso. This company was, and still is, called The Great Eastern Sun Trading Co., located in nearby Asheville, North Carolina. Barry Evans eventually became the sole owner of the American Miso Co. I came to work for Great Eastern Sun in 1983. Prior to this I had worked for several years for Laurelbrook Foods, a large natural foods distributor in Maryland, and then on a Permaculture farm along the Maryland/Virginia border for two years growing organic winter wheat, barley, soybeans and summer produce according to the principles set forth in Masanobu Fukuoka’s classic, The One Straw Revolution... We still do some farming and quite a bit of gardening on our 100 acres here at American Miso Co., in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Escarpment. I met my wife at a macrobiotic study house in 1980.

“We arrived at American Miso Co. in February 1985 and I took over the position of miso maker after John Belleme’s departure in December 1985 [Note: Belleme was fired by Barry Evans.] I was trained to make miso by Akinori Takei, my Japanese teacher and friend, who had also studied with the Onozaki family in Japan. Takei-san remained with me for approximately another year; since then I have been on my own. We are a small enterprise and make approx. 250,000 lb of miso a year with only 3 employees and myself. We make all of our own koji (both barley and rice) by hand in a centuries-old fashion.”


• Summary: In this autobiography, Aveline Kushi tells her life story as the first lady of macrobiotics in America. She also adds much interesting detail to the history of macrobiotics and the natural foods movement in America, including the history of Erewhon Trading Co. (p. 192-204). Aveline was born Tomoko Yokoyama in about 1923 to devout Christian parents in the remote Japanese village of Yokota. After surviving a life-threatening illness, she quit teaching schoolchildren and went to Tokyo to enroll in the Maison Ignoramus, “The School of Ignorance” founded by macrobiotic educator George Ohsawa. There she became inspired by his teachings and dream of realizing One Peaceful World by elevating the physical, mental, and spiritual health of human beings. Recognizing her leadership ability, Ohsawa sent her to America, without a penny in her pocket, to spread his teachings. At the Greyhound bus station in New York she met Michio Kushi, and they were married in 1953. Over the next 4 decades they played the leading role in introducing macrobiotics to the western world–while Aveline also raised a family of 5 children!

The book could be improved by the inclusion of more dates (for example, we are not told when Aveline was born, when Erewhon was founded in Boston or Los Angeles, etc.) and by an Index.

On the front dust jacket cover is a large color photo of Aveline, holding a fan, in a Japanese kimono. On the rear cover is a smaller photo (black and white) of Aveline standing with Michio. Other photos show (p. 65-74; none on glossy paper): (1) Banjiro and Katsuo Yokoyama, Aveline’s parents, in traditional Japanese clothing. (2) The Yokoyama family in Yokota, Japan, mid-1940s. (3) The Salvation Army Church in Yokota. (4) Aveline, at age 15, with roommates at Teachers’ College, 1938, Japan. (5) Aveline with members of the Tennis Club. (6) Participating in a ladies’ sword demonstration at college. (7) Aveline and two graduate students, 1941. (8) Mr. Tanaka, class adviser, with students, including Aveline. (9) During World War II, Aveline with her students at an elementary school where she taught in the village of Maki. (10) Aveline’s mother and brother, Makoto, who served in the Japanese Navy. (11) Aveline in Yokota after her illness and before going to George Ohsawa’s school. (12) George Ohsawa, seated on the grass out of doors, smoking his pipe, with his students. (13) Aveline’s farewell party at the Maison Ignoramus before going to America. George Ohsawa, with pipe, is at top right; Lima Ohsawa is to the left and Aveline is next to...
her. (14) Michio, Aveline, and Mr. Shinohara (a former
Maison Ignoramus student) on the Chicago waterfront,
1951. (15) Aveline and a friend from Nagasaki relax on
the Columbia University campus.

Pages 153-60: (16) Aveline and daughter Lilly in New
York, 1953. (17) Michio Kushi presides over wedding of
Herman and Cornelia Aihara. (18) Aveline and her children
in Queens, New York (Haruo, Norio, Lilly, and Phiya [a
boy]), 1962. (19) George Ohswara on a visit to New York,
early 1960s. (20) Michio teaching at Musubi, the first
macrobiotic restaurant in America. (21) Erewhon employees
during a snowstorm, early 1970s. Aveline Kushi is in
second row. (22) Lima Ohswa and Aveline at a macrobiotic
party in Boston, early 1970s. (23) International travels and
teachings: Learning to wear an Indian sari. (24) Aveline
seated at a seminar in Brazil applauding, with Michio and
son Hisao. (25) At a French palm healing class. (26)
Relaxing in Switzerland after giving a cooking class. (27)
Michio, Aveline and Shizuko Yamamoto in front of Notre
Dame Cathedral in Paris. (28) Teaching cooking at the
Kushi Institute at Brookline. Mirror on top gives students
overhead view of food being prepared.

Pages 273-81: (29) Side view of Noh mask held by
Master Sadoya Kita. (30) Aveline performing Noh dance in
Los Angeles. (31) Aveline with Bill Dufty, Gloria Swanson,
and Master Kita. (32) Like thousands of macrobiotic
cooking classes all over the world, this one ends in smiles.
(33) Front of the Kushi’s home in Brookline, Massachusetts.
(34) The five Kushi children eating noodles: Lilly, Norio,
Haruo, Phiya, and Hisao; one girl and four boys. (35) In
front of Mt. Fuji in Japan, with Michio, Lima Ohswa and
two macrobiotic friends. (36) Aveline at Kushi Institute in
Becket, Massachusetts, with natural farmer Masanobu
Fukuoka and Esoteric Buddhist priest Rev. Tanaka. (37) In
front of the main house at the Kushi Institute in Becket with
Kazuhiro Irie, a Japanese friend. (38) Demonstrating daikon
at a cooking class. (39) With Anthony Muto, Dr. Martha C.
Cottrell, and other macrobiotic teachers in New York after
the AIDS seminar. (40) On a visit to Africa in 1987, the
Kushis started a macrobiotic educational campaign to
prevent AIDS. This photo shows them discussing organic
farming with Sister Theresa in the Congo. (41) The Kushi
and their son Phiya at the grave of Aveline’s parents on a
mountainside overlooking Yokota. (42) Full-page photo of
Aveline and Michio Kushi.

Note: On page 198, it is suggested (but not clearly
stated) that Aveline might have coined the term “natural
foods” in this sense or context. A search of Google Books
shows that the term was used in 5,450 books from 1954 to
1964, and many of them are in this sense and context. The
term “natural foods store” was also used in 1955 by J.I.
Rodale in Organic Gardening and Farming (a periodical;
see Vol. 2, p. 106) and in books by D.C. Jarvis (1960) and
Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-232-
6876.

239. Wollner, Joel. 1988. Soy-based cheeses–Concerns for
the consumer. Can a traditional product be patented. Soya
• Summary: In this letter to the editor, the writer is
concerned about two issues raised in the article titled “Soy
Cheese Market” (Soya Newsletter, Jan/Feb. 1988). He
wonders to what extent the present success of soy cheese in
the natural foods marketplace is based on consumers’ lack
of awareness that casein is a dairy product. His own
informal survey, conducted shortly after Soya Kaas was first
introduced and already finding widespread acceptance,
found very few consumers who knew that casein is derived
from milk. “In fact, over 90% thought Soya Kaas was
strictly vegetarian, containing no milk-derived ingredients.”

He is also shocked that Simply Natural has patented a
product (named Soyalite) made by fermenting fresh tofu in
miso and discovered by accident. This process “is well
known and practiced by thousands of people all over the
United States, and has been since the late 1970’s. I first
learned of ‘miso-pickled tofu’ (as we called it) in 1978,
while manager at Erewhon Natural Foods retail store in
Boston [Massachusetts]. One of our employees had learned
the process while studying with Noburo Muramoto, a
teacher of Oriental food-crafting in Escondido, California.
Her miso-pickled tofu was a big hit among the Erewhon
staff, and we began selling it ready-to-eat in the store and
published the recipe in our weekly consumer newsletter.
Soon after, miso-pickled tofu became a favorite dish among
Boston’s diverse natural foods community, and found a
place in the menus of local natural foods restaurants.”
Address: Director, Mitoku USA Inc., New York.

[San-J International begins production in America]. East
• Summary: In 1804, almost half a century before
Commodore Perry’s ships forced open Japan’s ports to
American trade, the Sato family’s fleet of small boats began
ferrying their homemade tamari and other goods up the
Kiso, Ibi, and Nagara Rivers. From the port city of Kuwana
in the Bay of Ise on the Pacific Coast, the Satos received
goods from larger ships and delivered them to communities
upriver. Takayoshi Sato is currently the president of San-J
International, the remnant company, almost eighty years
since the Satos closed their maritime business. Faced with
the loss of livelihood, the Satos turned to making tamari and
soybean miso on a large scale in 1909.

With the dollar at an all-time low against the Japanese
eyen, and 100% of all natural shoyu and tamari sold in the
U.S. being imported from Japan, the opening of the San-J
International tamari plant could not be more timely.
American importers of Japanese foods have seen a 50% increase in the price of shoyu and tamari in the past eighteen months. There are just a few companies in Japan still making genuine tamari. San-Jirushi at Kuwana is the largest, producing roughly half of the country’s annual production of 6,000 kiloliters (1,500,000 gallons).

William Shurtleff first proposed exporting San-J tamari to the U.S. in 1977. Shurtleff gave a sample of San-J tamari to the president of Mitoku, which supplied Erewhon with Japanese foods. Shortly thereafter, Erewhon began importing San-J tamari in five gallon tins. Next John McLaughlin, a Richmond businessman, tasted San-J tamari and was impressed enough to go to Japan and talk to the Sato brothers. The meeting led to the founding of San-J International in December 1978, a Japanese-American joint venture to market San-J tamari and eventually build the Richmond plant.

Today, industrial giants such as Stouffer’s and Campbell’s use San-J tamari exclusively in all their frozen food lines. San-J makes the point in their ads: “One teaspoon of tamari—which contains just a pinch of salt—is the seasoning equivalent of a full tablespoon of salt. Tamari seasons with protein, not sodium.” In the manufacture of tamari, the mixture of koji and brine, called moromi, is left to ferment for about six months. Tamari is pasteurized (2% ethyl alcohol is added to prevent the growth of yeasts and molds). The Richmond plant can make about 1 million gallons of tamari and tamari shoyu (tamari with 20% wheat added) a year, about two times the current annual sales of the imported product.

The Richmond process will differ from that used to make tamari in Kuwana. First, in Japan, San-J tamari is aged for at least 12 months at room temperature. In Richmond, fermentation is accelerated to approximately 6 months by heating the fermentation vats with electric coils. Second, the San-J tamari from Japan is aged in old cedar vats while the Richmond plant is using fiberglass vats lined with epoxy resin. Every major importer of natural Japanese foods has expressed interest in bottling San-J tamari in their private label. However, only Eden Foods Clinton, Michigan, has negotiated a contract with San-J.


• Summary: Irwin Carasso (born on 2 June 1951) got interested in natural foods and vitamins through his brother. He went to school in Boston, and though he never got involved with the macrobiotic movement, he used to shop at Erewhon. At one point he decided to move back to Florida and start a natural food retail store. He opened Tree of Life in St. Augustine in May 1971. He drove a truck up to Boston, met Paul Hawken, and started carrying some of the Erewhon products, as well as those from Arrowhead Mills, and some New York importers. In Feb. 1972 Carasso founded a natural foods distribution company, which he also called Tree of Life, in the same building as his natural food store. He was age 20 at the time. In about November 1973 the company moved to Industrial Drive in St. Augustine.

The key policies that allowed this company to grow into the largest natural foods distributor in America (and one of the few pioneers to survive) were a strong focus on service, clear communication at every level (to suppliers, customer, etc.), and a high level of integrity and honesty about the products that were carried. Tree carried a much broader line of products than the “purist” natural foods distributors, and they were sometimes criticized harshly by competitors for carrying turbinado sugar, all vitamins, unbleached white flour, etc. Yet if people wanted an item and it was reasonably good, Carasso would carry it and explain clearly what it was. The vitamins were a key to profitability and growth. “The real health food fanatic was always a closet junkie.” Carasso didn’t mind if the company carried raw sugar as long as they called it raw sugar. The top quality service was accompanied by higher prices than most competitors charged. Tree offered a whole range of products that were not available at the time, dairy products (from California) and bulk foods, more packaged foods than most early competitors. But they started without the major health food and vitamin lines, since none of the “old line” distributors or major vitamin companies would sell to them.

Tree’s first and only acquisition was in 1978, when Irwin bought the Marty Bellman Co., a small (less than $2 million a year sales) health food distributor in Sun Valley, California, in order to get their vitamin lines. The old line distributors put pressure on the vitamin manufacturers (such as Schiff and Plus) not to sell to small, new competitors.

Irwin sold Tree of Life in April 1982 to a group of financial people called Wilson Financial, but he kept Marty Bellman Co., renaming it Hi-Profit Distributors. Sales at the time were about $31.5 million a year. Irwin felt that he had done what he wanted to do and he wanted to do something different with his life. In Dec. 1985, Wilson Financial sold Tree of Life for $15 million to a Dutch firm named Wessanen of North America, which was owned by a $1,000 million company from the Netherlands named Royal Wessanen NV Co. Then last year, Wasannen bought the Balanced Foods chain (Balanced, Midwest, Collegedale, Midwest Dietetics) and SunRay. Then in Sept. 1987 Irwin sold High-Profit Distributors back to Tree of Life. At that time he got out of the industry. He has never seen a history of Tree published previously. “The funny thing about this whole industry is that, except for some of the old line distributors, Tree was probably the only ‘new-age’ natural foods company that made any money. Most of them did not survive. I think it was for two reasons. First, their product ranges were too narrow. And second they had a philosophy
(too purist) that inhibited their business, and prevented them from doing what they wanted to do. None of them ever had a goal to make more than 1 or 2% profit. Tree looked to make 10% profit. Tree carried 10,000 items. Erewhon at its peak had several hundred, maybe 500. Tree financed its growth entirely internally, starting with $125,000 total in the early years. The business was run very tight, with C.O.D. terms.”

Note: This is the earliest (and only) English-language document seen (April 2003) that uses the term “health food fanatic.”

Address: St. Augustine, Florida and Malibu, California. Phone: 904-471-0470.


• Summary: The following account is based on hours of discussion between Bill Bolduc, the Redmonds, and the Silvers between 1988 and 1991. Bill is not familiar with the details of the history of the food co-op in Ann Arbor prior to 1969. But Ronnie Teeguarden says that in about July 1967 he and Gloria Dunn started a loosely-organized food buying co-op—which had no name—in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Within a few weeks, a number of their friends and acquaintances (a group of eclectic pathfinders, students, graduates, macrobiotics, dropouts, musicians) informally joined the group. These included Tim Redmond, Mark and Nancy Retzloff, Linda Succop, Iona Teeguarden, and Bob Thorson. From time to time, they collectively ordered macrobiotic staples from Erewhon in Boston using the Erewhon catalog. When the foods arrived, the food co-op members got together and divided them up at the Teeguarden-Leabu General Store, located a half flight below street level at 209 South State Street, below the Herb David Guitar Studio in Ann Arbor. Run by Ronnie Teeguarden, with help from Gloria, this store’s main business was selling local art, second hand clothes and records, etc.

Bill Bolduc and Judy Succop (Linda Succop’s sister), were married in June 1969 in Ann Arbor. They were not yet members of the co-op at that time. A few days later, they went to Berkeley for the summer. When they returned to Ann Arbor at the end of that summer, they lived in Saline, Michigan, 12 miles outside of town with Mark & Nancy Retzloff, Linda Succop, and Tim Redmond. Bill, who wasn’t working or going to college, was trying to figure out what to do next. By September 1969, Bill and Judy Bolduc joined the food co-op. They also joined the Zen Macrobiotic Supper Club; all of its members were also members of the food co-op.

In the fall of 1969 the Teeguarden-Leabu second-hand store looked like it was about to close, which would leave the food co-op without a home. The group (especially Ronnie) convinced Bill Bolduc to take charge of the food co-op and find it a permanent home, which he did.

On 4 Nov. 1969 Bill Bolduc incorporated Eden Organic Foods, Inc. as a non-profit corporation in the state of Michigan. The name “Eden,” which stood for Environmental Defense Energy Network, was coined at this time by Bob Thorson during a discussion between, Bill Bolduc, and Gloria Dunn at a coffee shop. Thus, the term “Eden” was first used in connection with this co-op or business in Nov. 1969.

Eden was born under a good star. The date Nov. 4 was carefully chosen to be astrologically propitious. At the time, Bill was an intense student of astrology with Michael Erlewine—who is now world famous in the field, and the owner of Circle Books, an astrological publishing company. In 1970 Michael also designed the Eden logo of the 4 sprouts in a circle. Eventually Michael became one of Bill Bolduc’s students in macrobiotics.

Bill was president of Eden Organic Foods and his wife Judy (who was working as a secretary at the University of Michigan School of Music) was secretary. Bolduc used $200 of his own money to rent a converted apartment above the bicycle store at 514 East William St. in Ann Arbor, near campus. People from the community loaned $1,500 to help stock the co-op store and buy an 8-inch Meadows stone mill to grind flour.

The question arises: When was Eden Foods established? Bill Bolduc and Tim Redmond believe that the founding should be dated from Nov. 1969, when the company was first named; before Nov. 1969 the food co-op was not even a business. It was dead and had disappeared for about a month until Bill resurrected it by placing an order to Erewhon using his own money.

Eden Organic Foods first began selling soyfoods commercially in November 1969, starting with their first order from Erewhon in Boston. They would buy “tamari” (actually shoyu) and miso (kome = rice, mugi = barley, and Hacho varieties) in bulk from Erewhon (which imported them from Japan). At their store, Linda Succop (Bill’s wife’s sister) would repackage the products, putting the shoyu into bottles and the miso into plastic bags. They were labeled using plain white pressure-sensitive gummed labels with a rubber stamp. One stamp contained the name and ingredients for each product, and another, that was stamped below it, gave the company name and address. They were written in the weight or volume by hand. Also at William St. a tiny Meadows Mill was used to grind grains and seeds into flour.


Ron Teeguarden, and James Silver. Center, Nov. 5. 2 p. Revised 4 Dec. 1991 by Bill Bolduc, Ron Teeguarden, and James Silver.

**Summary:** In Sept. 1970 the fledgling company had an offer to move into a newly-redecorated mini-mall [at 211 South State St.] on the main street of campus. New personnel and financing would be needed. Bolduc called Tim Redmond, who had been studying and working at the Sanae macrobiotic restaurant in Boston, to ask for help. Tim returned to Ann Arbor and joined Bolduc in the expansion effort. To raise money for the move, the two approached Tim Redmond’s father, who said he would help finance the expansion only if the business was reorganized as a for-profit corporation with Tim having equal ownership. They agreed and in about Oct. 1970 Eden was reorganized as a for-profit corporation with Bolduc and Redmond each owning 50%. At that time the partners shortened the company name to Eden Foods Inc. Bolduc and Redmond then borrowed a 4-figure sum from Tim’s dad, had the new store remodeled, and entered the big time. After the new store was opened and running, Redmond returned to Boston and the Sanae restaurant, where he completed his studies. But with this move they fell from the graces of the political co-operators. In November 1970 they did a “Brown rice, seaweed, and dirty hot dog” Bob Dylan commercial on a local radio station; it was a big hit. They bought a 15-inch Meadows Mill and a rotary-drum toaster, then milled flour and baked granola in the back of the store.

In 1970 Bill had located Tom Vreeland, an organic farmer in Ypsilanti, Michigan. An Eden Foods Wholesale Pricelist dated 26 July 1971 shows that the Eden store at 211 South State St. was wholesaling soybeans, soft wheat, corn, and rye, all grown organically in Michigan. Eden was also selling organic flours that they ground from these grains.

In the spring of 1971, after realizing they were the only “natural food” store in the area, and having some other “health food” store owners in Detroit express an interest in carrying more food, they decided to wholesale foods out of the back of their retail store at 211 South State Street. Bill flew to Boston to meet Tim Redmond. They visited Erewhon (they wanted to convince Erewhon to let Eden be their distributor at lower prices), then Bill flew to Arrowhead Mills in Deaf Smith County, Texas, to make arrangements buying in bulk at wholesale prices. In the summer of 1971 they ordered their first 20-foot trailer load of organic foods from Arrowhead Mills, and ran an ad in *East West Journal*. Soon they started to distribute their foods to 4-5 accounts in Detroit. They bought a 1964 16-foot green Dodge van and a dry weight weigher/dumper machine. Their two main brands were Arrowhead Mills and Erewhon, but soon they developed the Eden brand with printed labels, onto which they would rubber-stamp the product name (such as bottled tamari and packaged miso). Soon they added other brands: Celestial Seasonings, After the Fall, Timbercrest, etc.

The wholesale operation quickly outgrew the back of the retail store, so they borrowed more money and rented a 5,000 square foot Quonset hut (resembling an airplane hanger) down on Main Street by the Huron River. Tim Redmond, Mark Retzloff, and Bill Bolduc ran the wholesale operation. Retzloff later co-founded Alfalfa’s, a natural foods supermarket chain based in Boulder, Colorado.

In October 1971 Bolduc hired Michael Potter, who was living in Detroit, to run the store. Just before this, Potter had managed a natural foods store named Joyous Revival in nearby Birmingham, Michigan. Prior to this time, the company had been owned by Bill and Judy Bolduc (50%) and by Timothy Redmond (50%). Potter was given 13.5% of the stock and the other principals’ share reduced proportionally.

In the late summer or fall of 1973 the Bolducs sold their shares back to the corporation, which then gave a portion of these to Tim Redmond and Michael Potter so that these two men now owned 51% and 49% respectively.

The Bolducs then left Ann Arbor, moving to Cincinnati, then to Illinois, then back to Ann Arbor. Bill is certain that when he left Eden Foods, the company was not importing any products from Japan. He would guess that it was not until about 1975 that Eden started to import a line of foods from Japan. Their first supplier in Japan was Muso Shokuhin, a leading macrobiotic and natural foods exporter in Osaka. Initially, all of their imported products were required to bear the Erewhon brand. Imported soyfoods included miso and shoyu. Sales hit $175,000 in 1973.


Address: ELI Research Corp., 660 Northland Blvd., Suite 28, Cincinnati, Ohio 45240. Phone: 513-851-0330 or 513-751-9090.


**Summary:** This color ad (7.5 by 13 inches) shows colorful packages of five types of Erewhon products: Misos, seaweeds, ramen, rice crackers, and sweets. In the center is a gold plaque that reads: “Recommended by Michio Kushi. Macrobiotic quality.” This same endorsement is in the upper left corner of each package. Erewhon now has four 4 varieties of miso under its brand: Hatcho (note new correct spelling), genmai, kome, and mugi. Note that all still use the esoteric Japanese names. Plastic bag packages are colorful.
and attractive. Slogan at the bottom of the ad: “Our great
taste comes naturally.” Address: [Massachusetts].

•Summary:* U.S. Mills, established in 1908, specializes in
100% natural products. Our Erehwon cereals, granolas and
nut butters are produced in our facility in Omaha, Nebraska.
We also import a complete line of macrobiotic products
from Japan, including shoyu tamari. In addition, we are the
exclusive importer of Kentaur cereals from Switzerland.
When the name Erehwon or U.S. Mills appears on the
package, be assured your customers are getting the very
best. U.S. Mills Inc., 395 Elliot St., Newton Upper Falls,
Massachusetts 02164; (617) 969-5400.

counterculture took on the food industry, 1966-1988. New
•Summary:* A colorful overview of how the American
counterculture has affected mainstream food patterns and of
the post-1966 natural foods movement. Part I describes the
making of a countercuisine that was politicized by the
Movement, the work of early pioneers of eating lower on
the food chain (such as Frances Moore Lappe), and the
early organic food movement. Part II discusses the
antithesis, the rage of the Big Food industry and the
counterculture criticism of Big Food. In 1955, about 400
million pounds of additives went into U.S. food; by 1970 it
was 1.06 billion, or about 5 pounds per capita. In Part III we
face the persistent fact of American culture: its inability to
adjust. And the co-opting of natural foods by Big Food.

Reviewed by Charles Bowden in the *Los Angeles Times

The sub-chapter titled “Hip Enterprise” discusses:
Crescent Dragonwagon and their *The Commune Cookbook,*
Mollie Katzen, the Moosewood Restaurant (founded 1972
in Ithaca, New York) and *Moosewood Cookbook* (1977),
Common Ground Restaurant (Brattleboro, Vermont),
Common Ground Restaurant (founded 1973 in San
Francisco, California; all you can eat for 60 cents—but no
talking), Far-Fetched Foods (a health food store opened by
Jerry Sealund in 1966 in the Haight-Ashbury district of San
Francisco; the employees were organized as a commune,
sold only nutritious food, avoided expensive vitamins and
dietetic items found in older health food stores, and sought
new sources of supply, such as organic truck gardens.

“Charles Perry reports that after being robbed 12 times in
the Haight, Sealund closed the store, worked for an All
Saints bread-baking operation and the Black Panthers’ free
breakfast program, and then organized another organic
grocery in the more tranquil Santa Rosa.”

Fred Rohe opened his first store in the Haight district
of San Francisco in 1965. A former chemicals salesman and
part-time producer of rock concerts, Rohe characterized
himself as a devout Buddhist. “As his clientele shifted from
older people to flower children, Rohe repositioned
accordingly. In addition to organic foods, Rohe’s first store
sold Rodale Press books and rock albums, and offered a
meditation area complete with altar. By being so overtly
countercultural, Rohe’s well-stocked store filled the gap
between the older drugstore-type health food store and the
limited-inventory new wave conspiracies, and his sales
increased tenfold in four years. From his original Haight-
Ashbury store, Rohe established outlets [of New Age
Foods] in Santa Cruz, San Anselmo, and Palo Alto. To foster
bulk purchases and to maintain organic standards,
Rohe joined with other Bay Area merchants in establishing
a wholesale cooperative. What looked suspiciously like a
cartel to some was defended as a ‘tribal council’ whose aim
was to establish a viable ‘alternative to poisoned, processed
and synthetic foods of the not-so-super markets.’

There is a poor history and discussion of Erehwon and
its ties to East West Journal, then on to Mo Siegel, who
started Celestial Seasonings in 1970 at age 21, and sold it in
1984 to Dart & Kraft Inc. for a reported $8 million to $10
million.

247. National Academy of Sciences, National Research
Council, Committee on the Role of Alternative Farming
Alternative Agriculture. Washington, DC: National
Academy Press. xiv + 448 p. Illust. 26 cm.
•Summary:* Soybeans are mentioned throughout this book:
38-39, 200-01, 210, 233, 264, 274. Exemption from cross-
compliance rule, p. 11. Export trends, p. 27, 29, 94.
Fertilizer use on, p. 38-42, 200-01. Integrated pest
52-53. Loan rates for, p. 75. Soybean meal, p. 94.
Pesticide use on, p. 5, 38, 44, 47-48, 83, 101, 175, 200-01.
Pests, p. 186. Prices for, p. 237, 238, 254. Regional
differences in farm income from, p. 61-62. Rotations with,
p. 9, 25, 146, 159, 186, 215, 232, 239-40, 249, 253-74, 275-
Value of exports, p. 29. Yields, p. 34, 52, 200-01, 216, 255,
262, 271, 277.

Chapter 11 (p. 398-419) is an interesting case study of
“Rice production in California: The Lundberg Family
Farms.” The farm is located in northern California in
Richvale, Butte County, about 30 miles southeast of Chico.
A family partnership owned by four brothers, the farm
consists of 3,100 acres. The Lundbergs produce about 1,900
acres of rice each year using largely conventional methods
that include the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides,
but in somewhat less than the recommended amounts. On
this land they dispose of rice straw by decomposition in the
soil rather than burning. In addition, the produce about 100
acres of rice without pesticides or chemical fertilizers. They call this their organic rice because the methods they use comply with the California organic farming laws. They have been experimenting with the production of organic rice for 18 years. The organic rice enterprise first became profitable in 1985 with a yield of 4,400 lb/acre. Rice is grown only every other year in a rotation with legume-fallow-legume, so the yield is only one-half the measured yield in a given year. Includes a bibliography of 8 references. Address: Washington, DC.


**Summary:** Cynthia arrived at Erewhon in 1983. In April 1986 Erewhon acquired U.S. Mills, which had been founded in 1908 under the same name, U.S. Mills. They were and are a cereal manufacturing company. Their two main cereal brands were Uncle Sam’s Cereal (the product that the company was founded on), and Skinner’s Raisin Bran (America’s first raisin bran, introduced in 1926). In effect U.S. Mills and Erewhon were merged, and U.S. Mills was chosen as the corporate name, largely since it had been around longer. Ronald L. Rossetti had acquired Erewhon after it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. He was and still is head of Nature Food Centres, a chain of health food stores. Erewhon was purchased by Rossetti as an individual, not by Nature Food Centres. Contrary to what the media often said, Erewhon was never, in any way, owned by, or part of, or a subsidiary of Nature Food Centres. The misconception (created by the media) that Nature Food Centres owned Erewhon caused real problems for Erewhon at one point. Then in Nov. 1986 Erewhon Inc. bought U.S. Mills. Ron Rossetti is presently no longer involved with U.S. Mills or Erewhon. In May 1988 Chuck Verde (who was the president of Erewhon) and Cynthia Davis acquired the U.S. Mills/ Erewhon business. They are now the main joint shareholders. At that time they brought in another company as an investor. Erewhon is their brand name for the natural food industry; the product charter has not changed and they are selling to the same market. Surprisingly U.S. Mills has nothing written about their long, interesting, pioneering, and complex history. However Cynthia feels that the history of Erewhon written in Ron Kotzsch in East West in Feb. 1984 was an good, accurate history up to that time. Address: U.S. Mills Inc., 395 Eliot St., Newton, Upper Falls, Massachusetts 02164-1131. Phone: 617-969-5400.


**Summary:** "Starting in the early 1970s, Erewhon imported scant supplies of a highly perishable, fresh rice koji along with its regular line of Japanese products. Most often, this koji was spoiled or worm-infested by the time it arrived in Boston, Massachusetts. But on those few occasions when a usable amount arrived intact, we had the rare pleasure of attempting to make amazaké at home." One attempt was made on Thanksgiving of 1973. In spring 1977 the Erewhon flagship store on Newbury Street in Boston began to sell Cold Mountain Misos, then Cold Mountain Koji. The misos sold well but not the koji, so Joel and his wife, Wendy, developed a simple method for making amazaké at home.

Mona Schwartz in Florida began to order koji from Joel and developed a good recipe for making it into amazaké. Joel learned and perfected the process, then described it in detail in the 10-16 April 1978 edition of his newsletter Erewhon News (Newbury Street) under the title “Overnight Amazake.” “You can imagine my surprise–no, shock–when, later that spring Charles Kendall, macrobiotic aficionado, keeper of the Erewhon Company store, and supplier to our store of ‘homemade’ organic sauerkraut (his own), approached me one day in the store and asked if I would consider selling the refrigerated amazaké drink he had developed.” The rest is history.

In about the spring of 1985, Joel and Sjon Welters drove to Moniteau Farm where Robert Nissenbaum and Dave Carlson, calling themselves Imagine Foods, were making a frozen confection from amazaké. “This new incarnation of an old Boston study-house favorite, was actually made from a mixture of amazaké, which they first made from Cold Mountain koji and Chico-San brown rice, combined with Chico-San rice syrup and various natural flavorings, and run through a soft-serve ice cream machine. (A frozen dessert made in several flavors from rice kayu sweetened with rice syrup and/or barley malt syrup was sold at Erewhon Newbury Street in 1977-78.)”

But Imagine Foods was having technical and flavor problems with its product. In Fayetteville, Arkansas, Joel and Sjon had developed a “series of amazaké-like beverages and desserts made by enzyme conversion from whole grains, including brown rice... Of course, our work was top secret, since, at the time, enzyme processing was virtually unknown in the natural food industry, and used for little more than processing corn syrup in the conventional food industry. Robert and Dave had no knowledge of it at all.

“Sjon and I confirmed (to ourselves) the rightness of our enzyme process for use in Rice Dream to make a single brown rice base ingredient for the mix. This development alone would solve the technical and flavor problems to make a commercially feasible product with a broadly appealing taste and texture. We decided to invite Robert and Dave to relocate to Fayetteville and purchase the base ingredient, which would be made in our plant, from us. Months of negotiations would pass before the enzyme process solution was finally revealed to Imagine Foods [by whom?] at the next NNFA show. But then, through a series of twists and turns, Sjon and I lost control, and the enzyme
process project was ‘diverted’ to California Natural Products. More than this, I am not prepared to discuss at this time.” Address: 19 Pepper Hollow Drive, Clifton Park, New York 12065. Phone: 518-383-0299.


• Summary: Margy Coates is the wife of Rod Coates, founder of Laurelbrook Foods. He died of Alzheimer’s on 4 March 1990. This is a tribute to the man she loved. A large head-and-shoulders photo (p. 1) shows Rod, dressed in a motorcycle jacket and helmet, smiling, on his motorcycle. Below that is a family tree for Rod and Margy (born Margery Kelly, 1919, in Catonsville, Maryland). They had six children between 1942 and 1950, as follows: Sarah “Sally” Elmslie Coates (born 1942), Judith Horner Deming (born 1943; Her first marriage was to John Winton Deming in Aug. 1972. Their children were Lhiana Shee Deming, born 1973, and Emily Deming, born 1977; Her second marriage was to Arnold Knepper), Daniel Gardner Deming (born 1945), Marion Atwood Coates (born 1946), Dora Mahlon Coates (born 1948; Her first marriage was to Paul Gerard Hawken in June 1971. Their children were Palo Cheyenne Hawken, born 1972, and Iona Fairlight Hawken, born 1974. They are now divorced), and Nancy Turnbull Coates (born 1950).

Page 2, titled “The Greatest Happiness Comes from the Greatest Activity,” describes the major activities in Rod’s life. His first love was motorcycles. As a youth, he was an Eagle Scout. From 1950 to 1970 he was with Triumph Motorcycle Corp. in Towson, Maryland, as Service Manager for the Eastern USA. From 1970 to 1980 he was owner and manager of Laurelbrook Foods in Bel Air, Maryland. Page 3 shows the amateur racing awards he won between 1940 and 1957. Rod’s leisure activities centered around the workshop. Page 4 shows the many cars he restored from 1920 to 1958. Page 5 shows a floor diagram of the buildings occupied by Laurelbrook Foods. Also included are some of Laurelbrook’s Christmas Cards from the 1970s and a photo showing Rod and Margy sitting on the back of a Laurelbrook delivery truck. Address: 2516 Laurelbrook Rd., Fallston, Maryland 21047. Phone: 301-877-1695.


• Summary: Starting in the late 1960s, the pioneering work with soyfoods in London was done by Craig and Greg Sams. They and their parents were Americans, and they had gone to college in America. Their father was employed by the U.S. armed forces as an historian; they spent a lot of their time growing up between America and England. Greg fell out of a tree while going to college in Berkeley in the late 1960s and was paralyzed from the waist down, so he was confined to a wheelchair, but was still very active and innovative. In the late 1960s they set up a macrobiotic natural foods cafe/restaurant on Portobello Road in London, then changed it into Ceres Grain Shop, a natural foods retail store. As volume increased, they began to distribute their products out of the back of their shop, and in about 1971 founded Harmony Foods Ltd. as a distribution company located in a warehouse on Ladbroke [sic, Latimer] Road. The model and evolution was similar to that of Erewhon in Boston. Harmony Foods was the first natural foods distributor in England, and probably the second in Europe after Lima Foods of Belgium. Soon they were importing macrobiotic foods from Japan, and distributing organically grown grains from England and from The Camargue (a marshy island in the delta of the Rhone River in the south of France), etc.

Among their early Japanese imports were bulk miso and “tamari” (actually shoyu), imported from Muso in wooden kegs. They repackaged the miso and shoyu in glass bottles under the Harmony Foods label in London. This was the first Japanese miso and shoyu sold in England. In about 1972, as soon as Erewhon started having miso and shoyu packed in Japan, the Sams had the same thing done with theirs, then they applied their own labels in London. But they continued to import in bulk as well. A Chinese company in London made tofu and [mung] bean sprouts, then sold the tofu to the Sams brothers; they sold it unpackaged in open trays in water. At that time, tofu was not emphasized much in macrobiotic circles so not much was sold; it was considered too yin. The Sams also sold deep-fried Rissoles filled with TVP instead of meat; as early as 1970 the Rissoles were being made by an Israeli guy (name?) who owned a shop (name?) by the Hempstead Heath. Marigold Foods also used TVP in the mid-1970s.

In 1970 Bill Tara, then a vice president at Erewhon in Boston, passed through London on his way to India. One purpose of his trip was to scout out the possibility of Erewhon setting up a distribution point or center in England. Paul Hawken was president of Erewhon at the time, and Erewhon was importing miso and tamari from both Muso and Mitoku in Japan. Bill and Paul had been roommates in a warehouse in San Francisco, then they took over the Erewhon food store from Evan Root, Paul starting 2-3 months before Bill. In London, the Sams brothers were just opening a new natural foods restaurant in the Notting Hill area so Bill and Paul Petrofsky spent 2 weeks fixing it up. Paul later started Baldwin Hill Bakery with Hy Lerner. Bill stayed in London 2-3 months during this first visit.

In about 1972 Bill returned to London with Russel Demerais, on the Erewhon payroll, again to start and Erewhon distribution center. But Erewhon went through a cash crisis and Harmony foods had grown dramatically. So
Bill and Peter Bradford (an Englishman who had come to American in about 1970 and worked for Erewhon doing organic agriculture at Erewhon Farms near Keene, New Hampshire) began to work for the Sams brothers both at Ceres Grain Shop (the retail store) and Harmony Foods (in the warehouse). Bradford, who now has a very successful natural food store in England named Clearwater Natural Grocer, has been one of the most important promoters of soyfoods in the UK. At this time, Craig Sams set up a bakery. By now, miso and tamari sales had increased; Harmony was still affixing its own label to unlabeled packs.

In 1974 Bill and Peter established Sunwheel as a natural food/macrobiotic distributor. They picked up exotic Japanese imports that Harmony found unprofitable and wanted to drop—so there was little or no competitive feeling with the Sams. By late 1974 Sunwheel Hatcho Miso, Mugi Miso, and Tamari were on the market, imported from Muso (Yuko Okada) in Japan. Sunwheel also made granola and peanut butter. Sunwheel never sold any other soyfood products; they had very limited warehouse space and no refrigeration.

In about 1977 Sunwheel acquired a retail store that had been started in and by the Community Health Foundation. By 1979 Sunwheel was very successful, but it needed to be recapitalized or sold. So the partners decided to sell it to a larger health food company; Peter kept the retail store.

In Nov. 1975 Bill established the Self Health Center which by 1976 grew into the Community Health Foundation (CHF). By 1976 CHF was offering classes in soyfoods. Paul Jones was the key man with tofu; he taught classes and started making tofu out of his home in the Highgate area. Paul Jones was definitely the first Caucasian to pioneer tofu in England. Simon Bailey, a baker who was originally with one of the first natural foods stores in England, located in Bath, taught about tempeh. These people were experimenting in the kitchen with soyfoods and taught in a sort of an apprenticeship program. Jon Sandifer, who is still with CHF, learned tempeh from Simon Bailey. CHF sold some tofu and tempeh through its own sit-down restaurant named The Seven Sheaves, then renamed The Natural Snack and changed to a cafeteria. A few people did experiments with miso but it never got to a commercial scale in part because of persistent rumors that Lima Foods was going to start making it.

By the late 1970s soyfoods were growing in popularity in the UK. Two separate groups promoted them; the vegetarians and animal rights people (who liked TVP), and the natural foods and macrobiotic people. Marigold Foods also used TVP in the mid-1970s.

Much of important pioneering commercial work with soyfoods in Europe was done by macrobiotic groups in the Netherlands and Belgium. Bill often went there to teach in 1974-79. Tofu, and later tempeh, were emphasized by groups such as Manna in Amsterdam and De Brandnetel in Antwerp. Macrobiotics was much more active in the Lowlands than in England.

The Sams brothers later started Whole Earth as a marketing company for their jams. They sold it fairly soon. Greg Sams (disabled) is no longer in the food business; he runs The Chaos Shop in London which sells photographic reproductions of computer-generated chaos patterns. Craig started Realeat Co. and now may be with the Haldane Foods Group. Address: Director, Nova Inst., P.O. Box 4648, Estes Park, Colorado 80517. Phone: 303-586-6265.


• Summary: Craig and Greg Sams were both born in America. Their mother is from Nebraska and their father from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Greg is 4 years younger than Craig. During the 1950s and 1960s the family went to England periodically, largely because Craig’s father worked in England as a historian for the U.S. Air Force. In 1965 Craig took a year off from college, traveled around the Indian subcontinent, and got hepatitis. Upon returning to the Univ. of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia for his final year, he fell in with 3 followers of macrobiotics and got interested in macrobiotics. In about Feb. or March of 1966 he went to the Paradox, a macrobiotic restaurant in New York and decided that he wanted to start a similar restaurant in London. In late 1966 Craig’s brother, Greg, fell out of a tree in Berkeley, was paralyzed from the waist down and was confined to a wheel chair—as he still is.

In Feb. 1967 Craig started a restaurant named the Macro at 10-A Airlie Gardens, Holland Park, London. Yoko Ono, John Lennon’s wife, was one of the first regulars. She was the first person Craig met in London who was aware of macrobiotics; she had learned about it in Japan. But Craig had to close Macro after 2 months because of zoning problems. In mid-1967 Greg joined Craig in London and in Dec. 1967 they opened a new macrobiotic / natural foods restaurant named Seed at 136a Westbourne Terrace, W.2, London—a few minutes walk from Paddington Station. Soyfoods were a part of the menu. They got Kikkoman shoyu, shiro-miso, and Hatcho mimo from a Japanese import company named Mikado-ya, which was run by Japanese in southeast London out of the basement of a house and supplied Japanese embassies in Europe and Africa. At that time Craig thinks there were no Japanese restaurants or retail stores in London. Seed soon started to import Hatcho and barley (mugi) mimo from Muso in Japan. Seed never
used any of Lima’s soyfood products. Seed also used fermented tofu; they mixed it with tahini, spread it on bread, and called it a Rarebit—another alternative Welsh Rarebit, which is cheese on toast. Seed purchased fresh tofu and [mung] bean sprouts from a Chinese company named Lung Kee on Fernroy Road, Paddington, London, right on the banks of the canal. It was run by one Chinese man who employed about 15 West Indian / Jamaican women who made the foods. Bean sprouts accounted for most of Lung Kee’s business. Craig has no idea when Lung Kee started making tofu. In addition to its mainstay, brown rice, Seed served the tofu diced in miso soups, or sauteed with vegetables such as nitsuke carrots, etc., or as a dessert with tofu and apple concentrate whipped with fruit to a thick creamy consistency and chilled. The restaurant did well. It was soon famous for its “groovy vibes” and its free meal of brown rice, veggies, and green tea for those who could not afford to pay. Although the Sams brothers were not “proponents of the brown rice and marijuana regimen” (as Kotzsch had implied in 1985, p. 221), Seed was a favorite hangout for a host of ’60s counterculture celebrities such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Yoko Ono, and others. Americans such as Bill Tara, Peggy Taylor, Eric Utne, and Paul Petrofsky also worked there. Then people began to ask the Sams if they could buy staple foods from the restaurant. So food was soon packaged and sold over the restaurant counter.

In about March 1969, to meet the growing consumer demand, the Sams brothers opened Ceres, a natural foods / macrobiotic retail store, at 8-A All Saints Road, 2 bocks from and parallel to Portobello Road. Ceres also did extremely well, with Greg and various managers having the main responsibility while Craig focused on the restaurant. Soyfoods retailed by Ceres included Hatcho and mugi miso, tamari, fermented tofu, and fresh tofu sold in trays immersed in water. Eventually Bill Tara and Peter Bradford took over management of Ceres. Soon other people began to open restaurants and natural foods / macrobiotic stores like Ceres in college towns in England: Infinity Foods in Brighton (at Sussex University; Peter Deadman, Robin Bines, Simon Bailey were involved), Arjuna in Cambridge, Harvest in Bath, and On the Eighth Day in Manchester. In 1970 the Sams developed a large mobile tent macrobiotic restaurant and made a lot of money by taking it to various big rock festivals.

In Aug. 1970 Harmony Foods was established as a natural foods / macrobiotic import, product development, and distribution company. The money from the mobile restaurant was used to rent a building at No. 10 St. Luke’s Road in London (only about 300 yards from the Ceres shop), and to import enough products to start a line / range of products under the Harmony Brand (the logo was a yin / yang sign). They stored and packed these in basement at Harmony Foods. Starting in 1969, the first imports for the restaurant and for Ceres had come from Muso in Japan, and from a macrobiotic society in Vietnam came red rice and green tea. In 1970 they started to import 4-5 tons of organically-grown brown rice from The Camargue in the south of France. Grown by the same man who grew brown rice for Lima Foods, it became the company’s main product. Harmony Foods started out with about 20 customers—16 conventional health food shops and 4 of the new wave of natural foods stores (which the natural foods stores called “grain shops”). Wholefood of Baker Street was the pioneer “organic shop” that started in the 1950s. They were part of the Soil Association, so organic growers used it as an outlet for the first organically grown produce retailed in England. They soon became an important outlet for Harmony Foods as well. In addition a man named Ivan Seruya would collect food (mostly produce) from the organic growers and deliver it to restaurants like Seed and Manna in London. One other product that was grown organically was Pimhill Flour. Harmony Foods was a pioneer in developing new organic growers (such as Stewart Patterson who farmed wheat with horses) and in putting organically grown foods into retail outlets.

By Aug. 1970 Harmony Foods was distributing soyfoods, including Hatcho miso, mugi (barley) miso, and tamari from Muso in Japan—imported in wooden kegs and packed in glass jars. These were the first miso and shoyu products available at retail outlets in England.

In Jan. 1971 Harmony Foods outgrew its building on St. Luke’s Rd. and moved into a larger warehouse at 191 Latimer Road (Maidenhead), a former cosmetics factory. Just before the move, Bill Tara informed the Sams that he was in London to set up Erehwon Europe to compete with Harmony. The restaurant, Seed, was sold in the spring of 1971 and reopened as The Magic Carpet. In 1971 Ceres was renamed Ceres Grain Shop and relocated at 269 A Portobello Rd.

In mid-1972 the shop next to Ceres closed. The Sams took it over and made it into Ceres Bakery. It transformed large amounts of wheat, organically grown in England, into unique and delicious naturally leavened breads. The enzymes in the freshly-milled flour helped to leaven the bread.

When they closed down Seed, the restaurant on All Saints Road, there was still a demand for simple macrobiotic food, so in about Feb/March 1971 they opened Green Genes, a sort of macrobiotic workingman’s café on a much smaller scale. Each person picked up her or her food from a counter; there was no table service. It was open for lunch only whereas Seed had been open only in the evenings.

In 1972 they began to publish a magazine titled Seed: The Journal of Organic Living. Bill Tara and Peter Bradford helped with it occasionally. It continued for 6 years. That same year, above Ceres Bakery, started Ceres Bookstore, which only last for 1½ years.
Meanwhile Bill Tara and Peter Bradford had expanded and transformed Ceres Grain Shop, but in a way that led to extensive shoplifting, so it was scaled back to near its original size and finally sold in 1979 to Jack Weller. By that year all efforts and resources were focused on Harmony Foods, the wholesale business. Peanut butter (non-organic), the first product manufactured by Harmony, was now in two of the leading supermarket chains, Safeway and Waitrose. Address: 269 Portobello Road, Notting Hill, London W11 1LR, England. Phone: 071-229 7545.


• **Summary:** Chico-San never really developed its own distribution company. It used other established distributors, such as Balanced Foods in New Jersey, K&L (Kahan & Lessin) in Los Angeles, Landstrom in San Francisco, and Health Foods Incorporated in Chicago. “We had a tough time getting started in selling macrobiotic foods. Chico-San also sold a lot of macrobiotic foods through its mail-order service because most of the large distributors only handled the best-selling items such as rice cakes, soy sauce, and sesame salt; they wouldn’t take the complete macrobiotic line.” In late 1962, shortly after the company was established, Chico-San got a few vans and began a few small routes down to the San Francisco Bay Area and as far north as Redding, distributing 2 types of whole-grain bread (a rice loaf and an unleavened whole-wheat bread) and gluten-nut crackers to the Berkeley Co-op and established (old-line) health food stores. The Berkeley Co-op was one of the first to carry the full line of macrobiotic products. These routes continued until about 1964-65.

Chico-San’s first really successful product was rice cakes. They were introduced in 1963 but initially the big distributors showed no interest. That changed starting in about 1964 when a new generation of rice cake machines began to make a better product and a few of the big distributors started to carry them. By 1965 Chico-San’s rice cakes and other popular products were being sold at more than 150 California outlets. It was the national popularity of the rice cakes that kept Chico-San from developing its own distribution company, and relying instead on large established distributors—and later brokers.

By about 1966-1967 rice cakes and rice chips *(senbei)* were beginning to cut a wedge into the mass market nationwide, so Chico-San created the Spiral Foods brand for these mainstream products, keeping the Chico-San brand for the health food market.

Concerning imports of miso and soy sauce from Japan, Chico-San first imported directly from George Ohsawa; he located the manufacturer, put the order together, and shipped it himself. Then came Nippon C.I., which started by George and some of his disciples in Tokyo, but it didn’t last very long. In 1966 Chico-San started importing from Muso Shokuhin in Osaka. But after Muso started selling a lot to Erewhon (which became a major competitor for Chico-San), Bob felt that product quality began to decline, so he began to do all his importing from Ohsawa Japan, a company that was developed by George’s sister-in-law (Lima Ohsawa’s sister), Flora Tanaka, at George’s request. Bob felt the quality of products from Ohsawa Japan was better than from Muso, but the prices were higher and the company was not quite as professional in its business dealings.

Concerning the sale of Chico-San to Heinz, Bob is overall not very happy with the outcome. Granted, rice cakes are now much more widely known and sold in supermarkets, but the loss of Chico-San “put a big hole in the process of selling macrobiotic foods.” Bob and Herman Aihara bought back the macrobiotic line from Heinz and created Ohsawa America in Chico to try to sell it. Early general managers were Marty Roth, then Lane Seiger (who had previously worked for Bob at Chico-San). But the volume was not there on relatively few products to sustain a company profitably and eventually the company ran up debts of $300,000. At that point Bob basically gave the company to Sierra Natural Foods in Brisbane, California. Sierra had several thousand products; they only paid for the inventory. Bob is now working to develop new products from rice–such as a rice-crust pizza and crackers. Address: Chico, California. Phone: 916-891-0970.


• **Summary:** Lenny is not sure who coined and popularized the term “seitan” or when, but he thinks it was George Ohsawa. People who might know for sure include Aveline or Michio Kushi, Yuko Okada, Alcan Yamaguchi, or other macrobiotic old-timers. Lenny first heard the term seitan in about 1969. Erewhon was importing a little package of dried, salty seitan from a macrobiotic exporter in Japan. Yuko Okada of Muso Shokuhin, or his assistant Julia Yamaguchi (daughter of Alcan Yamaguchi) might know details on this product.

Yumié Kono Johns came from one of the macrobiotic centers in Japan and was cooking at the Seventh Inn in Boston. Lenny first learned how to make seitan from her. Before that time neither Aveline Kushi nor Cornellia Aihara knew how to make seitan; they said it was too difficult. Lenny heard from both Yumié and Aveline that seitan was Ohsawa’s recommendation for a high-protein, non-meat food, that was especially good as a snack with beer. It was unbelievably salty and dry, so you almost had to drink something cold (like beer) with it. You could hardly eat it
alone. Some people used to cook it with beans instead of pork. For details see Tan-Pops (1972).

In the early 1970s a deep-fried seitan product on a stick, called Tan-Pops was sold at some Boston natural food stores. Whoever made it may well have been the first commercial manufacturer of seitan in America. There were a lot of people making seitan in Boston in the early 1970s. In about 1972-75 Mat Chait of the Ricycle, a really bright and entrepreneurial guy, used to use a commissary at Erewhon’s warehouse to prepare a number of wholesome natural foods, then he had a gas-powered portable steam table that he would put on the back of 5 trucks, each with an umbrella over the top, to sell food at key spots in Boston. Each truck always had a seitan dish.

Lenny and Barbara are revising their book *Cooking with Seitan* to introduce a new generation of “seitaners” (seitan makers), including a lot of people who are making new and innovative types of meat analogs.

Concerning new gluten products, Arrowhead Mills has a “Brother Ron Pickarski formulation” to which you just add water and mix, with no kneading or washing. It comes in a box and contains some other ingredients in addition to the gluten flour. Farm Foods in Summertown, Tennessee has a similar product. They say it is not vital wheat gluten, and they call it something like “Instant Gluten.”

Concerning early publications on seitan, *East West Journal* ran one early article, and also used seitan in cooking columns before the 1985 article on seitan that he and Barbara wrote. Sandy Chianfoni (Lenox, Massachusetts), who bought Upcountry Seitan from the Donovans, used to distribute the booklet titled “Cooking with Seitan” by Winston Donovan. It was just a small pamphlet to help sell the product. Winston cured himself of his heart disease but succumbed to a brain tumor. He and Ken Burns were consuming quite a bit of wild ginseng. Mark Mayell at *East West Journal* has another seitan cookbook, which is small and about 80 pages long; it was used to promote a company product. Address: New Age, Brighton, Massachusetts. Phone: 617-787-2005.


• Summary: Jimmy was born on 21 March 1942 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father was an officer in the Army Medical Corps. After a brief stay in Baltimore, when Jimmy was in 4th grade, the family moved to Manhasset, Long Island, New York. He grew up there and graduated from high school. He graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio, then did graduate work at the University of Illinois in the Inst. of Labor and Industrial Relations. He finished his course work after 18 months, but did not write his thesis, then went to New York as a labor organizer. After receiving a draft notice during the Vietnam War, he enrolled in the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor studying Medical Care Organization. Again he completed his course work for the doctoral program, but facing the doctoral thesis, he dropped out in 1967 or 1968.

He was briefly introduced to natural foods and macrobiotics in 1967 in Ann Arbor by a friend named Earl Rosner. One day, in the midst of the psychedelic counterculture he had a deep inner realization that Americans were destroying their ecosystem, both within and without. He quit using psychedelics and began to eat only natural foods. He read *You are All Sanpaku* and *The Book of Judgment*, early macrobiotic works. He bought the books and “health foods” at an old-line health food store named Zerbo’s, run by Harry Zerbo in nearby Livonia, Michigan. At the Kuwahara trading post in downtown Detroit he bought real Japanese food—such as various sea vegetables, soba, and noodles—and Koda Brothers Kokuho Rose brown rice.

At about this time (1967-68) Jimmy got into the music business, and was sort of in business with a poet named John Sinclair, who was a great bear of a man, who the media regarded as the Pharaoh of the Hippies, and who managed a band named the MC-5. Jimmy and John were partners in a production company named Trans-Love Productions–Gets You There on Time. Jimmy managed a rock group named Iggy Pop and the Stooges. After a few months John introduced Jimmy and Susan (his girlfriend of several years and wife to be) to Jim Semark, another poet who was into macrobiotics, Baha’i, and meditation. In mid-1968 Semark invited Jimmy and Susan to a macrobiotic cooking class taught by Michio Kushi at Semark’s home in Detroit; then they soon met Michel Abehsera—who they thought was wonderful and very down to earth.

Jimmy and his wife, Susan, were married on 23 Oct. 1968 in Ann Arbor. He and Susan were in Ann Arbor at the time the food co-op changed into Eden Foods but they were never members of the co-op or the Zen Macrobiotic Supper Club—for reasons that he cannot now recall. He and Susan were loners and membership in such groups wasn’t their style. Jimmy’s parents still lived on Long Island in New York so when he and Susan visited them, they used to go into the city and buy foods from Arnie Greenberg (who owned Greenberg’s, a Jewish deli-grocery store at 125 1st Ave., near Ratner’s vegetarian delicatessen, in New York City). Arnie carried foods in bulk and packaged natural foods from suppliers such as Infinity. Infinity Foods was a small food warehouse on the 2nd or 3rd floor run by a bunch of Scientologists (including Howard Rower and Jason Hammond [son of John Hammond Sr. of Columbia Records and brother of the white blues guitarist John Hammond Jr. of John Hammond and the Nighthawks]) who were into macrobiotics and natural foods. Jimmy had their catalog and visited their warehouse. Located in downtown
New York at 171 Duane St. on the west side near the commercial produce and meat area. Infinity started in the mid-1960s and was the first company to import macrobiotic foods from Japan—before Erewhon. The Erewhon retail store used to carry Infinity’s products. Then Infinity fell on hard times and disappeared. Arnie would also ship him macrobiotic staples by Greyhound bus. He recalls Gloria Dunn, who looked like a gypsy, and he recalls Eden Organic Foods which was on the second floor of a building near downtown Ann Arbor. Shortly after Bill Bolduc started Eden, Jimmy and his wife left for Los Angeles with Iggy Pop.

Their first daughter, Rachel was born on 23 Jan. 1969 in Ann Arbor. He went to Los Angeles with his band in the spring of 1970. He played music at night then during the day would hang out at the Erewhon retail store on Beverly Blvd. in Los Angeles with Bruce Macdonald and Paul Hawken. He thinks that Michio Kushi had sent either Bill Tara, Bruce Macdonald, or Paul Hawken from Boston to open a branch of Erewhon in Los Angeles in about the summer of 1969. Years later when the store became a wholesale company, it was given the name Erewhon West, since it had different ownership from Erewhon in Boston. At the end of the summer of 1970, he and his wife moved to Los Angeles to live with Aveline Kushi, who had a house on Franklin Ave. in Hollywood. He wanted to work with Erewhon, not in the retail store on Beverly Blvd., but in the little warehouse that they were just acquiring kitty-corner to across the street from the retail store. In about 1970 it began wholesaling and distribution business. But when Jimmy returned in the fall, Hawken was gone; he had moved to San Francisco and gone to work with Fred Rohe. Hawken had apparently had a falling out with Michio and Aveline Kushi. So Jimmy worked with Bruce Macdonald (“a wild man then, as ever”).

Jimmy and his family then moved to Boston, where they lived and worked from Dec. 1970 to 1976. Jimmy had been asked by Michio Kushi to take over the failing restaurants (Sanae and The Seventh Inn) in Boston. Both were owned by Sanae Corporation. Richard Sandler and Warren Durbin had grandiose plans to expand Sanae, so they opened The Seventh Inn on Boylston St. in Boston. It was an immediate failure and they struggled with it for years afterwards—then they just up and left. Paul Hawken at Erewhon had promised to help Jimmy with Sanae.

Then Jimmy worked in Los Angeles with Erewhon West (owned by John Fountain—John Deming was the financial backer) from 1976 to 1980. John Deming’s family controls the Murphy Oil Co. in Louisiana and they are extremely wealthy. Erewhon West had financial troubles trying to compete with Nature’s Best and K&L—big, established distributors. In 1980 Deming fired Fountain and was going to liquidate the company—just shut it down. So Jimmy and Jeff Hilgert bought the assets from Deming and in June 1980 they transformed Erewhon West into Pure Sales. The company has done various things over the years. Initially it sold natural food consumer products. John Fogg developed the excellent marketing concept for So Tamari in about 1981. When Erewhon went bankrupt in 1981, they voided their contract with Pure Sales to permit the use of their name for a royalty—so within 90 days Pure Sales eliminated the Erewhon name from all of their products; all of the Japanese products became “So’” products (So’ Tamari, So’ Ramen, etc.), a name Jimmy coined, which meant nothing but sounded Japanese. Continued. Address: President, Pure Sales, P.O. Box 5116, Irvine, California 92716-5116. Phone: 714-540-5455.


• Summary: In 1982 Jimmy and Jeff Hilgert sold their business (which was growing very fast), except for the name (Pure Sales), to Fillmore Foods, a supplement company that wanted to expand into natural foods. Fillmore Foods named the new company Pure & Simple—its rebirth. Bruce Macdonald, always one to see an opportunity, started Pure & Simple making natural tortilla chips in San Diego. The chips were reasonably successful. “It’s not clear to me whether Bruce coined the name Pure & Simple or whether he found it on the back of a Corn Nuts package.”

When Phil Parente / Parenti got involved in raising money to take over New-Age Natural Foods (Fred Rohe’s company), somehow Pure & Simple became part of the package. Bruce Macdonald took the name Pure & Simple, which he controlled, to Parente, offered to trade the name for shares in the company if Parente would continue producing his chips. He also suggested many other product ideas to expand the line. Parente agreed. Then in the early 1970s Parente was sued by the company that makes Corn Nuts because they wanted to use the Pure & Simple name. The two companies fought a legal battle over this name for several years. Parente won. Then Parente began to expand Pure & Simple. An ex-disc jockey named A.J. Celeri got Parente involved in some carrot packing operation that his family had been involved in. Then they got into organic chickens and eggs, and finally opened a big New Age natural foods supermarket in Palo Alto. A good idea that had arrived too early, it was not successful. Soon the whole thing was completely out of hand. In the end, Phil Parente ran the original Pure & Simple into the ground. He had the mafioso from the produce market chasing him, and all the people who had invested money in the company were also after him. Pure & Simple never filed formal bankruptcy papers; it just went down the drain. During this period Pure & Simple and The Well were both located in the same warehouse [at 795 West Hedding St.] in San Jose.
thinks that Pure & Simple was the name of the whole company, which owned the line of Pure & Simple branded grocery products, such as jams and juices. The Well was simply the fresh produce distribution arm of Pure & Simple.

The Lundberg brothers, producers of organically grown rice in Richvale, California, had a brother-in-law or a cousin named Dick who worked as a salesman for Shade Foods, a maker of yogurt toppings in Belmont, California. Dick went to Bill Shade and recommended that Shade acquire the Pure & Simple name and run the company. So Shade Foods bought Pure & Simple, which at that time was only producing a line of jams and a few other minor products. They were grossing about $4,000 a month and they had about $9,000 a month in expenses. Shade Foods ran Pure & Simple for about a year–into the ground. Roger Hillyard knows this whole story. Roger had a brokerage named Omega and he took Jeffrey Hilgert (who was employed by John Deming at Erewhon–Los Angeles) to Shade Foods in hopes that Jeffrey would take over the marketing of the Pure & Simple products. Jeffrey convinced Shade Foods to sell the company to Deming. Shade agreed to sell. Jimmy later bought Pure & Simple (along with Erewhon–Los Angeles) from Deming. When Jimmy sold his business (Pure Sales) to Fillmore, most of his 100 products or SKUs [SKU = stock keeping unit] were under the Pure & Simple brand. These products went off the market in about 1985-86 when the whole thing, with $5 million in sales, fell apart. Pure Sales is now primarily a supplier of organically grown ingredients to natural food manufacturers.

Of all the original natural food companies based on the Erewhon format, Eden Foods is the only one that has survived and thrived in its original format. But Eden might not be in existence if it hadn’t been for soymilk.

Note: Jimmy Silver and his wife and family have long lived in Irvine, California. The physical office of Pure Sales has been in Costa Mesa since 1985. Address: President, Pure Sales, P.O. Box 5116, Irvine, California 92716-5116. Phone: 714-540-5455.


* Summary: Ron ran a business named the Teeguarden-Leabu General Store located in the basement of Marshall’s Bookstore (that sold radical and anarchist literature), which was below the Herb David Guitar Studio at 209 South State Street a few blocks off Main Street in Ann Arbor. The store was financed by his partner and best friend Vic Leabu (pronounced luh-BOE then but luh-BUU now; it’s Romanian not French), and Gloria Dunn worked there a lot. A very kind black lady named Rose from Marshall’s Bookstore rented Ron and Vic the space for $50.00 a month because she liked the creative work they were doing and Marshall’s was using the basement. The store sold antique clothing from the 1920s, art from local artists, and records; it was not a thrift store.

In about the summer of 1969 Ron and Gloria Dunn started a small food-buying co-op. The co-op was an eccentric, inventive, creative expression–and food was part of it. Co-ops were very new in those days. Within a few weeks some friends, who were also involved in macrobiotic cooking, joined the circle of people that were buying food together. These included Vic Leabu, Tim Redmond, Mark and Nancy Retzloff, and Bob Thorson. The informal group ordered food from Erewhon roughly 3-5 times; Gloria and Ron put together the orders which were probably pre-paid. When the food arrived, those who had participated in the order divided it up at the Teeguarden-Leabu General Store. Ron Teeguarden brought whole grains and miso into the co-op. Vic Leabu’s influence gradually increased, while Gloria’s declined. At the maximum, no more than 12 people were ever involved with the food co-op to which Ron belonged. It was never thought of as a business, it had no assets nor board of directors, and it never paid any money for the space that it used occasionally. It was just a bunch of people buying together.

When the co-op first started, there was only one little old-line health food store in Ann Arbor; the room was about 10 feet square and it did not sell natural or macrobiotic foods except very expensive brown rice in little bags.

To go back a bit: In early 1968 Ron felt he was becoming severely debilitated–from smoking pot (as was the fashion in those days) and the incessant pressure of being a varsity tennis player at Michigan on a full athletic load. In retrospect, he felt like he almost had chronic fatigue syndrome from burning the candle at every end. So he wrote a letter to George Ohsawa (not knowing that Ohsawa had died) asking for advice. He got a great letter back from Herman Aihara saying, in effect: “Eat miso soup and tekka every day, use them to help you give up coffee, and if you ever come to California, please come and stay with me.” Ron was deeply impressed with Herman’s kind and generous offer to a person he didn’t even know. So Ron sold his dope to buy an airplane ticket to California, and appeared at Herman’s door in long hair and a beard. They took him in and within a week his life changed and has never gone back. “It was a revelation.” He became thoroughly macrobiotic, quit drugs, and returned to Ann Arbor; thereafter his memory became clearer and he dropped everything to start what has become a lifelong interest in Oriental medicine and healing. Ron notes: “I am eternally grateful to Herman as a great man.” Shortly thereafter Ron and Iona, who had know each other for years but never gotten along well, were married; she then quit drugs, started a macrobiotic diet, joined the co-op, and soon...
became a fantastic cook. In 1971 she wrote a cookbook titled *Freedom through cooking: The macrobiotic way*.

Jimmy Silver was not a member of the co-op but he was a key influence because he had been macrobiotic for about 2 years, he had an advanced understanding of the philosophy and practice, he had long hair and was very hip, but he did not use drugs—which was very rare at that time. He was so healthy, his wife was very beautiful, and they were both very pure. He managed a rock group named the MC-5 whose motto was “Sex, drugs, and rock and roll.” People looked up to him as the leader of the macrobiotic movement in Ann Arbor. Ron doesn’t know where Jimmy got his food—he never came into the co-op. Nor does he recall that the co-op ever had a bank account and he does not see why they would have needed one.

But after 2-6 months the local health department wouldn’t let them keep grains in the basement of Marshall’s Bookstore, so they moved it to an upstairs location at 514 East William Street; that was when Bill Bolduc and Tim Redmond (with important guidance from Jimmy Silver and help from Mark Retzloff) began to organize the co-op and transform it into a company, which was first given a name–Eden Organic Foods. At that same time, Ron greatly decreased his involvement in the food co-op. He shopped at the co-op quite a bit but he does not recall ever working there. He was busy with his own store and he became motivated to try to finish school (he was in school but carrying a light load), then he wanted to move to California, so he and Iona sold their second-hand general store for $300.

The question arises: When was Eden Foods established? Ron Teeguarden believes that the idea for Eden Foods was born in mid-1969 with the establishment of the original unnamed food co-op that ordered macrobiotic foods. “That was when the seed was planted, though it didn’t bloom until later that year when the name Eden was coined and a real macrobiotic food company came into existence.” Ron is happy to have been connected with this group and to have helped to plant the seed that has become one of America’s most successful natural food and macrobiotic food companies–Eden Foods–but he feels that he deserves very little credit for what he did and he certainly does not want to be called “the founder.” “Most of the credit for establishing the company goes to Bill Bolduc.” He is now deeply involved with Chinese herbs, has just raised close to $1 million, and plans to build an upscale store in Hollywood by late 1992, and eventually take his concept nationwide.

Follow-up talk with Ron. 1993. March 6. The time from 1967 to 1969 is quite hazy in his mind. It seems like another life and another world. “It’s a funny, fuzzy feeling to know that I was part of Eden and part of Erewhon when it first started.” Ron also started the Acupressure Center in Berkeley. Ron did not follow developments at Eden Organic Foods after he left Ann Arbor in 1970. He does not recall having ever met Michael Potter, and he still does not recall that the food co-op ever had a bank account or that he ever signed a signature card for that account (yet “We probably did have a bank account; Maybe Vic got it and I might have signed it. Maybe that’s where the money went every day.”) And he has never been aware that the name “Eden” may have been derived from letters in his last name–but he is not sure that his recollections are correct. His new Herbal Emporium in Hollywood is coming along very nicely. Address: The Tea Garden, 1334 Abbott Kinney Blvd., Venice, California 90291. Phone: 310-450-0188.


• **Summary:** In the summer of 1971 Tim and Bill Bolduc first met Mike Potter, who had been managing a macrobiotic natural foods store named Joyous Revival in Birmingham, Michigan. Mike was born in about December 1949. There used to be free concerts on Sundays in the park in Ann Arbor. Mike would buy a 50-lb bag of rice from Eden plus a few odds and ends, take it out to the park, cook the rice, and sell it by the bowl to people in the audience.

The growing wholesale business made such large demands on Tim’s time that he and Bill began to look for someone to manage the retail store. In the fall of 1971, they hired Mike Potter as manager. For a while Mike worked for little or no wages. In 1972 Bill and Tim offered Mike an ownership position, and gave him about 13% of the total stock in lieu of his service. Bill and Tim now each owned 43.5% of the company’s stock. This ownership structure lasted for about one year. In about Nov. 1972 the retail store was moved from 211 State Street into a much larger location at 330 Maynard St. Potter continued to manage the retail store until about 1974.

When Bill Bolduc left the company in the late summer or fall of 1973, he and his wife Judy sold their shares back to the company. Bill left for a variety of reasons, in part because of a little friction that existed at the time. Tim now ended up owning 51% of the company stock and Michael Potter owned 49%. Tim was the president. This arrangement continued for about a year until about the winter of 1974, when Potter convinced Redmond to give up 1% of his stock for a certain amount of money he knew the company needed at the time. Tim and Mike Potter were now 50-50 partners. Potter became the president shortly thereafter.

In 1974 Tim Redmond made initial contacts with Muso, a leading macrobiotic supplier. Mike Potter now traveled to Japan and developed Eden’s contacts with Muso. Eden began importing directly from Japan, but Erewhon had an arrangement with Muso which stated that Muso could only sell products to American natural foods companies under...
the Erewhon brand. Eventually the growing number of natural foods importers, including Eden, protested this policy. There were meetings in Florida and California. Yuko Okada of Muso and Mr. Kazama of Mitoku came to a meeting that was held in Florida, and in about 1975 or 1976 Eden began to do business with Mr. Kazama of Mitoku, importing under the Eden brand. This move by Mitoku broke the Erewhon-Muso monopoly. Today Eden again imports all of its Japanese products from Muso.

In 1973, after about 1½ years of operating out of the rudimentary Quonset hut, Eden was ready for a bigger warehouse. So they found an old building near the middle of Ann Arbor, several streets west of Main Street, down by the railroad tracks. They shared this building and their trucking with Midwest Natural Foods which was run by Hank Bednarz and David Rock. During this period of 1½ to 2, Eden and Midwest became competitors. Eden sold only dry bulk and packaged natural foods; Midwest sold packaged health food lines, vitamins, and frozen or refrigerated goods. Though the two companies proved to be philosophically incompatible, they were the first to act as a full-line “super distributor.”

Still growing, Eden moved to larger location on Platt Road in the spring of 1974. The previous 50/50 ownership structure continued until the summer 1979, when they took in Cliff Adler as a junior partner. Cliff purchased 10% of the company stock at a favorable price, leaving Mike and Tim with 45% each. Shortly after the disastrous fire occurred in Nov. 1979 at the warehouse on Platt Road, several key employees were encouraged to stay with the company by awarding them shares of stock. Also one outside person purchased some stock from the company; this provided money that the company greatly needed. The retail store and restaurant were made into an independent company (named The Maynard Street Connection, Inc.) from the Eden Foods wholesale operation.

In May 1980 Tim resigned his position with the company, sold most of his stock back to the corporation (he kept only a few shares), and took over management of the retail store and restaurant, which had been the beginning of the company. There were many personal reasons that Tim left. Since the company’s future looked uncertain, he received a relatively low price for his stock. He still owns the stock he did not sell at that time. Tim and a friend operated the retail store and restaurant for about 3 years, then they sold it at the end of 1983. In mid-1984 Tim and Mike Potter had lunch and Mike invited Tim to come into the new soymilk venture, American Soy Products (ASP). Tim worked as a consultant for the first 9 months until mid-1985, at which time he became an employee of ASP. Tim is still one of a few people who own shares of stock in Eden Foods; others include Mike Potter and three other people.

Tim is interested in the question: When was Eden Foods founded? He once asked Michael Potter where Michael got that July 1967 date. He recalls that Michael said he had asked the National Bank of Detroit (NBD) in Ann Arbor, which carried Eden’s first bank account. It is Tim’s guess that the July 1967 date was when Ronnie Teeguarden opened the account for his used clothing store (Teeguarden-Leabu General Store). Tim feels that “Eden Foods did not start in July 1967 by any stretch of the imagination. To say [as a 1991 Eden publication does] that in 1967 “The first checking account was opened for Eden Foods’ seems blatantly incorrect.” The concept may have started as early as 1967 but the entity and the name did not start until Nov. 1969.

Some people have stated their opinion that the 1979 fire was caused by arson in order to collect insurance money. Tim is sure that these opinions are incorrect. During 1977 and 1978 Eden had been expanding rapidly and had gotten into a tight financial position. Cliff Adler helped the company in this situation. In 1979 they were having the most profitable months they ever had. The business was not in bad financial shape. Moreover the fire cost Eden hundreds of thousands dollars more than they ever recovered from the insurance company. Address: Vice President of Marketing and Sales, American Soy Products, Inc., 1474 N. Woodland Dr., Saline, Michigan 48176. Phone: 313-429-2310.


- **Summary:** Erewhon: Paul Hawken was a very charismatic, very intelligent person with an exceptional ability to envision potential and then organize people so as to make things happen. He was a real innovator. He has presented many people with a lot of opportunities and challenges to grow and learn. Roger Hillyard, Bruce Macdonald, and Bill Tara also played key roles in building Erewhon in the early days. Bruce and Paul are alike in many ways. Paul’s Smith & Hawken is still a major customer of Muso and Yuko Okada, but now they buy Japanese gardening tools by the container.

Essene was owned by Denny and Howard Waxman. They were in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) and definitely modeled after Erewhon. By 1969 or 1970 they had a very successful little retail store at 320 South Street in Philadelphia. Then they expanded into a wholesale distribution company. Denny is still in Philadelphia lecturing on macrobiotics.

Laurelbrook was near Baltimore, Maryland, owned by Rod Coates, the father of Judy and Dora Coates. Dora Coates was Paul Hawken’s first wife. Judy Coates was John Deming’s first wife. Jimmy thinks that Laurelbrook started as a wholesale distributor, not as a retail store. Rod died of Alzheimer’s disease. Judy Coates lives in Ross, California,
and Dora lives in Marin, living over one of Paul Hawken’s buildings.

Ceres in Colorado Springs was started by Frank Calpeno. Frank’s sister, Wendy, was known as the “Natural Foods Lady.” Ceres was an existing account of Erewhon in 1976. Jimmy handled their account. They went out of business causing Erewhon to lose a lot of money.

The Well was located in San Jose, California. Paul Hawken may have stimulated Fred Rohe to start it. It was Fred’s first distribution business; he had a very non-exclusive view. Jimmy thinks that “If Fred had never met Paul, Fred would be a rich man today. Paul gave Fred a much bigger vision of what he ought to be doing; he overexpanded and ended up with nothing. Phil Parenti / Parente came along later when a financial opportunity arose. Roger Hillyard and Bruce Macdonald know a lot about The Well. Roger Hillyard runs a coffee shop named Farley’s on Potrero Hill in San Francisco. Bruce Macdonald lives in Vermont. Bruce had started a company named Pure and Simple in San Diego or Encinitas. They made corn ships. Bruce folded Pure & Simple into the Well in exchange for stock. Bruce had to fight a lawsuit for several years against a company named Corn Nuts which had the phrase “Pure and Simple” on the back of their little Corn Nuts package. Phil won, so The Well used the trademark Pure and Simple for all their branded products.

Mountain Rose was in Colorado. Bruce Macdonald took it over for a while, then Arrowhead Mills took it over for a while and finally closed it down.

Janus had a little retail store in Seattle, Washington, which started after the distribution company started.

There was a long and bitter history between Erewhon and Chico-San, but they tried to keep things nice on the surface. Part was a difference in personality between Michio Kushi and Herman Aihara. Address: President, Pure Sales, P.O. Box 5116, Irvine, California 92716-5116. Phone: 714-540-5455.

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Summary: Arrowhead Mills was started by Frank Ford in Hereford, Texas. Paul Hawken had a strong impact on the company’s development. Paul and Frank became good friends—they have much in common. Frank is a big bear of a guy, very charismatic, intelligent, and sweet, who became a born-again Christian. He is a very interesting, wholesome man, a farmer who had unsuccessfully run for political office. Frank has become a sort of figurehead for Arrowhead—whose eminence grise was named Homer. At one point Erewhon cooperated and later they became competitors.

Shadowfax was more like Midwest Natural Foods. Founded by Charlie Smail and located in upstate New York (perhaps Binghamton), they didn’t like the macros. Michel Abehsera was one of their advisors. Michel is now the mentor of a Jewish community in either Montreal or Toronto, Canada.

Llama, Toucan & Crow in Brattleboro, Vermont, was started by Bob Sanders [sic, Swanson], Barclay McFadden, and one other person. Both a natural foods distributor and retail store, the latter opened in 1976. The distribution part was bought by a company that later became Stow Mills. Barclay McFadden became CEO of Stow Mills, and Bob Swanson started Sandpoint Distributing after that.

Lifestream was just across the border in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Arran Stephens started it, and he now owns a company named Manna Milling that is a very big purveyor of natural cereals in Canada and the USA; their brand name is Nature’s Path. Lifestream had an eastern branch in Toronto, named Lifestream East, which then became LifeSource, which is now run by an Indian man named Parshan Sahota, who now owns a remnant of what used to be Landstrom.

Tree of Life was founded by Irwin Carasso. Jimmy thinks his family was in the food distribution business in Florida, and he heard they helped to bankroll the company in the early days with $250,000. Tree of Life was an early customer of Erewhon.

Food for Life in Illinois was another one of these early companies. Address: President, Pure Sales, P.O. Box 5116, Irvine, California 92716-5116. Phone: 714-540-5455.


Some notes: “Hy Lerner, a physician who ran the warehouse at Erewhon [Boston] in the early days subsequently started [with Paul Petrofsky] and owns Baldwin Hill Bakery, bakers of the most wonderful whole wheat breads from the Belgian / French sourdough recipe taught to him by Omer Gevaert, one of the members of the family that owns Lima / Belgium. Omer’s nephews are Lark and Kerry Lindsey, who started Arden Rice Cakes in North Carolina (with Lima’s technical assistance) and subsequently sold the company to Quaker Oats shortly before Bob Kennedy sold Chico-San to H.J. Heinz.”

“Eric Utne, presently publisher of The Utne Reader (bankrolled by his wife’s Rothschild inheritance, according
to an interview with Eric) once was manager of the Erewhon retail store on Newbury Street in Boston. As I recall, Michio Kushi put him there for ideological reasons after Roger [Hillyard] put organically grown potatoes on sale in the store and everybody freaked out!” Note: Potatoes, as well as tomatoes and eggplant, are “forbidden foods” in a macrobiotic diet because they are members of the nightshade family.

“Eric was married to Peggy Taylor before that [after working at *East West Journal*] and together they started the *New Age* magazine. When they split up, she kept the magazine, which she later sold. Peggy Taylor was Evan Root’s girlfriend when I moved to Boston... Evan later married Barbara Reardon... Barbara was at that time one of the principal students of T.T. Liang, my first t’ai chi teacher, who subsequently moved to Los Angeles and who I see every Saturday morning. He’s 91.” Address: President, Pure Foods and American Soy Products in Michigan. Part II.


**Summary:** Nihon CI in Tokyo exported a lot of foods to Chico-San under the Lima label, and a small amount to Infinity under the Infinity label.

Muso’s first U.S. customer was Erewhon—via Michio Kushi’s connections. Mitoku’s first customer was also Erewhon. Erewhon soon began importing from both in order to get the best price and quality. Mr. Kazama (founder of Mitoku) was much more resourceful. The import duties varied wildly depending on how the customs officials classified the foods.

The meetings of natural food distributors were initially intended only for macrobiotic distributors. The first one was at Pajaro Dunes in California.

New Age Distributing (formed by Fred Rohe) became part of The Well, which became part of Pure & Simple. Charlie Smail started Shadowfax. Address: Farley’s Coffee Shop, #1315 18th St., Potrero Hill, San Francisco, California 94107. Phone: 415-648-1545.


**Summary:** Nihon CI in Tokyo exported a lot of foods to America, Eden coined the name Edensoy and developed the artwork for a stand-up foil retort pouch—since the Tetra Brik Aseptic packages had not yet become legal in this country. The product was introduced to America in 1983 at a natural foods trade show in Denver, Colorado. The response was “phenomenal.” No previous Eden product had ever attracted as much attention. At the show, they picked up 30 distributors for the soymilk. Edensoy soon became by far the company’s most successful product to date. Eventually imported Edensoy accounted for about 40% of Eden Foods’ total sales! “It turned into a bigger thing than any of us had anticipated.”

Also starting in about 1982 there was a big growth of interest in macrobiotic foods. Because of its large line of macrobiotic foods, Eden was now uniquely well positioned to take advantage of this growth.

Edensoy soymilk opened a lot of doors to new distributors. Inevitably these distributors came to Eden for the soymilk and then almost always ended up carrying the rest of the Eden line. The combined sales growth of Edensoy and the macrobiotic foods led to a big increase in Eden’s sales to other distributors. Shortly after that, Eden began to import Edensoy to a public warehouse in Los Angeles to service the West Coast market. Eventually that led to Eden sharing a warehouse with Sierra Natural Foods in San Francisco, and soon the rest of Eden’s products were stocked there too.

During the mid-1980s, in large part because of Edensoy, Eden’s sales to distributors began to overtake wholesale sales to natural/health food stores. The latter were beginning to drop because of competition from full-line super-distributors. Eventually the latter comprised only 10% of Eden’s total sales. At that point, in about 1986 or 1987, Eden stopped wholesaling directly to retail stores and started to sell only to distributors. Eden delivered its products on its own trucks to these distributors, and this extra service also gave them a competitive edge.

Discontinuing wholesale distribution to retail stores had a very positive effect on Eden’s growth. All the energy that was formerly required to attend to that 10% of the business was now free to be focused on developing new products and the Eden brand.

The period from March 1984 to June 1985 was a difficult one for Edensoy. The problems with the FDA, the
Kazama "began his search for food producers and understood his desire for foods of high quality. So Mr. that time in New York City. Michio felt that Mr. Kazama through a Japanese friend, Mr. Obayashi, who resided at was introduced to Mr. Kazama (who lived in Tokyo) a Japanese source for foods that Erewhon would sell. He store named Erewhon in Boston. Michio began to search for diet is the basis for health, happiness, and peace. world peace, and increasingly came to believe that a proper University. He continuously sought ways of establishing came to the U.S. in Nov. 1949 to study at Columbia Kushi, who became a World Federalist after World War II, getting Mr. Akiyoshi Kazama involved in this work. Mr. Kushi, Michio. 1992. Introduction to American Soy Products, 1474 N. Woodland Dr., Saline, in the company and its products. Address: President, Ron works for ASP above all because he believes in the company and its products. Address: President, American Soy Products, Inc. (ASP). In Feb. 1991 he became CEO of ASP. Ron was president of Eden Foods. In mid-June 1991 he was asked to resign from his position at Eden Foods. He chose to leave and go to ASP to work full time. Michael is now chairman of Eden Foods and his sister is president. Ron is now president of ASP, a joint venture company. Ron works for ASP above all because he believes in a serious car accident. Cliff was killed and Michael was seriously injured. Cliff was a very outgoing person with lots of charisma, and his death had a profound emotional impact on the company; his many close friends felt deep loss. Ron, who was purchasing director and a director of the company, took charge of running the company in this time of confusion. He organized a management team, started daily management meetings, put budgets in place, and severely curtailed spending to start accumulating money for the FDA fine. Within a month, Ron became vice president; Mike was president and CEO. In about Nov. 1989 Ron became president of Eden Foods and president of Schmidt Noodle Co. Mike remained CEO. Yet despite these problems, in the two years from 1989 to 1991 sales at Eden Foods almost doubled--making them two of the most profitable years in the company's history. Right after Cliff died, Ron took his place as a director of American Soy Products, Inc. (ASP). In April 1993 Mr. Kazama died. He was a strong and quiet person, and his death was a great loss. His son, Ryo, became president and CEO. Yet despite these problems, in the two years from 1989 to 1991 sales at Eden Foods almost doubled--making them two of the most profitable years in the company's history. Right after Cliff died, Ron took his place as a director of American Soy Products, Inc. (ASP). In Feb. 1991 he became CEO of ASP. Ron was president of Eden Foods. In mid-June 1991 he was asked to resign from his position at Eden Foods. He chose to leave and go to ASP to work full time. Michael is now chairman of Eden Foods and his sister is president. Ron is now president of ASP, a joint venture company. Ron works for ASP above all because he believes in their work to export traditional Japanese natural foods to Erewhon; the order was worth $3,000. The Kushis first met Mr. Kazama in Boston in 1970. Over the years, the volume of Mitoku's exports steadily grew, and expanded to Europe, Australia, and the Middle East. Today Mitoku ships its products to about 35 countries. Approximately 40% of Mitoku's exports go to America, 40% to Europe, and 20% to Australia and other regions. Annual sales are about $10 million. Among the major suppliers are Sendai Miso Shoyu Co. Ltd., Hatcho Miso Co. Ltd., Hagoromo Miso, Ltd., Hanamaruki Miso Co. Ltd, San Iku Foods Co. Ltd. Distributors of Mitoku’s products include the following: In the USA: Westbrae Natural Foods Inc., Great Eastern Sun Inc., U.S. Mills Inc., Tree of Life Inc., and Shojin Natural Foods (Hawaii). In Canada: Koyo Foods Inc., Flora Distributors Ltd., and Timbuktu. In Costa Rica: Distribuidora de Productos Macrobioticos S.A. In England: Sunwheel Foods Ltd, Celnat, Tama. In Belgium: Lima N.V. Est. In South Africa: Key Health. In Austria: Naturkostladen, Lebenszeichen. In Switzerland: S’lotusbluemli, Terrasana, Futonhaus. In Sweden: Kung Markatta. In Norway: Alternative Import. In Finland: Makro Bios. In Portugal: Armazens Da Matinha. In Spain: Kunga. In Italy: La Finestra Sul Cielo, Probios S.R.L., Dalla Terra al Cielo, Solo Natura. In Israel: Tivoli Ltd. In Australia: Pureharvest. In New Zealand: Enso. In Singapore: Nature’s Best. In Yugoslavia: General Export. In Japan: Seibu Department Stores Ltd., Tokyu Department Stores Ltd. Among the countries reached indirectly through transshipment are Hungary, reached through Austria, various South American countries reached through the United States, and other countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Iceland, Andorra, Ireland and the Caribbean Islands.” As Mitoku developed its international operations, Mr. Kazama hired many students from Western countries,
including Blake Rankin (USA), Ferro Ledvinka (Italy), Christopher Geoffrey Dawson (New Zealand, starting 1979), Robbie Swinnerton (England), Terrie Adams (USA), and Michelle Harbroun (France).

“For the past 10 years, Mitoku has echoed and supported the macrobiotic perspective with its motto ‘Ishoku-Dogen.’ These words, though they have been forgotten in the last few centuries by the very people in the health care field who should remember them well, mean literally ‘medicine and food have the same source,’ and can be translated as ‘food is medicine.’ This saying has been used and known as part of the ancestral heritage of wisdom transmitted from generation to generation for several thousand years in Oriental countries such as China, Korea and Japan.

“In an attempt to preserve Japanese traditions, Japan has instituted a ‘Living Treasures’ program granting official recognition and support to [living masters in] various cultural areas such as theater, music, dance, sculpture, carpentry, weaving... and arts and crafts. Ironically, though, Japan has not granted the same official recognition to its traditional methods of food processing and production in spite of the fact that increasingly large numbers of people throughout the world are now appreciating traditionally processed Japanese food products and have become aware of their important health benefits. The Japanese traditional arts of producing miso, soy sauce, tofu, natto, amazake, rice vinegar, sake, mirin, condiments and pickles as well as cooking methods and preparation are unique among the culinary practices of the world... These foods are also works of art... It is my hope and recommendation that official recognition and support be granted by the ‘Living Treasures of Japan’ to those who have dedicated their life to the traditional art of food production and processing in spite of the hardships and commercial disadvantages they are compelled to face in business competition and present-day economical conditions.” Address: 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146.


• Summary: In the early years, Bill was strongly in favor of developing local sources of foods, and especially in developing organically grown sources. He was philosophically opposed to importing foods. In 1970 he first hit the road in his car in search of organic growers like Tom Vreeland (who Erewhon ended up stealing from Eden), and Amish farmers in Ohio and Indiana that supplied buckwheat and molasses to Eden. Then he found the Schmidt Noodle Co. and got them started as a supplier, plus all the original juices.

Within Eden, Bill was the person who initiated the idea of finding local organic farmers. The first organic farmer that Eden contracted with was Tom Vreeland near Ypsilanti, Michigan, and the first organic crops they bought were soybeans, wheat, corn, and rye. These crops, organically grown in Michigan, are shown in the Eden Foods Wholesale Pricelist of 26 July 1971, so they must have been grown during 1970. In July 1971 Eden was at 211 S. State Street. Bill found Tom Vreeland through a chiropractor named Dr. Blossom, who was a close friend, who supported Eden, who was a member of the Church of God (a nationwide Christian church), as was Tom Vreeland, and who attended the opening of the store at 211 S. State St. Tom was already growing crops organically before Bill met him; he had never switched over to chemical farming. Bill was looking for farmers such as Tom who were already growing crops organically; he was not trying to convert chemical farmers to organic methods, but if they wanted to convert, Bill would help them and give them a market for their crops.

The inspiration for finding local organic farmers came from 3 sources: Paul Hawken of Erewhon, Robert Rodale, and Frank Ford of Arrowhead Mills. He talked with all of them at about the same time. Hawken had crisscrossed America in his BMW looking for organic farmers. Bill happened to be in Boston, Massachusetts, when Hawken returned from that expedition. Talking with Hawken encouraged Bill to look for more growers over a wider area. Bill also went to Emmaus, Pennsylvania and met with Robert Rodale Jr. to get the names of names of organic farmers and specifications for organic crops. And he talked with Frank Ford.

Then Bill found other organic farmers like Ernie Fordos (he grew beans from the thumb area of Michigan, and still grows for Bill), and Dale Kunkel (carrots, cabbage, sold in the Erewhon retail store). When Bill couldn’t find local organic growers for a desired crop, he would buy from a non-organic source--as he did with sunflower seeds from Ontario, Canada. Both he and Tim Redmond spent a great deal of time finding organic sources. By 1973 when Bill left the company, roughly 15-20 farmers were growing crops organically for Eden.

Bill does not have any early Erewhon catalogs or Eden Catalogs. Tim Redmond is the only person he knows who has early Eden materials.

During at least one trip to China, another person went along with Mike Potter. They bought all kinds of antiques and “made a fortune” when they sold them back in the USA. Address: Organic Processing Corp., 1430 Clifton Rd., Xenia, Ohio 45385. Phone: 513-767-9266 or 1-800-647-2326.


**Summary:** Erewhon went through three phases of selling:
(1) Retail. (2) Wholesale, direct to natural food retail stores and restaurants. (3) Wholesale, to natural food distributors (such as Eden Foods). Bruce started phase 2, selling direct to natural food stores and restaurants, primarily in New York.

In the spring of 1969, during Bruce’s tenure as general manager, Erewhon got into the wholesale business, running it initially out of their retail store at 342 Newbury Street. Paul Hawken was not involved in the wholesaling to other companies before he left for Japan. Their store was divided into 4 parts: The front half was the retail store, the back half contained the mill (a little 5-inch Meadows Mill later used for grinding whole-grain flours), a walk-in refrigerator, and packing tables (where Bruce recalls working with Jim Docker, packing little 1-5 lb paper bags of grains), an office, and the basement (connected to the ground floor by a dumb waiter), which was the warehouse for storage of commodities.

The wholesale business began in the basement. It started because Erewhon got a good deal on some sesame oil. A company named Sesame Products in Texas had developed the Egyptian salt method of naturally removing the hulls / husks of the sesame seeds. The company apparently went bankrupt, but actually they were a front for some illicit import dealings, such as electronic parts from Mexico. They got caught, and had to sell their high-quality oil. Bruce got the opportunity to buy (for Erewhon) all of their existing sesame oil for 10 cents on the dollar (90% discount). So he bought all the oil, most of which was in amber pint bottles, but the rest of which was in about 5-8 large drums, and trucked it to Erewhon’s retail store at 342 Newbury St., and helped to unload it. He and co-workers put Erewhon labels on the amber bottles (Bruce does not remember who designed these labels; Paul Hawken had them designed), bottled the bulk oil manually, labeled that as well, and moved it all to the basement. Erewhon was now ready to jump into the wholesale business, and natural sesame oil was their first wholesale product. Somehow Bruce / Erewhon had to sell 250-300 cases of natural sesame oil. But since he had bought it at a 90% discount, he was able to sell it at a profit below the price of other sesame oils on the market. In the spring of 1969, Bruce put the oil on a truck and drove it to Greenberg’s (125 First Ave.) in New York City, Paradox Restaurant, Georgie Abehsera’s restaurant, etc. He also took Erewhon’s whole line of products, including their new imports from Japan.

“Greenberg’s took on the entire line of Erewhon products. Suddenly, it just took off. A month or two later Erewhon was sending a van down to New York City ever week.”

Next Erewhon expanded its line of mechanically pressed, unrefined oils. Bruce had seen some expeller-pressed corn oil at Paul Keene’s Walnut Acres, so he ordered it from Shawnee Milling Co. in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Erewhon considered hexane solvent extraction to be the “big bad method” of removing oils, expeller pressing to be so-so (because the temperature in the worm-screw reached 140-160°F), and hydraulic pressing to be the best since it kept the product coolest. This golden corn oil foamed upon being heated and tasted like butter in baked goods. Erewhon’s third natural oil was a safflower oil. (In 1970 Paul Hawken wrote a pamphlet titled “The New Oil Story”).

Next Erewhon added a line of grains. They got non-organic brown rice from Koda Brothers in Dos Palos, California. The company was owned by Japanese-Americans, who were the first to break out of the cooperative marketing scheme, in which all growers mixed their rice together. They had rubber rollers, which did not scratch the grain during dehulling. Their Kokuho-Rose white rice has been the rice of choice for 30 years among Japanese-Americans. Bruce thinks they may have first sold brown rice (in 100 lb peat bags) to Infinity in New York, then to Erewhon.

Then Erewhon added a line of products imported from Japan. These first arrived in about Nov. 1968, just as the Erewhon retail store at 342 Newbury St. was opening. All the Japanese imports came in bulk from Muso Shokuhin in Osaka, rather than individually packaged. Tamari (from Marushima) and miso (including bulk mugi [barley] and Hatcho miso), moromi, etc. came in wooden kegs, loose, rather than in containers, so there was lots of breakage. Most of these imported products were stored in the basement. Erewhon bought some noodles (soba and udon in 5 kg boxes) from Japan Foods, then from Nishimoto Trading Co. and also from Muso. The product line was very simple, consisting of no more than 400 different items. The best-selling wholesale items were the oils, tamari, miso, rice, and imported kuzu, umeboshi (salt plums) and azuki beans. In the retail store there was no produce case or freezer, no vitamins or supplements, no potatoes or dairy products.

Initially, Erewhon’s largest customer was the combined 4-5 macrobiotic study houses in Boston, Massachusetts, accounting for roughly 50% of sales. Erewhon had an old van that delivered the food to the study houses, initially at retail prices; this business kept the retail store afloat. By the late spring of 1969 the wholesale business began to take off, and the macrobiotic study houses were now allowed to buy at wholesale prices. Some additional delivery trucks were acquired.

The macrobiotic products, other than what Erewhon imported, were only available in health food stores, through Chico-San. Because of the high mark-ups at several stages in the process, these products were tremendously expensive for consumers. So Erewhon decided to sell direct to East
Coast stores, cutting out the distributors, to keep prices down. Now things started to move very fast, and Erewhon soon achieved national distribution. “It was like introducing products into a vacuum. The whole natural foods industry was starting up, all these little places like Eden Foods in Ann Arbor [Michigan], Tom Swan in Chicago [Illinois], etc.

Bruce traveled to New York and lined up new wholesale customers among macrobiotic restaurants and food stores. Samsara, a macro restaurant in the lower east side run by George (“Georgie”) Abehsera, was Erewhon’s first customer and its biggest restaurant customer. (Michel Abehsera’s younger brother, George later became the baron of the clay and soap business, Three Sheaves, Pierre Cattier, then Nature de France). Right around the corner was Arnie Greenberg, who had a deli on the lower east side, and was one of the first to merchandise macrobiotic foods; he rapidly became Erewhon’s best customer. He was very busy selling a mish-mash of foods though he had no particular personal commitment to macrobiotics. Before him, Irma Paule in New York City had run “The Little Cupboard” but had gotten in trouble and was no longer in business at this time. Other good restaurant customers were the Paradox, and the Caldron (Gloria Bremmer at 308 E. 6th St.). The Good Earth, a retail store run by Townley, soon began to order; he was one of the original honest organic produce retailers. The restaurants and the food stores accounted for about equal sales volume for Erewhon. Erewhon shipped all its goods to New York (its sole market) via common carrier; Erewhon owned no delivery trucks of its own. There were no other natural food stores in Boston. One other unique customer was Jimmy Silver, who was macrobiotic, the manager of a rock band named Iggy Pop and the Stooges, and had hair down to his waist. He would drive down from New York with his cute little wife, Susie, and buy $300.00 of food at a time for the whole band. It was the biggest single order that Erewhon ever got in those days. Not long after that, Jimmy dropped out of the music scene and came to Boston.

Then Roger took over from Bruce as general manager in about Oct. 1969, right after Bruce married Maureen, his first wife, and left for Los Angeles to help start the branch of Erewhon there. The Erewhon store in Boston (at 342 Newbury St.) started with sales of about $400 a day. The day of Bruce’s wedding, on a Saturday in about Oct. 1969 was the first day that the Erewhon store’s sales topped $1,000 a day. It was a milestone day and in those days it seemed like big money. But two years later, Erewhon’s sales were $20,000 a day.

In Los Angeles, Bill Tara had opened the doors, and put the bricks and boards up for a new Erewhon store. But Bill was never comfortable doing business; he preferred to teach macrobiotics. So Aveline Kushi encouraged Bruce to come to Los Angeles (where she was living at the time) and to get the West Coast branch of Erewhon started. So Bruce and Maureen moved to Los Angeles.

How did Erewhon finance this growth? At the beginning Erewhon, the trailblazer, was extremely profitable, since they had essentially no competition, and had thriving retail stores in Boston and Los Angeles. The dollar was very strong (from 1967 to 1971 one dollar was worth 355 yen), so Erewhon could buy an item for $1, sell it for $3.50 and still be $2 under any competition (mainly Chico-San). Erewhon invented the concept of a natural food store. Fred Rohe in San Francisco had developed a related idea, perhaps a little before and in parallel with Erewhon. His Sunset Health Foods, later named New Age Foods, was a modified health-food store that sold vitamins, whereas Erewhon was a pure natural foods store, that didn’t sell vitamins. In addition, Erewhon had quality standards and a philosophy of foods that no one in the industry had.

After Bruce left, Erewhon moved into its first real warehouse on Farnsworth St. This represented the first real commitment to the wholesale business. A fleet of trucks was acquired. Eventually semis [semtrailers] were delivering all over New England. Address: P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.

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labeled "organic." Erewhon never talked with Kennedy or labeled it "unsprayed." Chico-San would not allow it to be Erewhon and the Lundbergs, in which the Lundbergs early 1970 a side deal (contract) was made, between contracted to buy. Chico-San was always in danger of prevented Kennedy from selling the amount he had produced by the Lundbergs. But Chico-San sold this rice for a high price (much of it in rice cakes or 1-lb bags), which produced by the Lundbergs. But Chico-San sold this rice for a high price (much of it in rice cakes or 1-lb bags), which prevented Kennedy from selling the amount he had contracted to buy. Chico-San was always in danger of breaking the agreement and losing his exclusivity. So [in early 1970] a side deal (contract) was made, between Erewhon and the Lundbergs, in which the Lundbergs packaged the unsold rice exclusively for Erewhon and labeled it "unsprayed." Chico-San would not allow it to be labeled "organic." Erewhon never talked with Kennedy or Chico-San about this side deal. "He hated our guts! But we did him a real favor; we sold the rice and we didn’t really hurt him, since we were selling into an entirely new market—on the East Coast and in bulk and in boxcars."

With this arrangement, Erewhon got into the rice business in a big way, selling their rice for $11.00 a bag versus about $30.00 for the same product from Chico-San labeled “organic.” Brown rice soon became Erewhon’s biggest product; they sold it to Eden Foods, Laurelbrook, Tom Swan in Chicago [Illinois; he didn’t last long], Tree of Life in Florida, Food for Health in Tucson (Arizona), some distributors in Northern California, Green Mountain Grainery in Boulder (Colorado), etc. It was rice that gave Erewhon nationwide distribution, putting their products in every natural food store in the USA. Bob Kennedy was furious but he was stuck with his 5-year contract. Note: The fire in early Aug. 1972 that burned Chico-San to the ground essentially rendered the contract null and void.

Now Erewhon-West began to catch up with Erewhon-Boston in sales because of two factors: They could get a shipment from Japan 3 weeks faster than Boston, and they were near the source of brown rice.

When Paul Hawken returned from Japan in Dec. 1969 he went direct to Los Angeles, but stayed only several weeks. He then went to San Francisco and worked for several months with Fred Rohe (they had become close friends) on writing educational pamphlets and trying to organize Organic Merchants. After returning briefly to Erewhon West in Los Angeles, he returned to Boston. Paul’s direct contribution to starting Erewhon West was insignificant; he wasn’t there long enough to do much. Bruce turned it into a real business. “Paul’s real contribution was finding new suppliers and products in Japan (he toured Japan with Yuko Okada’s father), getting the products labeled in Japan, then arranging for them to be shipped to Los Angeles in containers. Mr. Kazama and Mitoku came later. Erewhon had tried to order Hatcho miso from Muso, but Muso couldn’t get it. But Mr. Kazama got it; he is a supreme negotiator! I’ve never met anyone quite like him.

“One of the secrets to Erewhon’s success was always having, as a base, a successful retail store, that had a big mark-up and was generating cash. That was our “calling card.” Then the warehouse could grow off of that. The store was also a wonderful place to test and develop new products. “A store is a cash business. With distribution, sooner or later, you have to give terms—such as net 30 days. Thus the adage: ‘If you’re going to grow a business, you need $2 in capital for ever dollar that you grow.’"

In late 1970, to keep up with the explosive growth, Erewhon rented a second warehouse at 8454 Steller Drive (10,000 square feet). In his “spare time,” entrepreneurial Bruce founded two other businesses of his own: Pure & Simple, and The Natural Living Company. Pure & Simple, located in the Steller Drive warehouse, was the first of America’s new wave of natural food snack companies.
Bruce had talked over the idea with Paul Hawken, who felt that snack foods were not appropriate for Erewhon at that time. The company’s first product was Corn Munchies, which was the first natural corn chip. They would make corn tortillas, cut them into wedges, fry them in sesame oil, and season them with tamari. The Corn Munchies soon became very successful. The Natural Living Co. made bodycare products and cosmetics, starting with Sesame Shampoo and Sesame Lotion. Bruce had met a brilliant chemist named Carlos de Villalvilla, a Cuban aristocrat who was head of research for Max Factor. He was a concert pianist with 2-3 PhDs. Bruce asked him to develop a line of cosmetics without preservatives or mineral oil (a vegetable oil should be used instead of a petroleum derivative). Carlos used sesame oil (which is very stable) as the vegetable oil in these first two products.

By early 1971 Erewhon had outgrown the 10,000 foot warehouse and another 20,000 square feet in an old bakery, from which they did all transshipments to distributors. The store expanded twice, taking over the corner fish store (live fish in aquariums), to 8001 Beverly Blvd. Jim Gronemeyer did the remodeling. Tommy DeSilva worked there, and ended up owning the business. Continued. Address: P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.


• Summary: In one of its first issues (the very first was published in Jan. 1971), East West Journal published an interview with Bruce while Erewhon–Los Angeles was at the peak of its activity. They arranged for imports of natural foods from Japan to come into Los Angeles. They developed labels for the products with nice stories about each product; Burton Block did the graphics and helped with the text. He later became famous with the Nutragena designs.

In early 1971 Bruce found out that Paul Hawken had somehow obtained some stock and thus ownership in Erewhon and had not mentioned it to Bruce.

So Bruce went back to Boston and discussed the matter with Paul. Paul said, essentially, “That’s the way it is.” Ultimately Bruce felt that Michio was to blame for the problem, but “when I found out that Paul had some stock, I felt he had broken a blood bond with me and had deliberately deceived me. I felt more disgust than anger towards Paul because I had considered him a very close friend.

“I was not upset at Michio. Basically I have always felt that he was just stupid. He had the greatest opportunity–like the founding of the computer industry and he was Bill Gates–and he couldn’t comprehend the American entrepreneurial spirit. Michio’s approach was the traditional Japanese one. You come to work for a company, we pay you on top of the head, you have lifetime employment, but don’t ever ask to own any of it. But he was in a country that was entrepreneurial to its core. Hey, we don’t mind working for nothing–at the beginning. He should have offered the people who conceived and built Erewhon partial ownership in the company to motivate them and to keep them around. Failing to do that was Michio’s biggest mistake.”


Bruce had always thought that Aveline had always owned all the Erewhon stock–from day one to the bitter end. The Kushi’s attorney, Morris Kirsner, had put it in her name because they were worried about something happening like had happened to Irma Paule who ran the Ohsawa Foundation in New York. After Beth Ann Simon (a former heroin addict) died in Nov. 1965, the FDA raided the Ohsawa Foundation late one night and found its Nature’s Cupboard to be selling food, as well as books, recommending the food as a cure for illness. Charged with “false advertising,” the center was closed down, and the focus of macrobiotic teaching shifted to Boston. Michio was always concerned about teaching and being a purveyor of the foods about which he was teaching.

Seeing no future for himself in Erewhon, Bruce left Erewhon forever in May 1971 to attend to his two other thriving businesses. Bruce, who had been president of Erewhon on the West Coast, had been willing to work hard to build the company for a small salary ($150/week), reinvesting all earnings, on the understanding that he would become a part owner later—the entrepreneurial way. That had been his basic approach, and he assumed Paul and Michio were thinking the same way. But it never happened.

Erewhon had more than 99% of the market share on all of the Japanese imports. Bob Kennedy was buying from Tokyo C.I., which was very tiny. They had excellent sources for oils and grains, had built “Erewhon” into the top brand name, and had developed an aura of almost invincibility and quality. In short, they owned the market they had created.

Who got Muso (in Osaka) exporting Japanese natural foods? Probably Michio talking to Mr. Okada. Lima Ohsawa was more closely associated with Tokyo C.I. than with either Muso or Mitoku. Bob Kennedy had a certain allegiance to Lima Ohsawa. Herman and Cornellia Aihara had a little conflict with Michio and Aveline Kushi; “it was never on the surface but it sure was underneath.” The split began in 1961 when Herman and Cornellia, following Ohsawa’s advice, moved to Chico, California, with the group (including Bob Kennedy) that started Chico-San, Inc. in early 1972; Michio and Aveline decided to stay on the
East Coast. All four (Michio and Herman, Aveline and Cornelia) were best buddies up until 1961. After than, there was a certain coolness. Bruce remembers, for examples, that when he and others were out in California, they never invited Herman (a sensei) down to lectures or other events. That was unusual. Bruce thinks (but is not sure) that Bob Kennedy (Chico-San) never bought (or never bought much) from Muso.

What happened to Erewhon–Los Angeles? One of the people who financed the early growth of Erewhon was John Deming, whose family were wealthy rice [sic, oil] barons. He married Judy Coates, lived on a trust fund, and invested something like $150,000 to $200,000 in Erewhon. Paul Hawken was close friends with him, in part because Paul went out with Judy Coates, then later married Judy's sister, Dora. Then (according to hearsay) something happened and John asked for his money back. Erewhon said they couldn't pay him, but offered him Erewhon–Los Angeles instead. “So Deming ended up owning the West Coast” [Erewhon–L.A.]. [Note: For John Deming’s version of this, see Dec. 1994 interview with him.]

When Bruce was in Los Angeles, Tom DeSilva had been his “right hand man.” In a major policy goof, they put Jim Gronemeyer in charge of the warehouse—which was sort of running the company. That blew up rather quickly. Bruce was long gone, so he does not know the details. Then Tom DeSilva took over, before Deming came in (in 1973-74) and took over Erewhon L.A. Deming owned the company and John Fountain was the manager who ran it. He bought much more than he needed. Someone stole a lot of money; it was a sick scene. They moved the warehouse from Steller Driver down to Vernon; it just declined, although the retail store, run by Tom, did well. Then Tom bought the retail store from John Deming in 1980. It was named Erewhon Natural Foods, and it quickly expanded into neighboring storefronts as they became available, adding a vitamin section, a deli, and then a restaurant named Nowhere Cafe. In 1990 Tom heard a rumor that their landlord would not renew their lease and would, in fact, use the space to open similar businesses. Acting quickly on this news, Tom located a 12,000 square foot space at 7660 Beverly Blvd. next to CBS Television Studios in the street level of a five-story apartment building. The new Erewhon store had to be designed, built, and permitted from an empty shell; this was accomplished within a year. The new store opened in 1991 with annual sales exceeding $9 million.

During much of the early history of Erewhon, Paul Hawken was in Japan. Paul’s main reason for going to Japan was so that Erewhon could develop consumer packages and have the products (tamari, miso, noodles, seaweeds, kuzu) packaged in Japan. Hawken didn’t return from Japan until the Erewhon store and 2 warehouses in Los Angeles (8554 Steller Drive, plus part of an old gigantic bakery) were up and running at full speed. They could get imports from Japan 2-3 weeks sooner in Long Beach than in Boston. From the West Coast, they shipped the goods as far east as Chicago, Illinois.

In about mid-1971 East West Journal published an interview with Bruce about Erewhon, conducted by his first wife, Maureen. It contained a photo of Bruce, and a good chronology of developments at Erewhon–Los Angeles. That was the real active time for the West Coast. In Aug. 1973 Paul Hawken wrote a self-serving article in East West Journal titled “Erewhon: A biography. The view within,” which is full of inaccuracies.


• Summary: In late 1970, Bruce was managing the Erewhon store and distribution company in Los Angeles. To keep up with Erewhon’s explosive growth, he rented a second warehouse at 8454 Steller Drive (10,000 square feet). In his “spare time,” entrepreneurial Bruce founded two other businesses of his own: Pure & Simple, and The Natural Living Company. Pure & Simple, located in the Steller Drive warehouse, was the first of America’s new wave of natural food snack companies. Bruce had talked over the idea with Paul Hawken, who felt that snack foods were not appropriate for Erewhon at that time. Pure & Simple’s first product was Corn Munchies, which was the first natural corn chip. They would make corn tortillas, cut them into wedges, fry them in sesame oil, and season them with tamari. The Corn Munchies soon became very successful.

Bruce left Erewhon in May 1971 over an ownership dispute. His first move was to merge Pure & Simple with The Well, a natural food distributor in San Jose. Originally the Well had been named New Age Distributing, but Fred Rohe had started to get into financial troubles, so he had split off the distributing company as a separate business, which Phil Parenti / Parente was running.

Note: A letterhead shows that in Sept. 1979 Pure & Simple Natural Foods Inc. was located at 1045 Pepitone St., San Jose, California 95110. Phone: 408 / 295-7479. Jon Hoeffer ordered books on miso and tempeh. Address: P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.


• Summary: Margy and her husband, Rod, started Laurelbrook Foods, opening for business on 23 Aug. 1971. She was about 52 at the time and Rod was about 56. Eventually they got in “over their heads.” The company was always located in the same place: 505 Granary Rd., Forest Hill, Maryland 21050. They had a P.O. Box 47, in nearby
Bel Air, Maryland. The inspiration and impetus that led to founding the company came from their daughters (especially Judy, Dora, and Marion [Ronnie]), although she and Rod had always been pretty interested in natural foods. Judy went to Boston to study macrobiotics first, followed by Dora, then Marion. Their daughters had been living and studying macrobiotics in Boston, Massachusetts. Dora married Paul Hawken after they started Laurelbrook.

Rod had been interested in motorcycles from the time he was a kid. After World War II, he became very interested in British motorcycles made by Triumph. For years he was on the American Motorcycle Association Competition Committee. He raced some himself (he won the 100 mile amateur race at Daytona Beach, Florida), then began to repair and sell Triumph motorcycles out of their home garage. They lived in New Jersey, but when Triumph Corp. set up a company in Towson, then Timonium, Maryland, Rod went to work for them as a service manager from 1950 to 1969. The company changed hands, went down hill, and in 1970 Rod and many others were laid off.

Rod wanted to start his own business selling motorcycle accessories. He planned to call the company CPA Inc. (for Cycle Parts and Accessories). Rod had his severance pay plus some retirement funds, so they bought 2.63 acres of land at 505 Granary Rd., built a small warehouse to start with, and rented the front to a local girl named Mary Page and her natural foods company named Springbottom Natural Foods. But as the building was going up, their kids then convinced them to start a natural foods business instead of a motorcycle shop. They had been eating natural foods for the past 2 years, influenced by their daughters, especially Judy and Dora who were living in Boston and studying macrobiotics. So their natural foods wholesale distribution company, Laurelbrook, was in the back of the building. The earliest letterhead seen reads “Laurelbrook Foods, Div. of CPA Inc.” CPA never got of the ground.

Initially Laurelbrook bought its products mainly from Arrowhead Mills (Judy brought Frank Ford for a visit), and Erewhon. Later they also bought from Timbercrest (dried fruits), Lundberg, and John Baker and Carl Garrich (both rice farmers). Beautiful Day in College Park, Maryland, was their first customer. Laurelbrook was a family business.

Sally and Dan worked there almost from the start, and many nieces and nephews worked there. Margy and Rod did all sorts of work, packaging, grinding, making deliveries, and the like. Early competitors were Essene in Philadelphia (the biggest competitor), Erewhon in Boston, and Shiloh Farms in Pennsylvania.

Then the problems began. Some employees were using drugs and stealing merchandise from the warehouse. One person tried (unsuccessfully) to start a labor union. In about 1978, by the time Rod was age 65, he wanted to retire; the company had gotten too big for them and was growing too fast. Margy thinks this rapid growth was the main cause for Laurelbrook’s downfall. “We were not big business people and we didn’t quite know how to handle it—the complex finances, dealing with the banks, etc. We thought we needed a manager. So we brought in Richard Curry.” At its largest, shortly before Richard Curry came in, Laurelbrook had 50 employees. Richard started replacing our people with his people. Richard wanted to add a lot of new products to the company’s line. At that time, Tree of Life was probably Laurelbrook’s biggest competitor. “We didn’t really like the way things were going, but it was so complicated that we couldn’t do much, hope for the best, and go along. Sally had a lot of faith in Richard.” After long, unpleasant negotiations, Richard bought Laurelbrook from the Coates in August 1981, then about 6 months later he put it into bankruptcy (on 15 Feb. 1982). He had gotten in over his own head (which the Coates hadn’t realized). So he ordered lots of goods from their suppliers (who were by now the Coates’ close friends), sold them, then never paid the suppliers. Rod and Margy had to deal with lawyers and were deeply saddened and stressed by the way things ended.

They traveled to England (where Rod had motorcycle friends) and tried to enjoy retirement, but Rod didn’t seem like his old self. Margy knew that something was wrong, but she thought it might be stress and would go away. Rod died of Alzheimer’s disease on 4 March 1990.

Dora married Paul Hawken when Paul was head of Erewhon. Although Laurelbrook got a lot of supplies from Erewhon, this marriage did not have much effect on the relationship between Laurelbrook and Erewhon. Dora went to Findhorn with Paul, and right after that they separated. John Deming (who Judy married) also worked at Erewhon and also went to Findhorn. Address: 2516 Laurelbrook Rd., Fallston, Maryland 21047. Phone: 301-877-1695.


• Summary: This excellent, in-depth and detailed history of Laurelbrook Foods is written by one of the owners and founders on the original Laurelbrook stationery.

“In 1967 our next to oldest daughter, Judy, who had been with Erewhon and Michio Kushi, persuaded us to try a macrobiotic diet. While we were not really into natural foods, we always did cook from scratch, read labels, drank fruit juices instead of sodas, etc. She would come and cook for us for two weeks and let us try it out.

“Well, that was a rough two weeks, but we did it and felt great, even though we had thought we felt fine before. Also, although I’ve never been heavy, all of a sudden I found I looked good in slacks. So we stuck with it. Not forever, but for quite a while.
“When Rod [Margy’s husband] had the traumatic experience in 1970 of having his beloved Triumph Corp. fold up, under new and poor management, and partly because of the Japanese influx, we decided to set up a warehouse and sell cycle parts and accessories. On August 7, 1970 we bought 2.63 acres of land in Harford County at 505 Granary Road, which connected business Route 1 with the north end of the Route 1 Belair bypass. We built a warehouse on it with money from Rod’s severance pay.

“Three of our daughters had lived in Boston [Massachusetts] and worked with Michio Kushi. Ronnie (Marion) married Marty Russell in June 1970. He had also worked with Michio and became a natural foods baker. Dora married Paul Hawken in June, 1971, and Judy married John Deming in Aug. 1972. John and Paul had worked at Erewhon. The Hawkens and the Demings both went to Findhorn, and it was at the end of their stay there that Dora and Paul split up.

“Since we already had the warehouse building, it didn’t take much to persuade us to distribute natural foods. A visit from Frank Ford of Arrowhead Mills helped cinch the deal. We had already established a business on paper named ‘Cycle Parts and Accessories’ (CPA), so Laurelbrook Foods (named after the road we lived on) started by renting from CPA. We actually opened for business Aug. 23, 1971. The CPA business never got off the ground.

“The warehouse was 50 by 150 feet, with a basement under it 50 by 100 feet. We rented the front end of the building to a natural food store, Springbottom Natural Foods. This was entirely separate from us, run by Mary Page, a neighbor. Mary had been selling natural foods from her home for some time, and I had been a customer of hers. She was there a year, then got her own place. And by then we needed the space.

“That’s how we got in the business of distributing natural foods. And it kept us stepping from the start. Rod and I really loved that whole business. He used to say it reminded him of the motorcycle business as most of the people involved were real enthusiasts, and so many of the stores were Mom and Pop family type shops, as was so often the case with motorcycles.

“It was a very personal business for us; we really felt so warmly toward our customers and suppliers. Our son, Dan, came in with us, I think, in 1972, just after he got back from Vietnam. And our oldest daughter, Sally (now Sally Morris) came in 1973, both of them backbones of the business. Sally did the buying, and everything else that needed to be done. Dan, like Rod and me, did everything.

“My niece, Elise, worked in packaging almost from the beginning, and right through with Richard until the end. My sis-in-law worked with us for a while, as did a son-in-law, two nephews, and the older grandchildren when the need arose. Our youngest daughter, Nancy, who is a potter, made honey pots for us to sell.

Our first price list [1 page, dated Aug. 23, 1971] is the only one I have left. Later it was 5 or 6 legal size pages, double columns on both sides. All the borders were typed up by hand. We didn’t get our first computer until about 1976. A local woman worked very closely with us, printing up our price lists and flyers, until about 1975, when we got our own photocopy machine.

“Arrowhead Mills and Erewhon were our first suppliers. Then Timbercrest for dried fruit, and Westbrae and Eden Foods. Our macrobiotic items came from Erewhon. We worked very closely with Erewhon but I don’t believe we got any special dispensation more than other distributors. We got our rice from Lundberg Brothers (California), Carl Garrich at Lone Pine Farm [Lone Pine, Arkansas], and John Baker (Louisiana). Wheat came from Ted Whitmer and soap came from Tom’s Soap in Maine.

“Very soon we started finding our own sources and suppliers, and dealt locally as much as possible. Apple juice and from Murray’s Orchard and Golden Acres in Virginia, Dunkelberger’s Tap ‘n Apple from Pennsylvania, Bauman’s apple butter from Pennsylvania. Various beans, seeds and soft wheat from nearby farms, and potatoes from Pennsylvania. Donna’s cookies were made in New Jersey using our ingredients. Enos confections was a sesame seed candy made by an old woman in Pennsylvania, with antiquated machinery. Honey Pure sodas were made locally. And when we got into refrigeration we had Erivan yogurt, with the cream on top, made by a woman in Pennsylvania in the rented side of a bank building. Goat milk ice cream came right here from Harford County, and so on.

“We milled flour right from the start with a small Meadows Mill, and started packing almost right away. The only product we actually made ourselves was a candy, Chattanooga Chew Chews, made with sunflower seeds, pecans, sesame seeds, barley malt, honey and safflower oil.

“When we made deliveries, we would often pick up supplies on the trip home. Carob from Famarcro on the Virginia Beach run; Crocks from Williamsburg on the same trip. Grains and seeds from Wm. Hill in Richmond, Virginia.

“I think our biggest competitors in the early days were Essene in Philadelphia, Charlie Smail at Shadowfax in Binghampton, New York, and Shiloh Farms who delivered from their Pennsylvania headquarters. Later on, Neshaminy Valley in Pennsylvania, and Tree of Life in Florida.”


• Summary: First the names of some good sources: For Infinity Foods and Shadowfax: David Simon, 201-209-1646
(now doing business as Wholesome Brokers, still into scientology, formerly with Erewhon and a macrobiotic). For early Erewhon: Evan Root, 617-566-4783, in Brookline; he is very down to earth and sensible, like Jimmy Silver. For Erewhon–Los Angeles: Tom DeSilva, 213-655-3537. For Essene: Howard and Denny Waxman (brothers who founded Essene, which is still in business in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). For Laurelbrook: Margy Coates, 301-877-1695, is one of the angels on this planet.

Rich worked for the Kushis for over 13 years. He studied with them at Arlington Street Church before Erewhon existed. Evan and Peggy Taylor, Ronnie Coates and Marty Russell started Sanae; Rich worked there for 18 months, washing dishes and buying. Then he worked at East West Journal for 18 months when Robert Hargrove was editor, in advertising and sales. Then for the Seventh Inn for 18 months, shortly after it started and the two guys who founded it quit. It never got off the ground. Evan Root was followed by Ty Smith who was followed by Richard Sandler. Then in 1972 Rich went to work for Tom Chappel of Tom’s of Maine (natural toothpaste).

Bruce Macdonald married Maureen Traill, his first wife, in the first “official” macrobiotic wedding in Boston, Massachusetts, at the Old South Church on Copley Square. Then Bruce and Maureen moved to Los Angeles where Bruce played a major role starting Erewhon-Los Angeles. Bruce has had 6 children by four women. Now Bruce runs home-based Right Hand Press which publishes the teachings of Linda Green, an Avatar, dowser, and pendulum-using spiritual teacher from Oklahoma.

Rich thinks that one of the first people to develop a process for putting soy sauce on nuts was Nik Amartseff, who created Nik’s Snacks that were sold by Erewhon. Nik started out working with Fred Rohe’s New Age Foods in San Francisco. Ask Rich about Erewhon’s Hopi Seeds and Nik’s Snacks.

Rich began to work at Erewhon in 1974 when Bill Garrison was the president; he continued until the company went bankrupt. When Paul Hawken left Erewhon, Bill Garrison took over. In 1975, under Bill, the company was losing money. Michio brought in Ty Smith on the condition that if Ty could make the company profitable, Michio would give Ty shares in the company. At 33 Farnsworth St., as president Ty (who Rich has great respect for) made the company profitable, but Michio reneged on the deal. So Ty left—he is now in Hawaii running a combination convenience store, deli and gas station. Tom DeSilva knows how to reach him. Then Michio brought in as president Jeff Flasher, who was very close to Ty and thus knew that Michio could not be trusted. One day Jeff went to Michio and said that Erewhon could stay at 33 Farnsworth Street and probably stay profitable, but it wouldn’t grow as fast due to the limited space. Or Erewhon could move into a much larger warehouse and potentially sell a lot more food, but they would incur significant debt in the process. Jeff left the decision up to Michio and Michio decided to go for the larger warehouse, with the promise that he (Michio) would come through with a certain amount of money by a specified date. Michio was not able to do this.

Jeff Flasher is a wonderful person and his wife, Linda, at the time was extremely intelligent and helpful to Erewhon. Another reason for the downfall was the pressure of the full-line distributors, which led Erewhon to greatly expand its product line and to include many products of marginal quality. It was a choice between being a manufacturer (they made nut butters and granolas) and a brand name (from imports), versus competing with the full-line distributors. Michio chose the latter approach. That was a major reason for Erewhon’s downfall. Address: Right Hand Press, Cambridgeport, Vermont.


**Summary:** John was probably the second person to make seitan commercially in the USA. He was working in a health food store named Panacea in the middle of Manhattan in New York City. He and his girlfriend baked homemade buckwheat-crust pies, and they could see that homemade foods sold very quickly at the store. He saw freshly made, unique foods as a potential market. On 13 June 1974 John turned 26 years old. That fall he moved to Boston and began to live with a macrobiotic couple who were his friends, Sakee (or Ronald) Israel and his wife, Fern Ross-Israel. John recalls that Fern was pregnant. [Note: Fern and Sakee had been married on 19 Oct. 1974 in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. Their first child, Kate, was born at home on 3 May 1975.] Sakee was a musician, who drove a taxi cab to make money. John was a dabbler with macrobiotics—and still is. Several months after John arrived in Boston, Fern told him that several people from the Erewhon retail store had told her that if someone were to make seitan, they thought it would sell well at the store. Fern had learned to make seitan either in a macrobiotic cooking class or from another woman in a study house. She knew seitan was hard to make, so she taught John and her husband how to make it in the form of little salty, gingery meatball-like chunks.

At the time, John had never heard of seitan before, but he does recall that an early seitan product named Tan Pups (seitan skewered on a bamboo stick and deep-fried in a breaded tempura batter) had been on the market in Boston, but was no longer; they were probably America’s first commercial seitan product. John does not know who made Tan Pups nor when they were introduced. [Note: Tan Pups were introduced in March 1972 by Nik and Joanne Amartseff in Brookline, Massachusetts.] They had been sold
at the Erewhon retail store on Newbury St., but had been on the market for only about 6 months. John recalls hearing that the maker moved to Maine or New Hampshire after discontinuing Tan Pups in Boston.

John was a blues musician at the time, painting houses as a source of income. John had just been let go from a house painting job and he was desperate for money. Soon in late 1974 he and Sakee, as business partners, began making seitan in their apartment at 17 Dent Street in West Roxbury, and selling it in bulk (5-10 lb of chunks) to one macrobiotic study house where Pat Murray lived. She bought 5-10 pounds at a time. (She later owned a health food store in Newburyport, Massachusetts.) For fun, as a sort of joke, they named their fledgling business Gimme Some Food Co. But after a month or two, when their products began to sell, they changed the name to the Wheatmeat Company—since in late 1974 John coined the term “Wheatmeat” to refer to their seitan. His trademark registration says he first made seitan in May 1976, but he was making it commercially before that. Within a few weeks, in late 1974, he and Sakee began selling Wheatmeat in bulk to the Erewhon retail store and then to other health food stores (such as Organic Food Cellar). It was sold refrigerated, in the form of rather salty little gingery meatball-like chunks in a large glass jar. A customer or the store clerk would lift out the chunks with tongs. By early 1975 the Wheatmeat Co. introduced “Wheatmeat Sandwiches,” stuffed in pita bread in two flavors—one with homemade cole slaw (but no mayonnaise, using grapefruit juice instead of vinegar; Fern showed them how), another with tomatoes and lettuce; each had a sauce and was Saran-wrapped with a little paper label. John felt the sandwiches would have a broader appeal than plain macrobiotic Wheatmeat (seitan), but their main drawback was a short shelf life—only several days. Fairly soon they also began to sell Wheatmeat Cutlets in about 8-ounce polyethylene bags. Each piece was rolled flat. Later (about 1979) he introduced an unflavored, unsalted slab of wheat gluten, also labeled Wheatmeat, but with a different label and appearance (it was light tan instead of dark brown). It wasn’t on the market for long because the shelf life was too short.

Next, in the spring of 1975, came Solar Burgers (although the name was not introduced until 1976). Based on information about protein combining in Diet for a Small Planet, John began grinding cooked soybeans into the wheat gluten and selling the burger-like patties.

Then came Tan Pops, pieces of seitan that were skewered, breaded and deep-fried. In the spring of 1975, several months after they introduced the Wheatmeat Sandwiches to Erewhon, Fern recalls John and Sakee began to make Tan Pops in their home kitchen at 17 Dent Street and sell them in Boston. John only vaguely recalls making Tan Pops at Dent Street. Concerning the name of this product, John Weissman recalls (he is more than 50% sure) that he coined the name Tan Pops (based on Tan Pups, a similar earlier product, of which John had tasted one or two) after he separated from Sakee Israel, had met the owners of Baby Watson Cheesecake Co., and was working with Robert Allen. The “Tan” came from sei-tan (tan means “protein” in Japanese), and the “Pop” referred to something on a stick, like a Popsicle. He also recalls that many people did not like the name Tan Pops, which they said reminded them of Tampons (the female hygiene product). But he does not recall what this deep-fried skewered seitan product was named while it was made at 17 Dent St. before he named it Tan Pops. [Fern Israel is not sure when this product was first named Tan Pops, but she thinks it may have been so named from the day it was introduced; this is the only name she can recall that it had.]

In the spring of 1975, at about the time of the birth of Fern’s first child, John moved out of Fern and Sakee’s home, and he and Sakee went their separate ways in terms of their business; it was a very amicable separation. John had moved in with his girlfriend at 51 Oak Ave. in West Newton. At that time there was a company named Baby Watson Cheesecake Co., owned by two men named Peter and Kenny. One of the owners of Baby Watson had tasted a Tan Pup formerly sold at Erewhon (but no longer available) and liked it very much. He talked to John and suggested that, since he was already making seitan, he start deep-frying it to make a product like the Tan Pup. Baby Watson was already carrying the Wheatmeat Sandwiches, but they thought a product like the Tan Pup would sell even better. At this point, John either developed or renamed the Tan Pop. He recalls that the Tan Pup was breaded with a typical (soggy and thin) tempura batter based on wheat flour. John developed a thick batter using coarse corn meal and sesame seeds; it became delightfully crunchy after deep frying. John and a friend, Rob Allen, were soon making the seitan and deep-frying the rectangular Tan Pops out of John’s home. The Tan Pops were sold first at Erewhon and then at Baby Watson; They were incredibly successful, in part because of the innovation of dipping the seitan in the corn batter before it was fried. To make the Tan Pops, slab or steaks of seitan were cut to size (approximately 3 inches wide, 4 inches long, and 3/4 inch thick) and placed on a tray. Each was dusted with a dry mixture of wheat and coarse corn flour, then an 8-inch long stick was pushed into one end so that it looked like the famous old New England Corn Dog. Then he dipped the skewered cylinder into a seasoned batter (with cinnamon, basil, powdered garlic and onion, plus sesame seeds) and deep-fried it. He put each store’s order of Tan Pops in a brown paper bag. At the store he would line one or more wooden bowls with paper towels, arrange the hot Tan Pops in the bowl like spokes on a wheel, then place them near the cash register. He was soon selling to 3 Erewhon stores, Baby Watson, and 1-2 organic...
food sellers, plus a few others totaling 10-12 outlets for the Tan Pops.

In the spring of 1976 John moved the kitchen to a location behind a bar in Waltham, Massachusetts. With friend Robert Allen, they introduced a new line of smaller seitan sandwiches, in hamburger-sized pitas pockets. They were named after people he knew, like the “Billy Biggins,” a Wheatmeat sandwich with grated carrots and tahini sauce, etc. Billy Biggins owned the bar. Then they rented space in a basement “mall” in Central Square, Cambridge, to begin a restaurant featuring Wheatmeat, Tan Pops and waffles. The developers ran away after somehow failing. John named another pee-wee sandwich the “Weymouth Whitney,” after the construction manager. It contained Wheatmeat, sauerkraut, caraway seeds, and Russian dressing made with Hain eggless mayo. These little sandwiches didn’t sell very well.

He also named the burger “Solar Burger” and reformulated it with TVP. Robert Allen suggested that their company might sell the Solar Burger to other, competing sandwich-makers—which they did. Shortly thereafter they stopped making their own sandwiches. John also sold wheatmeat in bulk to other sandwich-makers. While at Waltham, John conceived a new company name–Vegetable Protein Company. Continued... Address: VegPro Co., 133 Nottinghill Rd., Brighton, Massachusetts 02135.


• Summary: In about 1969-1970, Nik met Paul Hawken at New Age Natural Foods in Palo Alto, California, where Nik had been hired by Fred Rohe to create the natural deli department. Nik knew David Mastrandrea. Paul offered Nik a job at Erewhon. When Nik saw the coming demise of New Age, he accepted Paul’s offer, and arrived in Boston in about May of 1971.

At about the same time, Paul met a guy named Jerry (his last name started with “S,” perhaps “Sh,” and sounded like a German Jewish name). Jerry was roasting very small batches of sunflower and pumpkin seeds in iron skillets in his home kitchen in Berkeley, California; while they were still hot, in the skillet with the fire off, he would season them by rapidly mixing in undiluted tamari and continuing stirring until the liquid was evaporated and the flavor absorbed by the seeds. He bagged them and peddled them on the streets. Nik thinks that Jerry launched the first such commercial product, probably in about 1968. He had become reasonably successful when Paul met him in about 1969-1970, so Paul invited him to come to Boston, where Paul set him up in a corner of the recently acquired warehouse at 33 Farnsworth St. Jerry started production using his former simple skillets, then Paul helped him to buy a used cast-metal tumbler-style coffee roaster, converted to a peanut roaster, that could process 50 lb at a time. After being roasted, the seeds were poured into a large rectangular sieve, custom fabricated for this purpose. Jerry was making and packaging this line of Hopi Seeds as a one-man operation. Each seed was roasted and seasoned separately. They were on the market sometime between late 1969 and early 1970. His production soon exceeded his ability to handle it; he was selling through Erewhon wholesale. When Nik arrived in May 1971, Hawken asked Nik to assist Jerry. But after 1 month, Jerry suddenly disappeared—it was apparently related to his selling marijuana on the streets. Soon thereafter, by the summer of 1971, Nik increased the line from 2 products (sunflower, and pumpkin seeds) to 5 (almonds, cashews, and soybeans). They were sold in 1 oz polyethylene-cellophane bags. Erewhon had received a shipment of specially processed, split soybeans, and a new easy-to-clean, easy-to-empty roaster made of sheet steel was developed (it’s construction resembled a cement mixer). While the roasted seeds were still inside, Nik would spray in the tamari using a sprayer with a long nozzle, then finish cooking them on low heat.

When Nik arrived in May 1971, the main soy products that Erewhon sold were traditional tamari and miso, imported from Japan, plus soybeans and soy flour (toasted from Arrowhead).

By the fall of 1971 Nik was no longer directly involved with manufacturing the tamari-roasted seeds and nuts; he had been promoted to installing Erewhon’s first semi-automatic equipment to make the Hopi Seeds, granolas, etc. The main management people at Erewhon in those days were Paul Hawken (the alleged head), Bill Tara, Hy Lerner, and Yuko Okada (of Muso Shokuhin). Wally Gorell (who was designing packages for a while). Erewhon was setting up its West Coast operations at this time and there seemed to be an ongoing power struggle between Hawken versus Tom DeSilva and Roger Hillyard. At one point, Roger went to Arrowhead Mills. Nik continued to work for Erewhon until about May 1972. Later he returned in Sept. 1973 and stayed until about 1977.

At one point, Wally left Erewhon and Paul Hawken got a small graphic design firm to design a more sophisticated label for the Hopi Seeds and to change the name. The name they came up with was Sol Seeds, with a stylized logo of the sun. But the name had not been researched and the owner of that registered trademark threatened to sue. By now Paul Hawken was gone and Ty Smith was president. When Nik returned to Erewhon in Sept. 1973, he renewed his involvement in this line, which still contained only 5 items. By about 1974 he had built the line into one that contained up to 12 products, including trail mixes and mixed nuts and seeds. So at that time Ty honored Nik by renaming the line “Nik’s Snaks.” The name “Sol Seeds” never appeared on a
commercial Erewhon product. By the time Nik left Erewhon in about 1977, there were about 18 items in the Nik’s Snack line, a total of about 30 products including the various sizes of one product. Nik had taken a home operation, that never got sophisticated but was based on a good idea, and made it sophisticated in terms of the manufacturing process, product development, the package design, and the marketing. Nik’s Snaks were a good-selling product for Erewhon for as long as the company existed. Many other natural foods companies developed their own competing lines of “tamari-roasted seeds and nuts.”

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• **Summary:** Bruce was born on 5 Feb. 1946 in New London, Connecticut. In 1964 he entered the University of Connecticut, and essentially majored in LSD. He was an early buyer (for personal use only) of LSD from the Boohoo Church in Florida. This “Church” was the original importer of LSD from Sandoz Labs in Switzerland. Arthur Klets was head; Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert were involved.

At Christmas, 1965, Bruce dropped out of the university because he had a kidney disease that just wouldn’t go away. He went to a doctor who gave him, sequentially, 4-6 varieties of antibiotics. Each one worked for several weeks until the microorganisms became resistant. Seeing that he was on a dead-end road at age 18, he freaked. He took a bus to New York and, to his surprise, sitting next to him was Kathy Bellicchi (who is now living in Brookline, Massachusetts). She was from Bruce’s home town and he had known her in passing when they were younger, but he hadn’t seen her in a while. She said to him, “Just eat brown rice and salt and it will go away. I know somebody that I’d like to introduce you to. He’s got a little teeny restaurant in New York City called L’Epicerie [at Second Ave. and 57th St.]. He is Michel Abehsara.” Bruce recalls: “Michel is a rather spell-binding personality; also really smart and well-spoken. In 15 minutes he had me absolutely convinced that this was what I needed to do. And he was right. So I rented this apartment for $69 a month on Stanton, down on the Lower East Side” [of Manhattan].

For the next year, Bruce worked at a boring job for Bennett Brothers (an old, established mail order company in Manhattan selling trinkets—not natural foods) to pay the bills, and he began to study macrobiotics, and yin/yang. Finding a chart which showed buckwheat to be the most yang grain, he decided to start eating buckwheat as his main food. After receiving a call from an old friend, Bort Carleton, in Vershire, Vermont (a good, clean, quiet place for healing) he moved there and began living in a cabin with Bort (a shoe and boot tycoon in Boston), who was also involved with macrobiotics. Later, Bort also sponsored a macrobiotic study house. Soon Bruce was cured—permanently—of his kidney disease. He became a true believer in macrobiotics. He and Bort would drive to Boston to listen to Michio Kushi’s lectures in the old church.

In June 1967 Bruce moved to Boston, and began to live in the University Road study house. After four quick affairs with lovely young women (“I was really yang”), Michio called him over to 216 Gardner Road and asked him to “chill out” (calm down) with these girls, since Michio was “involved” with the same young ladies. Michio and Aveline had initially gotten together in a marriage arranged by George Ohsawa, who sent Aveline to America to marry his best student. Michio and Aveline had an “open marriage,” and both of them had affairs with younger people of the opposite sex the whole time that Bruce was in Boston. This was well known in the upper echelons of the still small macrobiotic community.

By late 1967 Bruce was working as a carpenter for Michio’s landlord (Mr. Fogelman), redoing his house at 216 Gardner Rd. Paul Hawken hired Bruce to be the contractor and carpenter to remodel the new Erewhon retail store at 342 Newbury St. Bruce did most of the design and contract work, then he assisted Jim Docker (a master carpenter) in the remodeling, getting thick planks from Boston piers for the floors, and constructing the shelves with dowels rather than nails. Erewhon had a little store below street level at 303-B Newbury Street, that later became Tao Books. While the business was at 303-B Newbury, in Aug. 1968 the first imports from Japan started to arrive from Muso Shokuhin. These included tamari (soy sauce) and miso. But Erewhon was unable to get Hatcho miso (“the Emperor’s miso”) in foil packs, and that was Erewhon’s first contact with Mr. Kazama; he was able to get that product for Erewhon in less than boat-load quantities. From then on, Erewhon started to import from both Muso and Kazama / Mitoku. The Erewhon store at 342 Newbury St. opened in November 1968, on Thanksgiving day, and several months later, in March 1969, Paul Hawken went to Japan. Paul asked Bruce to take over as general manager of Erewhon. Roger Hillyard ran the retail store in the front of the building.

What finally happened to Erewhon? Michio always said that Erewhon was a school; he should have said it was a business. Address: Right Hand Press, P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.


• **Summary:** How did Erewhon finance its rapid early growth? Initially there was a deal with the State Street Bank in Boston to borrow about $25,000. Bruce was on the West
Erewhon; he just grew the wheat and sold it (in his bags) to another early supplier. He did not have a contract with nobody else in that area.

They were able to grow such good quality wheat and other keeping the soil fertile. “It was the most amazing thing. biodynamic method and had developed this method of working with nature. There was an older fellow, whose fields. Frank Ford was a real farmer, who believed in composted cow manure that were eventually put on the Arrowhead Mills in Texas about 50 times; Bruce visited Hawken returned from Japan. Paul probably visited Arrowhead Mills to negotiate that loan—about 1970 or early 1971. They got a slug from New England Merchants—probably in the neighborhood of $100,000. Also, the Japanese companies were giving Erewhon some time to pay; it was Mitoku at the beginning, then Muso later on. Bruce saw some of Erewhon’s filings for the bankruptcy. As he recalls, Erewhon owed Muso about $200,000 and Mitoku (Mr. Kazama) about $200,000 to $250,000. The was quite surprising to Bruce. Apparently, right up to the end, Erewhon had been buying in roughly equal quantities from Muso and Mitoku. “Money was always extremely tight. Let’s say you double your sales. As you increase your inventory, you also increase your accounts receivable—the money that people owe you. Bruce used to buy commodities from Cornucopia. “I used to order about $8,000 worth a week and he gave me three weeks to pay. So essentially he invested $24,000 in commodities—money that he never saw again. When the 4th week came I paid the 1st week, on the 5th week I paid the 2nd week—but I always owed him $24,000. We did that with all our suppliers, but at the same time we were extending credit to all the people we were selling to. There is a rule of thumb; as your sales explode, you need $3 in capital for every dollar increase in sales. You need a dollar for the extra inventory, a dollar for the extra receivables, and you need a dollar for the extra equipment you need to buy to service it. That could be moving into a new warehouse, buying a new flour mill or new trucks or pallet jacks. Be we didn’t have those three dollars. So we had to squeeze ‘em and it was always very tight.”

Who were the early, important organic farmers who grew crops organically for Erewhon. Arrowhead Mills (from Hereford, Defa Smith County, Texas) was a major supplier of winter wheat, rye, corn, soybeans, pinto beans, etc. for about the first 3 years, before Erewhon had developed any of its own sources; that came later, after Paul Hawken returned from Japan. Paul probably visited Arrowhead Mills in Texas about 50 times; Bruce visited maybe 3 times, but he remembers the long windrows of composted cow manure that were eventually put on the fields. Frank Ford was a real farmer, who believed in working with nature. There was an older fellow, whose name now escapes Bruce, who was the brains behind Arrowhead’s farming. He had studied Ehrenfried Pfeiffer’s biodynamic method and had developed this method of keeping the soil fertile. “It was the most amazing thing. They were able to grow such good quality wheat and other crops in part because they were enriching their soil like nobody else in that area.”

Ted Whitmer, the spring wheat farmer in Montana, was another early supplier. He did not have a contract with Erewhon; he just grew the wheat and sold it (in his bags) to anyone who would buy it. Spring wheat is a high-gluten wheat that is used for bread. Winter wheat, which grew in Texas, is higher minerals because its in the ground longer (you plant it in the fall), but it doesn’t have much gluten. Lewis B. Cox, an organic farmer from Washington state, grew gorgeous pastry wheat, sold in his bags. Paul Keene at Walnut Acres was a retail mail order operation; Erewhon didn’t buy much from him. Shiloh Farms, in those days, was Arrowhead Mills’ big distributor. Erewhon didn’t buy much from them because they bought from Arrowhead direct.

The contract farming came later. There was a 5-year contract between Bob Kennedy and the Lundbergs. The Lundbergs had been growing rice for decades. When they contracted to grow brown rice for Chico-San, they decided to leave the local rice co-operative (which mingled together all the rice grown by its members); they had to keep their organic rice separate. Leaving the co-op was a big risk for them, in part because they now had to sell all their non-organic rice by themselves—with no help from the co-op. Paul Hawken did all the rice negotiations with the Lundbergs. Even after Erewhon sold all this “unsprayed” rice, they could not buy rice labeled “organic” from Lundberg for a number of years. That was when Paul Hawken went out to contract for organic rice farmers in the South–Carl Garrich in Lone Pine, Arkansas, and Willow Farms in Louisiana. That rice was sold in Erewhon’s bags and those were some of the first contract farming deals. At that point, Erewhon really began to have an impact on the expansion of organic farming in the United States.

But the person who should be given the credit for contracting organically grown crops, from farmers who had not previously grown organically, is Bob Kennedy of Chico-San. He was the innovator! Paul Keene was another innovator—a decade before Arrowhead Mills [1946-47 vs. 1960]. As far as someone from outside, specifying an organic product and agreeing to buy and market it—that was Bob Kennedy. The Lundbergs had a big family farm when Kennedy first approached them. They were concerned about all the chemicals they were using. But they had to make a rather major investment; they had to install a rubber roller rice mill which they bought from Japan. They also had to break away from the rice co-operative for their organic rice. So for them, it was a huge commitment, and they deserve plenty of credit as well.

Bruce knows nothing about Erewhon’s early operations in Canada; that was strictly from the East Coast and must have come later. “The Erewhon branches in Toronto and Milliken, Canada, were related to a guy named something like Fredericks, who was extremely wealthy. He had had been a vegetarian for many years and one day woke up paralyzed. Someone involved with macrobiotics got him on a macrobiotic diet and he had a remission. He set up something but it never amounted to a hill of beans.”
Bruce was not involved in Erewhon’s exports to places like Sunwheel in the UK. Erewhon never exported much of anything, except to Canada. The Japanese foods were sent directly to Europe. Eden Foods was by far the leader in exporting macrobiotic and natural food products to Europe.

The first soy sauce that Erewhon sold was probably purchased from Infinity, a small company in New York. “A $1,000 order would be the largest that they ever got.” Infinity was importing soy sauce from Japan before Erewhon. For a short time, Erewhon was by far Infinity’s largest customer—before Erewhon began importing from Japan. When Erewhon stopped importing from Infinity, that was one of two reasons for Infinity’s decline; the other was that Howard Rower began moving up in the Scientology hierarchy. The first soy sauce that Erewhon distributed was probably imported from Japan through Muso and made by Marushima. Address: P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.


• Summary: Bruce took a warehouse in Los Angeles and ran his businesses, Pure & Simple Corporation—which had a line Pure & Simple brand of fruit butters (naturally sweetened, peach butter, raspberry, blackberry, etc.). They were very successful. Sorrell Ridge (in the USA) copied that idea from Bruce and built it into a very big business. Greg Sams came out with the same line of products years later in the UK. Smuckers Simply Fruit is basically the same product.

After about 3 months in this warehouse, Bruce started talking with Phil Parenti about merging. So Pure & Simple (Bruce) and The Well (Phil) merged with no cash transaction; the new company was named The Well. About 6 months later (at Bruce’s suggestion), Parenti changed the company’s name to “Pure & Simple.” There were about 20 shareholders—all arranged by Phil—and Bruce had an option to buy a large number of those shares, which he never exercised. Now age 20, he got a large salary and a car. Bruce stayed involved with the new company; in the fall of 1971 he moved to Santa Cruz near San Jose. Roger Hillyard was still with Arrowhead Mills in Texas; he became chief of product development for Arrowhead. He put together there whole oil line and many other important products for Arrowhead.

New Age Distributing was started by Fred Rohe. First he had two natural food retail stores, the first in San Francisco, then a supermarket in Palo Alto. Then he started the distributing company in order to be like an Erewhon on the West Coast. Fred Rohe wasn’t a businessman. By the time the Palo Alto store opened, they were already in deep financial trouble. Then the lady landowner of the San Francisco store refused to renew the lease, which resulted in Fred losing that store; the whole thing just came unglued. Phil Parenti was a stockbroker who had gotten into natural foods, and he owned part of Fred Rohe’s company. Somehow, Phil ended up owning New Age Distributing—and its debt. He raised some money and brought in some additional shareholders; the company was already in San Jose. Phil had a friend named Mel Laroussa (“Sweet Melvin”) who was a lady’s man extraordinaire; he used to drive a little 280 Mercedes. Mel and his father were the proprietors of Standard Produce, which was the largest independent produce distributor in northern California. They had this huge warehouse in San Jose where Bruce and Phil occupied the back one-quarter. Bruce thinks that New Age Distributors was situated in this same warehouse. Eventually they ended up taking over the whole thing. The Well was just a new name for New Age Distributors—they wanted to get away from the “New Age” name. At the point that Bruce contacted Phil, New Age Distributors no longer existed. Bruce worked in San Jose for about 6 months, incorporating the Pure & Simple line into the merged catalog, handled distributor sales, and get everything set up.

Then Bruce took a vacation to Colorado to visit one of their largest customers, Green Mountain Granary. As he came over the hill into Boulder he said, “Oh my God. This is where I want to live. I just fell in love with that whole area.” As it turned out, the two owners of Green Mountain (George Slavin and Joe Rosenberg) were having a conflict over ownership. So Bruce bought the company via a 3-way trade; he traded all his interest in the Natural Living Company. Right before Bruce left San Jose, he called Roger Hillyard (who was still in Texas) and asked him if he would like to take over Bruce’s job of handling distributor sales and product development at The Well. Roger was tired of Texas and he wanted to return to his native California, so he said “yes.” Moreover, Phil was a good man, a visionary, and an excellent entrepreneur. But he and Bruce made the mistake of expanding much too fast. When Bruce met Phil, The Well was a distributor of organic produce, with a few dry goods. Soon they were a full-fledged distributor of all natural foods (but no vitamins or other supplements) including Japanese imports from Mitoku—with most items sold under the Pure & Simple brand. The main competitor at the time was Westbrae.

How did Pure & Simple go out of business and why? Phil Parenti was in the produce business and he always had cast a covetous eye to the Los Angeles market—which was where all the produce was happening. In Los Angeles was a wildly successful organic produce company, run out of no more than 2,000 square feet, called Max Kozek. Max was an old produce guy located right in the produce market. He had a doc where the trucks came in and out. “It was just the sweetest little operation you ever saw.” He was doing big business—30-40 LB3 (5 by 5 by 6 feet, rounded so it fits into the side of an airplane, holds 2,500 lb) containers a day,
flying it all over the country. The airlines loved this constant business, so they gave the produce companies low prices (about 10 cents a pound at the time) which made flying produce financially viable. “Max was just raking in the dough. He owned Arabian horses, lived in Beverly Hills, but he was getting older. And he was “a little shady around the edges,” in part because the demand for organic produce was always greater than the supply. They caught him putting non-organic carrots in bags labeled “organic” and everything went downhill from there. “Back in those days, carrots comprised about 50% of all organic produce—for the carrot juice. So the organic produce business was basically a carrot business. There was one year when he shipped more LB3 containers on United Airlines than anyone else. He was that big—like 1,200 a month. There was no other way for the East Coast stores to get fresh organic produce.”

The produce business is a bit of a grind. It starts around 11:00 at night and its over at 8:00 in the morning—so your daily schedule is all goofy. Max had done this for years and years.

In about 1972-73 the first big merger of the natural foods industry took place. Some big money guys came in and they assembled this conglomerate which involved El Molino Mills, Hain Pure Food, Inc., Max Kozek, Radiant Vitamins, plus some manufacturer of capsules. But there was a big falling out with Max, so he ended up buying back his company from the conglomerate, and made a lot of money in the deal.

Note: This deal (in the early 1970s) was apparently never finalized; a complex Internet search shows that no article about it ever appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

So Philip Parenti befriended Max Kozek and they worked out a deal. Bruce never knew the details, but Phil ended up buying Max Kozek. The Achilles heel of the deal was this—incredible story. Max had been selling to a company (The Village Market) in Pennsylvania—in Amish / Pennsylvania Dutch territory. Village Market had an idea that the next great market would be frozen organic vegetables. Somehow he ended up owing Max $300,000. They had an Amish stone warehouse that Bruce has been told was “the most beautiful warehouse that has ever existed.” So after he bought Max Kozek, Phil Parenti went to visit Village Market—because the guy owed $300,000. The guy at Village Market threw up his hands and said, “Just take over my business. I can’t pay.” So all of a sudden, Phil had to swallow two large businesses. Phil put “Sweet Melvin” in charge of the Pennsylvania warehouse. But Melvin was basically a trucker; his father ran the produce while he ran Standard Truck Lines, which was a contract trucker. Mel was an ace at that but he was not an ace at running a natural food distributing business—and much too much of a bon vivant. All this happened throughout the late 1970s while Bruce was a Green Mountain Granary. Phil had to declare bankruptcy. Jimmy Silver ended up with the brand name “Pure & Simple.” Max and Phil were pioneers of organic produce in the United States. Continued.

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• Summary: Cliffrose was started by Lyman “Rusty” White in about 1972 in Taos, New Mexico. Then he moved it up to Longmont, Colorado, which is just north of Boulder. Green Mountain Commodities was the wholesale division Green Mountain Granary (basically like Erewhon's distributing company), which Bruce founded, that was in essence in competition with Cliffrose. In fact, Cliffrose was the only real competitor in that area. Cliffrose ran semis that distributed to 12 states; Bruce never ran semis; he was strong locally, in Denver, Colorado, and the mountain states.

Rusty had built a business basically around having the Arrowhead Mills distributorship; and he was Arrowhead’s largest customer. Arrowhead had about 20 regional distributorships that they assigned.

One of these was Eden Foods. But Eden dropped Arrowhead very early and developed their own farming program involving local farmers—for philosophical and financial reasons. After Erewhon declared bankruptcy, Eden Foods became the North American distributor for Muso Shokuhin of Japan. Bruce has long been very close with all the top management at Eden. “Michael Potter had the attribute of tenacity like nobody I’ve ever met. After Eden Foods’ warehouse burned to the ground, Potter had to sue the insurance company and didn’t get an insurance settlement for 3 years. In the meantime, Michael had to rebuild the business, which he was running out of the backs of semis, etc. But Michael was brilliant enough, in about 1982, to hire a Clifford Adler. Clifford was a premier businessman, Jewish, very clean and astute, very well organized. Clifford brought stability to Eden Foods in a time of crisis. He was in charge of accounts receivable, and he made sure that the money worked.” After Bruce opened Green Mountain Commodities, he became very close to Clifford; they used to see one another every two weeks or so. So Bruce attributes a fair amount of Eden’s comeback and recovery to Cliff Adler, and to Michael Potter and to the overall spirit of everyone involved. Basically, everyone worked for no money for years. Michael also continued to cultivate good relationships with all of Eden’s local organic farmers. Bruce introduced Michael to Kawasho, a billion dollar company which makes Kawasaki motorcycles; they put up a big part of the financing for the soy plant. Address: P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.
Clearly established and respected. In later years things got a little weird with Bill Garrison (who ran the company into the ground), Ty Smith (who rebuilt it). Erewhon made a comeback under Ty, who was the last real live wire to run the place, before it went into its long, slow erosion and decline.

A decisive even was the lawsuit, which had to do with Erewhon’s refusal to sell to co-ops. The co-ops sued Erewhon. That was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Even though Erewhon won the lawsuit, but they lost because the legal fees cost them something like $250,000. There was not enough money to pay these fees and Erewhon never recovered. And Erewhon made other mistakes after that. Trying to become a full-line super-distributor. Doubling the number of items in the catalog. Moving into a huge and expensive warehouse. The labor union strike, etc.

Bruce hired Jeff Flasher out of jail in Los Angeles—where he first worked for Erewhon, L.A. In about 1970 Bruce got a letter from a guy named John Beverage, who was in jail. He said that he could get out if he could prove he had a job. Bruce wrote him back, “You’ve got a job.” John Beverage came to Erewhon West Coast, worked for 3-4 months and was a wonderful, sweet guy. He developed a very successful company making alfalfa sprouts in Boulder, Colorado throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. Unfortunately he died of a liver disease several years ago.

Anyway his roommate and best friend in jail was Jeff Flasher—who had been caught dealing pot [marijuana]. When John Beverage was working at Erewhon he told Bruce that he had a friend, Jeff Flasher, who was coming up for parole, and he asked Bruce if he would do the same thing for Jeff. Bruce said, “sure.” Jeff Flasher became the miller for Erewhon West Coast. Several years later Bruce heard that Jeff was president of the company. “I was astonished.”

Bruce believes that by focusing more on one product, Erewhon could have become a dominant force. San-J has built up and now owns the real tamari market, which means the market for natural soy sauce. They have nearly 70% or the market. While Bruce was at Green Mountain Commodities, San-J became the dominant player. They do all the bottling for Eden now. It happened when the dollar collapsed relative to the yen. Remember, in 1987 a dollar would buy 255 yen; it now buys about 130 yen. So, basically, all Japanese imports doubled in price, which enabled San-J—an American manufacturer of tamari and shoyu—to take such a large share of the market; they were $2 a bottle less expensive. Eden Food was a major importer of tamari [natural shoyu] from Japan, as was Westbrae with their Johsen. Tree of Life was a major importer and Arrowhead Mills used to sell quite a bit.

Some big questions: Why didn’t Erewhon West Coast move to San Francisco, since 95% their wholesale business was in northern California? It made no sense for Erewhon West Coast to be in Los Angeles—which had a tropical...
climate. Erewhon West Coast was a major factor in Erewhon’s early growth, largely because they could bring containers imported from Japan into the USA through the West Coast. “We began to rival the East Coast in sales for a while.” One month, the East Coast did $390,000 a month in sales while the West Coast did $330,000 a month. Why did Michio Kushi fail to grasp America’s entrepreneurial spirit? Why was he not honest and straightforward in his offers of stock ownership in Erewhon with Paul Hawken, Ty Smith, and Bruce Hawken? Address: P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.


• Summary: Continued: During the time when Jimmy Carter was president and interest rates were at 18% (these were hard economic times), Bruce’s flagship retail store, Green Mountain Granary in Boulder (which had been a grocery store for 130 years) was condemned by the City of Boulder. They said the building was in a 100-year floodplain, and they condemned every building from 4th Street at the tip of the mountains all the way to Broadway—but actually they wanted to build their own Justice Center and Library in this area. So instead of invoking “eminent domain,” they used this back-handed method. In about 1980 Bruce sold what was left of the company to his manager Seth Feldman.

Bruce then moved from Boulder to Boston. Tony Harnett, of the natural foods retail chain Bread & Circus, called Bruce and asked Bruce to come and work with him. After Erewhon went bankrupt, Tony was in big trouble; he had been getting most of his supplies from Erewhon. There was a little distributor in Connecticut named Earthbound. After Erewhon’s demise, all five of Tony’s retail stores tried successfully to order from Earthbound. But the next week when they tried to order again, Earthbound said, “Sorry, but we don’t have enough capital.” So Earthbound promptly went out of business. Consequently, Tony asked Bruce to start him a warehouse so he could supply his five stores. Bruce set it up in Watertown, and before long they had sales of $120,000 a week with three people—a very efficient operation. Then Bruce asked Tony for a share of the company, and Tony said “no.”

Then Michelle Abehsera’s younger brother, Georgie [George], called Bruce to say that he had just sold Nature de France (clay soaps) and he wanted to start a natural food store. Bruce left Boston in Dec. 1982, went down to New York, and that was the beginning of Commodities, which they opened in March 1983. It was soon the biggest natural food store in New York City. At he beginning, Bruce and Georgie were equal partners in the company. But he was becoming a very, very orthodox Jew. So every Friday at 3:00 he would sell Bruce his 50% of the company, then he would buy it back Sunday morning. But Friday night and Saturday were the two times the company had its biggest income—about 50% of the weekly total. This was great for Bruce personally. Then a rabbi in Israel told Georgie that this way of doing business was not “Kosher” enough, so Georgie he asked Bruce to buy him out—which Bruce did—but it was hard.

Commodities had signed a 10-year lease in 1982, starting at about $3,000 a month and gradually increasing each year to $7,000 a month. But in the meantime, Robert De Niro and George Lucas had started Tribeca as a state of the art film editing facility in New York; in 1989 De Niro bought the old Martinson Coffee factory on Franklin and Greenwich in Tribeca—a 300,000 square foot building a block from the Commodities natural food retail store. They invested millions of dollars in equipment, and before long every celebrity known to man started coming to Tribeca in limos. So, with 3 years to go on the lease, when Bruce eventually went to his landlord to renegotiate his 10-year lease, the landlord said the first year’s lease would be $30,000. “You can’t run a grocery store paying that kind of rent.” So Bruce sold Commodities to his ex-girlfriend and moved up to Vermont and basically retired.

That next summer (1990) he met Linda Green, “a walk-in angel,” at an annual dowser’s conference in [Danville?] Vermont. In the early 1990s, Bruce studied with Linda from Oklahoma. He actually lived in her monastery in Guthrie, Oklahoma—where she lived. He lived there 3-4 months and practiced spiritual dowsing, but he went there on and off for a year while she was there with the whole group. “We were dowsing these evil ratios and putting them in Solomon’s seals (a star inside of a circle) and then in a black box—many tens of thousands of them. For high-level dowsing, we used an Aurameter, a very, very sophisticated and super-sensitive device (no electricity is involved) for sensing energy fields. Its a long story. She had an amazing personal charisma—such a pure spirit. I’d never met anyone like that before—not even remotely close. She just turned my life in a completely new direction. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience. She asked me to start a publishing company. So I went to Vermont and published five of her books (several thousand copies were sold or given away) and organized four different conferences (one in Toronto, Canada; one in Burlington, Vermont) to introduce her and her work to people.”

Bruce (and Richard Young) published books at Right Hand Press (which Bruce started) in Cambridgeport, Vermont, about the work and teaching of this angel. “She died three years later and the group basically disbanded; she predicted her death because she had too many “dreaming bodies”—many more than her body could withstand. Bruce has healed a number of people of chronic illnesses using spiritual dowsing. “You should go to this
annual dowsing conference, where the dowsers all meet at this little town in Vermont. Old water dowsers, who come out of the hills, can tell you how deep a source of water is, how many gallons per minute you’ll get. They use different dowsing devices. I became proficient using that Aurameter; I can find anything—such as energy blockages in other people—if they are the right soul-type. It’s real. You can laugh or not, but I’ve seen it work again and again.” She was an “uneducated nurse.” She said there were two people born in the last century who came from a more evolved planet: Rudolf Steiner and Nikola Tesla (1856-1943). Tesla figured out a way to get free electricity.

In 1992, his daughter Crystal’s senior year, Bruce was in Boulder, Colorado. He moved to North Carolina in 1993 where he remains in 2011. Bruce has moved 55 times in 40 years.

In 1993 Bruce bought the Macrobiotic Wholesale Company, which had been a division of Great Eastern Sun. Barry Evans, owner of Great Eastern Sun, had sold it to a German guy named Kurt Schmidt, who ran it (with his wife) for about five years, then sold it to Bruce and Yuko Okada, who renamed it Macrobiotic Company of America (MCOA). Since MCOA had been part of Great Eastern Sun, they imported from Mitoku in Japan—not from Muso. In Feb. of 2000 there was a hostile takeover of MCOA by Bruce’s partner Yuko Okada of Muso. There were lawsuits back and forth, they settled, and Bruce had to sign a non-compete agreement for a year. In Feb. 2002 Bruce started his present company, Natural Import Company, also in Asheville, North Carolina. Norio Kushi ran MCOA for Yuko. As soon as Bruce left, Mitoku stopped selling to MCOA—but Mitoku had accounts receivable from MCOA. MCOA went bankrupt before Bruce’s new company opened. Norio sold down the $400,000 inventory and did not replace it; he was selling his seed corn. Norio started spending money lavishly, and 14 months later he went bankrupt. from a German named Address: P.O. Box 100, Cambridgeport, Vermont 05141. Phone: 802-869-2010.

**Summary:** Bruce Macdonald says try Patricia “Patti” Smith (via Jimmy Silver) in the Los Angeles Area. She saves things like this. Mark Mayell of East West Journal says: Try Alex Jack in Becket, 125 miles west of Boston (Alex says he has nothing on Erewhon). He collects documents; Try Michio and Aveline Kushi in Brookline or Becket; Try Ron Kotsch, who wrote his PhD thesis on Ohsawa. He lives in Amherst, Mass, 100 miles west of Boston. The offices of Natural Living (formerly East West) have copies of all back issues of East West Journal at the offices. They are available for perusal by researchers who obtain permission. The main articles are indexed in a computer from 1981 to the present.

Alex Jack says try Evan Root in the Brookline-Boston-Jamaica Plain area; he was the first employee. Also try Aveline Kushi; she has extensive archives from the early days at her home in Brookline. Aveline is working on her archives now. Carol Heidenry says they are in 75 boxes that were organized and labeled in March 1992. Aveline is excellent at saving things, and Erewhon was her thing.


**Summary:** Aveline selected the name Erewhon because George Ohsawa’s favorite book was *Erewhon*, a utopian novel published in 1872 by English author Samuel Butler. It is a beautiful story. Erewhon is Aveline’s goal for the beautiful peace of the country. She named the company in April 1966, shortly after the first retail store was started downstairs at 303-B Newbury Street in Boston.

The company started with $3,000 capitalization. Aveline owned all of the stock. The Kushi’s attorney, Morris Kirsner, suggested that Aveline should own all of the stock. In 1969 Paul Hawken and Evan Root went to Japan together. Aveline thinks that before they went, she and Michio offered Paul stock in Erewhon and Evan stock in Sanae, a restaurant he had started. Evan preferred to be paid in cash instead of stock, so they sent him money every month while he was in Japan. Aveline is not sure whether or not Paul accepted the stock he was offered, but she thinks he may have accepted it. Morris Kirsner’s files would probably show exactly what happened. (Note: Later she and Morris Kirsner says that Aveline offered Paul 50% ownership in Erewhon and he did not accept it. To this day (Feb. 1999) Aveline has no idea why Paul did not accept such a generous offer.) But after Paul returned from Japan the situation at Erewhon was completely different. So many other people had worked so hard to build the company that it did not seem fair that Paul should be the only shareholder besides herself.

After Beth Ann Simon died in 1965, the media tried and tried to talk with Michio. He did not want to talk with them so he told them to talk with his lawyer first. Then the FDA (or maybe the FBI) raided the Erewhon store at 303-B Newbury St. At the time Evan Root was in charge of the store but he was out buying food. Michio’s father, Keizo Kushi, who spoke almost no English and was slightly deaf, was minding the store. He called Aveline, who was cooking at her home. She rushed over to Erewhon. The FDA were trying for books such as the little yellow paperback book Zen Macrobiotics (not the red book Zen Cookery) by George Ohsawa. At the time it was illegal to sell books that prescribed or recommended the use of foods as medicine. Aveline had told Evan to always keep that book hidden, and
to sell it only to people who he was sure he could trust. The FDA could not find the book, so they asked if they could search the back room, which was dark. They asked if Aveline had a flashlight. She didn’t. They went to their car to get one. During the few minutes while they were gone, she ran into the back room, found a big box of the forbidden books, dumped them in the trash can, and covered them with newspapers. When they returned, she escorted them into the back room and sat casually atop the trash can while they searched. Fortunately their flashlight was dim; even though they eventually looked in the trash can they did not find the books. Still suspicious, then they asked if they could talk with Mr. Kushi. Aveline said, “I’m sorry, but I am the sole owner of Erewhon. He has no connection with it.” The Kushi’s attorney had advised that all shares of stock be in Aveline’s name, since Michio was teaching and lecturing about food.

At one point in the late 1960s they calculated the average age of the workers and managers at Erewhon; it was 22 years. When Erewhon eventually filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, Aveline cried as she signed the final papers. It was as if her own child had died. She adds of herself and Michio: “We were teachers, not businesspeople. When you see these Erewhon pioneers, please tell them that we are sorry.” Aveline hopes someday to have a reunion of all the people who worked at Erewhon. Address: 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-232-6869.


• Summary: Aveline went to Los Angeles with her youngest son, Hisao, so that a Japanese doctor could care for her son, who had slipped and damaged his knee. The doctor, an elderly gentleman, was a traditional Japanese chiropractor who specialized in bone massage (honetsugi) therapy. Bill Tara accompanied her to Los Angeles. Initially she stayed at Jacques Delange’s house. Every day Bill Tara drove Aveline and Hisao to Japantown to see the chiropractor. Aveline felt sorry for Bill Tara who had very little to do. She ordered all her personal food from Erewhon, so it occurred to her that she should start a macrobiotic natural foods store, which Bill Tara could manage. Without telling anyone, she opened Erewhon-L.A., renting a space near the farmers’ market. Soon an accountant from Erewhon-Boston called her and got very upset with the idea of her opening this store. She apologized, but said it had already been done.

The new store attracted students, and she soon needed a place for them to live. So she rented a big house on Franklin Avenue in Hollywood, and Bill Tara started giving lectures. The house, which had a gazebo in the back yard, could accommodate 5 or 6 friends besides her 4 other children who had come from Boston to stay with her. After the Franklin Avenue house filled up, she moved the group out of that house and leased another larger place several blocks away on Franklin Ave. (probably at 7357 Franklin Ave.) in Hollywood, with a big living room and library. Thirty people could stay there, and she started making 30-60 futons for the students to sleep on instead of mattresses. Later in Boston she taught some students how to make futons.

Aveline and her children stayed in Los Angeles for 2 years, then they returned to Boston. After she left, Aveline asked Carolyn Heidenry to come to Los Angeles from Boston and take over management of the Franklin Street house and of Aveline’s activities. Carolyn did that and also started a restaurant named Sanae West. Address: 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-232-6869.


• Summary: The word seitan was created by George Ohsawa about 20-25 years ago, a few years before Michio left New York for Boston. Michio first heard the word “seitan” from Ohsawa, when Ohsawa came to America with samples. He gave some samples to Michio, who thinks they were made by Marushima Shoyu at Shodoshima in Japan. Michio thinks the original concept came from China, but the style of product was very different.

Soon the seitan was made commercially and exported from Japan, probably by both Muso and Mitoku, and sent to Michio in New York. Michio thinks the commercial product was first imported by Erewhon. Initially only a small amount was imported; Michio gave out many samples. At about the same time, Aveline started to use and make seitan in her cooking classes, and to teach others how to make seitan. Address: 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-232-6869.


• Summary: Michio has thousands of files in his basement, and some of them probably contain early catalogs and other information about Erewhon. Erewhon definitely started to import from Mitoku first, and then Muso—but they were about the same time. Michio set up all these connections before Paul Hawken went to Japan. Mr. Kazama came to America and they talked about the items Michio wanted to import. Then Muso was approached. Michio thinks Erewhon started importing foods from Japan 1-2 months before Hawken went to Japan. Hawken and Evan Root went to Japan at the same time. The main purpose of Hawken’s trip was to study Japanese language and culture, and to set
up more good connections for Erewhon and to arrange for products to be packaged individually; previously all were shipped in bulk. Paul didn’t find out any new sources, Mr. Kazama did that.

Michio believes that there were two main reasons for Erewhon’s decline and bankruptcy: (1) The company tried to expand too much too fast. At the end it was selling 4,000 products; (2) This rapid expansion led to Erewhon having many poor quality products. The company should have concentrated on high quality macrobiotic foods.

Management wanted to have a wider selection of products, in part because competitors were offering a wide selection. Also, Erewhon gave up its virtual monopoly on macrobiotic-quality products imported from Japan and revealed many secrets about the Japanese manufacturers and suppliers of those foods and how those foods were made. If he had to do it over again, Michio would concentrate on only the best quality foods, and let the company grow slowly and naturally. For example, the quality of tamari soy sauce began to decline at a very early date. Likewise with the umeboshi plum and sea vegetables. “The quality of every product was declining because of too rapid growth in the company’s sales. Moreover the educational activities didn’t keep up with the company’s growth. Muso and Mitoku have been keeping good quality as best they can but the so-called other natural food buyers, who were not concerned with macrobiotics, also started to go to Japan and buy those products, not only from Muso and Mitoku, but from other suppliers too—especially suppliers of soy sauce and miso with lower quality. These inferior quality products were retailed for a cheaper price at stores in America. The public did not know about the difference in quality, so Erewhon began to face big competition.

Even though Aveline owned Erewhon, neither she nor Michio ever received any salaries or money from the company. They wanted to let the management of Erewhon have a free hand, so they didn’t tell them how to run it—to slow growth and concentrate on keeping quality high. “Erewhon was more like an educational place.” There were debates over whether or not Erewhon should carry organic cheese and vitamins. Michio and Aveline opposed carrying these products, but let management do as it wished.

At the time Erewhon was growing most rapidly, the company needed money to finance the expansion, but bank interest rates were extremely high—about 15-18%. Inventory control for 4,000 items is very difficult and expensive; it requires a large warehouse and shallow inventories. During the last few years, Erewhon was able to fill only 40-50% of its orders because so many items were out of stock. Also as the company grew, many non-macrobiotic employees had to be hired to drive the delivery trucks, and they created a labor union. Erewhon had to battle with this union for 1½ to 2 years, and that cost a great deal of money. Truck drivers cut prices to stores in order to try to meet the prices of competitors. Financial difficulties piled up starting at the time when interest rates jumped and the union was formed.

Bill asks why Aveline and Michio didn’t give talented managers a share of the ownership in Erewhon to motivate them to stay with the company. Michio says that Paul Hawken owned one-third of the Erewhon shares. Evan Root owned shares in Sanae. The Kushis paid all or part of Evan and Paul’s travel and living expenses in Japan. Paul got his one-third shares after he returned from Japan and became president. When he resigned, he was definitely paid for the value of his shares. Paul wrote from California that he needed the money and offered to sell back his shares. So Michio and Aveline sent him the money and Paul sent his shares back to them. Only later did Michio learn that Paul needed the money because of his divorce from Dora Coates. Other people (whose names Michio also remembers) also owned some shares. Michio does not feel that giving managers ownership would have helped Erewhon. Michio thinks that the people who managed Erewhon during its last 5 years had the necessary business skills necessary to manage a company of that size that was growing rapidly.

Another reason for Erewhon’s fall was that Michio did not pay serious enough attention to what was happening at Erewhon. He was too involved in teaching in America and Europe. At the time he noticed what was happening and stepped in, the situation had already become too serious. There was much sloppiness allowed by management, even though their intentions were good. He should have noticed a year before. It was a very sad situation. “Yet Erewhon had meaning as a pioneer company. That spirit still remains. My purpose at present is to continue education all over the world. Macrobiotics is now spreading all over the world, even to the Soviet Union, Thailand, and Japan. In Leningrad some 300 medical doctors are now studying macrobiotics as a group to help find a solution to the health problems of their country. His books are being translated into many Eastern European languages. Also it is very important to reach the scientific, medical, and nutrition professions—as well as governments. Their attitudes are now rapidly changing. Macrobiotics is now growing tremendously. My main concern with natural foods is that the quality be kept very good. My current effort is to elevate the quality of each product. For example, miso should definitely be fermented for 2-3 years. Soybeans and grains should all be organically grown, and only very good sea salt should be used—such as that made by S.I. Salt, an American company in New Mexico, and Lima salt in Europe [from Lima Foods in Belgium]. Michio now goes to Japan twice a year, and there he gives many lectures all over the country, helps to set up chapters of One Peaceful World, and works with food makers on product quality. He also formed the Japan Organic Natural Food Association (Yûki Nosui Sanbutsu Kyôkai) in Japan, of which he is president. About 200 companies are members.
On the one hand, Michio is happy with the way his work is going now. “But of course, I am always dissatisfied too. My time and my ability are limited. I can’t help as many people as I would like. The demand is so great. So I always feel sad on that point. Whenever you talk with people from Erewhon, please extend my best wishes. And say always that Michio is thinking of them and their happiness. I hope sometime in the future we can get together. Then we can talk more about how to build one peaceful world—and not only food, but more about health, families, government, economics, and spiritual matters, and how to make the many countries more united and harmonious in one world. Let’s work together.”


• Summary: Judy’s former husband, John Deming, lives in Palo Alto (Phone: 415-853-1231). He is an author [unpublished] and investor, but is no longer involved with food. Judy moved to Boston from Baltimore in April 1967. Before Judy met John, she was living with the Kushis, cooking at the house, and working a little at the first little Erewhon retail store at 303-B Newbury St. While Evan Root was in charge of the store, she recalls bagging and boxing foods at night and shipping them to individuals via the U.S. mail—probably at retail prices. Then she worked at Sanae. Later she cooked lunches for employees at the Erewhon warehouse at 33 Farnsworth Street. John Deming moved into the Kushi’s house on Boylston St., where Judy was now living, and he went to work at the warehouse. She and John were married in Aug. 1972, very shortly after they met. She recalls Bruce Macdonald’s wedding to Maureen Traill, because she made Maureen’s wedding gown. Maureen now lives in Lexington, Massachusetts, near Boston (Phone: 617-862-4687). She and Richard Young were later married.

It was Paul Hawken who had really gotten Judy’s parents (Rod and Margy Coates) interested in founding Laurelbrook and distributing natural foods. Paul, who at the time was married to Judy’s sister, Dora Coates, would come down from Boston with Dora to visit the Coates family. Dora had met Paul when she went to stay with Judy at one of the macrobiotic houses in Boston. John Deming gave some money [sic, some land in Mendocino County] to Herman Aihara before he and Judy met. After John and Judy moved to Los Angeles, John Deming ended up owning Erewhon Los Angeles—in about 1975. He worked closely with John Fountain, who had the initial interest and convinced John Deming to invest in it. Judy did not know much about John’s financial dealings. John Deming and Jimmy Silver did not part under good terms; there were problems related to Erewhon–Los Angeles; she thinks Jimmy sued John. She and Jimmy are very close friends but John is scrupulously honest.

Dora now lives in Oakland and works for a company named Environs in Oakland. Address: P.O. Box 1411, Ross, California 94957. Phone: 415-457-2155.


• Summary: Ron does not have any early Erewhon catalogues because he does not collect things. He gave all the research materials he gathered while writing his PhD thesis on George Ohsawa and the history of macrobiotics to Marc van Cauwenberghe’s library; much of the material was in Japanese (photocopies of Ohsawa’s books) and the rest was the English-language notes Ron took while reading these many books and other Japanese-language writings. However he will check to see if his sister has any early Erewhon catalogues.

Ronald was the manager and only employee of Erewhon in the summer of 1967, from early June to August, while the retail store was still downstairs at 303-B Newbury St., shortly before Paul Hawken arrived. Ron thinks he took over from Eizo Ninomiya, a Japanese fellow who barely spoke English and who replaced Evan Root in the spring. Eizo had come to teach a rather obscure form of jujitsu. Ron quickly learned that he was not cut out to be a businessman. The main products he sold (from rough wood shelves) were Kokuho-Rose brown rice, whole wheat flour and beans (which he bagged), Sahadi sesame butter, sea vegetables, and miso. He remembers bagging foods endlessly. Erewhon was probably ordering a lot of products from Infinity Foods, so the miso may well have come from them. He lived at the Gardener Road house and he would give Aveline the day-end receipts, which averaged about $50-60 a day that summer. One day he couldn’t account for $5 and it was a big thing. In the evenings he and 8-10 other people would gather for Michio Kushi’s talks in a back room at the Arlington Street Church. Ronald thinks he was replaced by Paul Hawken and Bill Tara. Ron does not know who owned Erewhon.

Ron went to Japan in the fall of 1967 with a vague plan to study Japanese culture and macrobiotics. He had studied Japanese at Harvard for a year the previous year, before he discovered macrobiotics. He was the first person from the Boston community to go to Japan for this purpose. Cecil and David Levin came in the spring of 1968. Ron studied with Japanese people, including an acupuncturist named Take Nouchi. He took flower arrangement classes at Nippon C.I., which had a cubbyhole in a huge commercial building. He lived with Michio Kushi’s parents for the first 4-5 months (early Dec. 1967 to early April 1968), in Japan, at
Hoya near Tokyo, then he moved to Kyoto and enrolled in Kyoto University as a research student. After 4 months, in Aug. 1968, he returned to America.

In 1976 Ron resolved to finish his graduate studies. To receive a doctoral degree in History of Religions from Harvard he needed only to write a dissertation. So he brushed up his Japanese and flew to Japan in Feb. 1977. He enrolled immediately in Kyoto University, got some jobs teaching English in colleges there, and spent the next 18 months collecting books and papers about Ohsawa, 95% in Japanese, and conducting 15-20 interviews. In July 1978 he returned to Boston and for the next 18 months he read and took notes on the documents he had collected. In the 2-3 years after he finished the thesis, he received 200-300 requests for copies of it, indicating that there was an interest in the history of macrobiotics. This led him to write a book on that subject at the request of Japan Publications. It has sold about 7,500 copies. In 1987 his book Macrobiotics: Beyond Food was published.

Ron continues to write: he is now interested in Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophy, and Waldorf Schools, plus the Alexander Technique related to body awareness. He is the editor of a magazine that deals with Waldorf education. He writes a little for Natural Living and New Age magazines.

Address: 4 Hulst Rd., Amherst, Massachusetts 01002.
Phone: 413-256-6478.


• Summary: Evan (his first name rhymes with “heaven”) does not have any early Erewhon catalogs, but he thinks Marc van Cauwenbergh might have some in his library on macrobiotics. He does have a letter to the general public announcing the opening of the first Erewhon retail store on 9 April 1966. It was at 303-B Newbury St., below street level. Initially Evan owned (titularly) 100% of the stock in Erewhon, but soon he passed it to Aveline Kushi after legal documents were drawn up. While he was at Erewhon the little retail store sold the following soy products: whole soybeans and probably soy flour (probably from Walnut Acres or a Mennonite community, both in Pennsylvania), soy sauce and miso (probably both obtained from Infinity Foods in New York; Infinity imported these products from Japan). Hamanatto was also sold. No tofu was sold at the store, but firm tofu was available from nearby Chinatown.

The Kushis imported miso, shoyu, condiments, etc. from Japan about twice while Evan was managing the Erewhon retail store. This direct importing was infrequent and the quantities were small due to the lack of cash. It was much easier to buy from Infinity or Chico-San and not tie up the money. In fact it was the norm to stretch out those friendly distributors as long as possible for payment.

Before he left Erewhon, in Oct. 1967, Evan personally hired Paul Hawken, with Aveline’s permission, to take his place. Then Evan opened the first macrobiotic restaurant in Boston, named Sanae (meaning “young rice plant” in Japanese); it opened in early 1968 on Newbury St. In late March 1969, Evan and Paul Hawken left Boston and traveled to Japan together. Several months before they left, Evan had been given 50% of the shares of stock in Sanae by the Kushis for the work he had done at Sanae. The Kushi’s lawyer, Morris Kirsner, had drafted the agreement to read that if Evan did not return to management of the company within 18 months, he would agree to sell this stock back to the Kushis at an agreed-upon price. Evan thinks that Paul had a similar type of stock arrangement in Erewhon, but he is not sure what it was (Note: See interview with Aveline Kushi, March 1993). Evan went to Japan mainly to study the language and culture. He ended up staying there 3 years and 7 months, largely in Tokyo (Setagaya-ku, Shoin-jinja-mae). He studied Japanese at the Tokyo School of Japanese Language. After 18 months, there was a lad name Hiro Fujieda living with the Kushis in Boston. Rather than Hiro pay rent to the Kushis, Hiro’s family would pay Evan monthly in Japan on a monthly basis—until the value of the stock was paid off. Evan used this money to support his studies.

After about a year, in late 1971 or early 1972, Evan went to work for Muso Shokuhin in Osaka. He translated letters that arrived from Europe and America into spoken Japanese, and then answered the correspondence. By the end of his stay in Japan, Muso was exporting quite a volume of natural foods and exports were a big part of the company focus. Evan thinks that Ty Smith took his place when Evan left.

Returning to Boston in early Oct. 1972 (along with Mr. Masuda and Michelle Matsuda), Evan became an employee of Sanae after several months, working as maître d’. In 1971, while Evan was in Japan, Sanae had expanded to open another larger branch restaurant in Boston, originally called “Sanae” but informally called “Big Sanae,” then later formally named The Seventh Inn (at 269 Boylston St.). When Evan was in Japan, he heard that the restaurants were not doing well, so Yuko Okada (originally of Muso Shokuhin, who was working at Erewhon) took over management of Sanae. Hiroshi Hayashi, a top cook in a lineaje, traveled to Boston from Japan, bringing with him his disciple, Chika Abe, to take charge of cooking at Sanae. His disciple, Mr. Yozo Masuda, later joined them. Hayashi is now at a restaurant named Latacarta in Peterborough, New Hampshire (Phone: 603-924-6878).

Evan’s recollection is that Paul Hawken’s trip to Japan was more to study the language and culture, but he did work on Erewhon business while he was there. Moreover, he
Dora were married. This happened at just about the time that Paul and Rod Coates had lost their jobs, wanted to start a new business, and already had a warehouse which he planned to use for a motorcycle parts company. Paul told him that this was perfect opportunity to get in on the ground floor of a growing new industry. At the time, Rod even had a motorcycle parts letterhead drawn up. So Paul played a major role in Rod’s decision. This happened at just about the time that Paul and Dora were married.

Paul is now writing a book on how businesses are affecting the environment. He left Smith & Hawken about 1 month ago because there was nothing more creative to do there. He prefers to be an entrepreneur rather than a manager. She is surprised he stayed there as long as he did.

Address: Oakland, California. Phone: 510-658-7633.


• Summary: Businesses, capitalism, and the free market are destroying the world (and thus themselves), yet they alone may have the power, capital, and organization to save it from ecological and social catastrophe. Because businesses have become the most powerful institution on the planet, they must begin to take responsibility for the whole and switch from the “economics of degradation” to the “economics of restoration.”

“For Paul Hawken started Smith & Hawken, the garden-horticulture-catalog company in 1979. Paul was the founder, in 1966, of Erewhon, one of the first natural foods companies in the country. He is the author of The Magic of Findhorn, The Next Economy, and Growing a Business. This article was adapted from a speech he recently gave to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco.”

For a host of responses to this article and Hawken’s answers to them, see the July issue of Inc. Address: Mill Valley, California.


• Summary: Fern first learned how to make seitan prior to the summer of 1974, probably from either Aveline Kushi or Tamara Uprichard, the wife of Stephen Uprichard. In the summer of 1974 Fern went to visit the Wiscoy Valley Community Farm in southern Minnesota. The farm was run communally by a group of macrobiotics who lived by farming the land, grew all their crops (they may have been the first macrobiotic group to grow aduki beans) organically, ground all their own flour, cooked on wood stoves, refused to buy imported food products from Japan, etc. They wanted to Americanize macrobiotics. She may have also learned to make seitan there, but probably not.

She knew about seitan by 19 October 1974, for on that date she was married to Ron Israel in West Roxbury, Boston, and for the wedding she personally made sweet & sour seitan balls—starting with seitan she had made herself.

Fern clearly recalls the first commercial seitan product that she ever tasted, which was named the Tan Pup—and which she loved. It was deep fried in a breaded batter (with corn, sesame seeds, and spices), had a skewer through one end, and measured about 4 inches long, 3 inches wide, and 3/4 inch thick. It was sold at the Erewhon retail store at 342 Newbury St. in Boston, in a special non-refrigerated bakery.
case, behind glass doors, 5-10 feet from the cash register, together with baked products. Fern thinks the product may have been made by Cathy Creighton. She probably first tasted Tan Pups at about the time her first child, Kate, was born at home on 3 May 1975. It may have been at about that time that Johnny moved out to live with his girlfriend Annie, and that he and Sakee split up as partners. She is quite sure the product was not on the market before 1974.

Before Fern’s first child was born, she taught her husband and John Weissman (who was living with them) how to make seitan. The two men formed a partnership (their business may have been named the Wheatmeat Company) and began to make seitan commercially. Soon they were selling it commercially in the Erewhon retail store in Boston under the brand name Wheatmeat. She does not remember Pat Murray ordering seitan, nor recall that the macro study houses ever ordered seitan. Then they began to make Tan Pops (a close relative of the former Tan Pups that Fern loved so much) in their home in West Roxbury and to sell them at Erewhon. (Sakee does not recall making Tan Pops). Fern has no recollection of the business named Baby Watson Cheesecake Co. Fern’s second child, a boy, was born at home in December 1976.

Fern thinks (but she is not sure) that after she and Sakee stopped making seitan, Chris Lorenson Bailey started to make bulk seitan at her home in Boston, and to sell it in the Erewhon retail store.

Fern talked about this with her good friend Enid Strauss, and Enid’s husband Andy; they made falafel balls at about the same time as Fern’s husband and John Weissman were making Tan Pops. Enid thought that Fern and her husband made the first Tan Pups. For more information she suggested contacting Helen and Matthew Sandler, who founded Matthew’s Bakery in Boston. They now live in Aspen, Colorado.

She also talked with Tamara Uprichard (in Heath, Massachusetts), who recalls that Hiroshi Hayashi at the Seventh Inn was the first to teach the fast way of making seitan from ground whole wheat. Hiroshi now has a natural foods restaurant named Latacarta in Peterborough, New Hampshire (Phone: 603-924-6878). Address: 82 Buckingham Rd., Milton, Massachusetts 02186. Phone: 617-696-1665.


• Summary: The OM (Organic Merchants) meeting held on Mt. Shasta at the end of June 1970 was organized by Fred Rohe of New Age Natural Foods. Before the OM meeting on Mt. Shasta, there had already been 1 or 2 meetings. The purpose of this meeting was to start a trade association of natural food retailers on the West Coast and to encourage the establishment of new stores of this type. The 1-2 day meeting took place outdoors on the side of Mt. Shasta and everyone slept outdoors in sleeping bags up near the top near a ski cabin. In the morning, they got up early and all chanted “Om.” Ezra Hendon (an attorney, who still lives in Berkeley and who was the public defender for all of California up until a few years ago) was selected to be the executive director of OM. He ran the group for about three years. Fred Rohe continued to be the guiding light. The association provided members with literature (pamphlets such as the “The Sugar Story”, “The Oil Story”), checked out suppliers to see if they were bogus or not (Talbott and Hendon checked out Dr. Bronner, who locked them in his laboratory with him and ranted and raved at them until they were terrified), etc. OM decals were created and member stores affixed them to the front door or windows.

OM ceased to exist because they couldn’t afford to pay the executive director, Ezra Hendon, adequately; he ended up having to bake bread in Bob’s store to make ends meet.

Bob first met Paul Hawken at this OM meeting; he thinks Paul was either working with Fred Rohe, or was representing Erewhon. Bob thinks that New Age Natural Foods in Palo Alto did not open until after Westbrae opened on 2 Feb. 1971. Other people who were at the meeting were Allen Talbot (now an attorney who lives in Berkeley) and Joel of Wholly Foods, stores from Chico and Redding were represented, someone from Good Naturd Grocery, etc. Bob does not recall Chico-San being represented.

Talk with Tom DeSilva of Erewhon–Los Angeles. 1992. July 10. Organic Merchants, representatives of the natural foods industry, met once a year for 4-5 years. Tom kept the minutes from all those meetings, but he does not know if he still has any of them.

Talk with Bruce Macdonald. 2011. March 2. Organic Merchants, a trade association for the natural foods industry, was the idea and dream of Fred Rohe and Paul Hawken. One of its purposes was to establish standards for natural and organic foods. As far as Bruce knows, no industry-wide standards were ever developed. Address: Owner, Berkeley Natural Grocery Co., 1336 Gilman St., Berkeley, California 94706. Phone: 415-526-2456.

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September 1970 at Boston University. He recalls: “The design of the Ricycle was absurd. It consisted of a steam table (which without its food weighed 600-700 pounds) welded onto the back of a girls bicycle. To move the Ricycle, he pedaled it (rain or shine; or pushed it up even gradual hills), but it was so heavy and clumsy as to be almost immobile.” At night it was kept in the garage of the macrobiotic study house at 6 Ellery Street.

During the first 6 months, Barbara Grace prepared most of the desserts and whole grain breads at the kitchen of a big study house across from the Brookline High School. Marion (who had an Italian last name) prepared the vegetable and grain dishes in another study house. (Note: Marion married Frank Capleno, who owned Ceres Natural Foods, a fairly big macrobiotic food distribution business in Colorado Springs, Colorado; they moved to Colorado in the early 1970s). Dora Coates (whose parents started Laurelbrook Foods) also cooked for Mat for a while. The business took off quickly, with the help of many magazine and newspaper articles. Mat got a loan, so in early 1971, in the dead of winter when it was too cold to be out on the street, Mat built a kitchen inside the Erewhon warehouse, and it began operation at the end of March 1971. Since Paul Hawken was in California at the time, Mat got permission from the acting president of Erewhon.

Every day the Ricycles would offer a grain dish, whole grain bread, a vegetable dish, a dessert, and often a soup—but there was a different menu every day. A number of popular dishes contained soy as an ingredient. A miso-tahini spread was usually available with the bread. Miso soup and Miso Rice were often served. For Miso Rice, miso was mixed with a little water then stirred into a pressure cooker of hot rice that had just been cooked, and allowed to stand for a few minutes. Mat vividly recalls that on days when he had to stand in front of Boston University in the freezing cold for 6 hours without moving, the miso soup would keep him warm. After Mat opened the kitchen at Erewhon, he contracted with David Kailin of Crane’s Call Bakery, a macrobiotic bakery, to make most of the desserts and other baked goods for the Ricycle. Sometimes the vegetable dish of the day had tofu in it, or the grain dish had miso in it.

While building the kitchen inside Erewhon, Mat constructed two more Ricycle carts. Mat launched these in the spring of 1971; one served its macrobiotic lunches on weekdays at MIT in Cambridge, and the other in downtown Boston at government center. He was unable to get permit to operate at Harvard Square. The other 2 Ricycles were operated by people that Mat employed; they were paid a percentage of their sales.

One year at the Christmas reunion, Mat did an elaborate impersonation of Michio Kushi (complete with makeup and a built-up nose construction), wrote, sang, and led the audience in a song about miso to the tune of “Get me to the church on time.” The words went: “I’m drinking miso in the morning. Hatcho or mugi is sublime. Aveline or my daughter, go heat up the water, and get my miso soup on time. If you use onion, sautee it first, if you use daikon, it satisfies your thirst. For I’m drinking miso in the morning...”

Mat left Boston in about December 1972 to take an acting job in New York. At the time he sold and shipped all 3 Ricycles to an eccentric millionaire’s son in Texas. He does not have any recollection of Tan Pups being on the market but he does remember seitan imported by Erewhon from Japan, perhaps by Japan Foods, in the form of little dark salty chunks. Perhaps Robert Hargrove might know more about this. Perhaps Erewhon made the Tan Pups.

Concerning Paul Hawken’s departure from Erewhon in late 1973, it has always been Mat’s understanding that Aveline Kushi owned the company but that the Kushi’s negotiated to pay him $30,000 when he left.

Mat once visited Erewhon’s little farm in Keene, New Hampshire. They made sauerkraut there on the top floor of a building; one would jump up and down on the cabbage in a barrel to press it. Address: 8-23rd Ave., Apt. 302, Venice, California 90291. Phone: 213-465-0383 or 213-469-5408.


**Summary**: Two of America’s main macrobiotic institutions were Erewhon, a pioneering natural foods company, and the East West Journal, a major counterculture magazine. Both were founded and owned by Michio and/or Aveline Kushi. They hired a succession of young amateur macrobiotic men to run these two companies but they never allowed these people to own any part of the company and they paid them low wages. Some of these young managers were exceptionally qualified (e.g., Paul Hawken and Bruce Macdonald at Erewhon, or Eric Utne at East West), but they were not willing to work year after year for low wages and with no ownership in the companies they were building. Michio should have known that one cannot run a growing company using a succession of inexperienced managers. Moreover, Michio gave the responsibility to the managers and some of the staff but he always kept ultimate authority. He often discouraged entrepreneurship among his managers, and he often “pulled the rug out from under their good ideas” or reintroduced the same ideas as his ideas.


**Summary**: In 1969 Joel, while a student at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, first made contact with Boston macrobiotic activities. In Ithaca, he often visited the Ithaca Seed Company, a counter-culture bookstore with
strong macrobiotic and Zen leanings and, what attracted him, the best local inventory of books on traditional Oriental arts, literature, culture, and philosophy. In about 1970, Ithaca Seed opened a small restaurant in the back of the bookstore, serving standard macrobiotic fare. “The first whiff of hijiki sent me scurrying back to Basho [the famous Japanese haiku poet].

Joel first moved to Boston in the summer of 1972 and lived there until the summer of 1974, when he and his wife moved to Cape Cod, Massachusetts, only 90 miles away. They moved back to Boston in 1977, stayed until the summer of 1982 (during this period they ran a macrobiotic study house), then moved to Arkansas.

Joel first worked at the Erewhon retail store (at 342 Newbury Street) in the summer of 1972, but only for 1 month. Paul Hawken was president. After several years experience in the “real world,” he returned to the Erewhon in the spring of 1977, as manager in training at the Newbury St. store. He was assistant manager at Newbury St. in late 1977, store manager in early 1978, store manager at Brookline in 1980, and retail CEO in 1981. He stayed at Erewhon until the new owner [Ronald Rossetti] took over command, then he moved to Arkansas, where he and friends started Mountain Ark Trading Co. in Fayetteville.

He lived in various Boston area macrobiotic “study houses” from summer 1972 through spring 1974, when he married and moved to an apartment. Throughout this period his roommates and closest friends worked at or managed various macrobiotic community enterprises: Erewhon, The Seventh Inn, East West Journal, Tao Books, East West Foundation, etc.

In the summer of 1974, Joel and his wife moved to Cape Cod where they lived until spring 1977. Throughout this time they maintained close ties with the Boston macrobiotic community. In 1975 they started the Macrobiotic Center of Cape Cod. In Nov. 1976 they hosted William Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi’s tofu and miso tour visit to Cape Cod, with activities that included a well-attended lecture-demonstration, an interview on local radio, and lunch (Nov. 19) with Claude Alan Stark, who presented Shurtleff with an inscribed copy of his book *The God of All: Sri Ramakrishna’s Approach to Religious Plurality* (1974, published by the author). Address: Joel Wollner Associates, P.O. Box 1343, Clifton Park, New York 12065. Phone: 518-371-7014. Fax: 518-373-8337.


• **Summary:** “Did you ever eat a ‘Tan Pup?’ [sic, Tan Pop]. Hot? If not, you can’t imagine the ecstasy (and agony) you missed. A Tan Pop’s crusty exterior belied a succulent interior, redolent of soy sauce, garlic, and herbs. The vegetarian’s version of the famous ‘Corn Dog,’ from which their name was played, the Tan Pop was a crispy-crusted, batter-fried chunk of Wheatmeat, ¼ pound, stuck on a skewer. More exotic than any blanketed hot dog, freshly cooked, steamy hot Tan Pops were so incredibly irresistible, they made many a glutton of gluten. No one, outside their maker, Johnny Weissman, of the Vegetable Protein Company, Cambridge, MA, knew the exact recipe. In the years I worked at Erewhon’s Newbury Street store, from 1977 to 1980, Tan Pops were a big hit, with a loyal following. Two mornings each week, ‘Johnny Wheatmeat,’ as we called him, brought in a batch of 50 or more steamy hot, freshly made Pops. I can still smell them today, mouth watering. We displayed them still hot in a large wood bowl at the checkout counter. I believe the store paid around 50¢ to 60¢ each, and they retailed for 75¢ or 85¢. As soon as they arrived, the store staff started in eating them, and eating too much of them. One Tan Pop was great, but rich as they were, two or more was courting belly aches. Still, there were never enough to go around, but Johnny would only complain about how difficult they were to make. I don’t know how long Tan Pops were sold at Erewhon before I started working there, nor do I know what became of Tan Pops or Johnny Wheatmeat in recent years. I remember learning that Johnny held a federal registration of the name ‘Wheatmeat.’ He also marketed Wheatmeat cutlets of several ounces each, refrigerated or frozen, plain (unseasoned) or cooked in soy sauce broth, which he sold to Erewhon and other Boston area natural food stores. As I recall, the Wheatmeat ingredients included wheat gluten and soy protein. Johnny Wheatmeat was something of a vegetable protein visionary, who experimented with many wheat and soy protein products, such as sausages. I also remember that Andrew Levine, formerly a clerk at Erewhon Newbury, used to spend a fair amount of time chatting with Johnny Weissman. You can reach Andy at Yellow Emperor in Eugene, Oregon (503) 485-6664.”

Note: To find out who developed the forerunner of Tan Pops, Joel suggests contacting Matt and Helen Sandler in Aspen, Colorado, or Hannah Bond (also known as Anne Harris) in Athens, Vermont. Both, in fact knew, that the forerunner was Tan Pops, developed by Nik Amartseff of Brookline, Massachusetts, in about March 1972. Address: Joel Wollner Associates, P.O. Box 1343, Clifton Park, New York 12065. Phone: 518-371-7014. Fax: 518-373-8337.


• **Summary:** Charles lived in Boston as part of the macrobiotic community for about 10-12 years, from about July 1971 to December 1981. In 1970-71 Charles started to work for Erewhon packaging products. Then he became theirroaster, roasting grains and seeds for the Erewhon
cereals. At one point he left for a year and studied Sanskrit. From about 1974 to 1978, Charles worked at the Erewhon warehouse running “The Company Store,” which sold products to Erewhon employees and “friends of the community.” They could buy small quantities of Erewhon products at wholesale prices + 10%. George Crane helped to start this store. After leaving The Company Store, Charles then went back into roasting for Erewhon.

Charles remembers Tan Pups (skewered deep-fried seitan in a breaded batter) as an excellent product, and thinks they may have been made by a woman out of her home as a small operation–but he is not at all sure. He tasted Tan Pups but he is not sure if he ever bought Tan Pups for The Company Store. He also remembers Tan Pops which his store brought from Johnny Weissman; he recalls that their quality gradually declined after he began to use gluten flour. Charlie liked Tan Pups better than Tan Pops.

People who were living in Boston during this period, who were involved with food, and who might know who created and made Tan Pups include, in order of importance: (1) Andy Strauss, who made peanut butter cookies, and who was out delivering to all the stores. He is now studying kendo in Japan. Andy was a good friend of Sakee Israel. Try contacting him at: 4 Bentley St., Brighton, Massachusetts 02135. Phone: 617-254-7977. (2) Tyler Smith, who came back to Boston from Japan in 1973 or 1974. He worked for a while at Tao books, then took over Erewhon, was there for 12-18 months then left. Ask Ty who ran the Erewhon retail stores on Newbury St. or in Cambridge during this time. (3) Richard Young keeps in touch with many people interested in macrobiotics and has their addresses and phone numbers in his notebooks. He now lives in his home town of Quincy, Massachusetts. Phone: 617-328-4197. (4) Hannah Bond lives in Cambridgeport, Vermont. Bruce Macdonald lives there too. (5) Matthew and Helen Sandler were in Boston from about 1969-1982. Helen was very discerning about quality and knew a lot about what foods people were making. (6) Tony Harnett who now owns Bread & Circus, but who started as a small store and purchased seitan from Johnny Weissman. (7) Ann Burns, Ken Burns’ widow, still lives at 16 Warren St, Brookline, MA 02146. Phone: 617-734-4115. (8) Victor Marin used to distribute foods in Boston. He now runs a little seaweed company (Ocean Harvest Sea Vegetables) on the cost of northern California (in Ukiah or Comptche), and harvests sea palm (Postelsia). (9) Chris Erickson, who worked at the Erewhon warehouse for many years with the roasting and nut butter line. He lived in Cambridge and is now in Kentfield, California. He arrived in Boston about 1970-71. His phone: 415-721-7249. Note: In Oct. 2004 Chris was murdered by his own son, with whom he was living in San Francisco. (10) Wendy Esko now lives on Lower Main St., Becket, MA. She is part of the macrobiotic community there. Her phone: 413-623-5645. (11) Nik Amartseff. (12) Ron Kotzsch. (13) Kazuko Awamura was a cook at the Erewhon warehouse. Address: Owner, Kendall Food Co., 46A Route 112, Worthington, Massachusetts 01098. Phone: 413-238-5928.


• Summary: Bill grew up in Oklahoma. In 1969 while attending the University of Oklahoma he developed an interest in Oriental culture, philosophy and religion. He started studying Buddhism and Taoism. One day he came across a little spiral-bound book titled Zen Macrobiotics by George Ohsawa. Within several months he quit school and hitch-hiked to Boston, arriving in Jan. 1970.

He lived in a study house with Tom and Mary Hatch, then lived with Michio and Aveline Kushi on Boylston Street, before they moved to 62 Buckminster Rd. First he worked as a carpenter, then starting in early 1972 he worked at the Erewhon warehouse. Paul Hawken was president of Erewhon, but he left Boston, then came back and left again.

In about the spring of 1975, at one of Michio Kushi’s “Way of Life” talks, which he gave every Tuesday and Thursday night, Michio said that he had made arrangements for 3 Americans to go to Japan to study traditional food processing. Bill never saw a written announcement of this. Bill signed up for the program along with about 20 other people. Bill had to return to Oklahoma in the summer of 1975, but he returned to Boston in Dec. 1975. He expected that he, Charles Kendall, and one other person would be leaving for Japan in Jan. 1976. He was surprised to find that he was the only one going. Everyone else, for reasons unknown to him, had backed out. He was a bit curious and suspicious as to why no one else wanted to go.

In Jan. 1976 Bill flew to Japan. He spoke no Japanese and had almost no money. It was his understanding that if he paid his flight to Japan, in exchange for the work he would do in Japan, he would be provided with a room and board, a small salary, and a flight back to America. Michio and Aveline had never suggested to Bill that he start a tofu shop in America after he returned, and Bill never had an interest in making tofu. He was going to Japan mainly to learn about the country and its culture; the tofu was accidental. In Osaka, Bill met Lima Ohsawa. An older man who was a friend of Lima’s became Bill’s guide. After several days in Osaka they took a train together to the little village of Otake, about 15 miles south of Hiroshima. They were greeted with great fanfare and met by a man who was the tofu master–who spoke no English. Bill never understood the relationship between the tofu master and Michio Kushi. The tofu master set Bill up in small apartment with a bike, 5 minutes bike ride from the tofu shop. Bill’s guide spent 2 days with Bill at the village translating (since no one else in the village spoke English).
then he left. Many villagers asked Bill if he was a soldier from a nearby U.S. military base.

Bill worked hard at the tofu shop with 7-8 other employees (mostly older women), not including delivery boys, for the next 7-8 months, until August. The master was very much a traditionalist; he was the only person Bill met in Japan who ate brown rice, but he never mentioned macrobiotics. The master was a hard worker, very stern and yang, but a good, strong, often loving man who treated Bill specially and kindly. Bill has very good memories of him. He made nigari tofu and 13-14 different product (incl. egg tofu, burdock tofu, various deep-fried types), and his dream was to have his style of tofu shop all over the world.

For Bill, the best times were when the master allowed him, twice a week, to take the company truck alone, all day, to deliver okara to dairy farmers in the countryside. Bill was able to do a bit of exploring of temples, shrines, and gardens on these trips. Sometimes the master would be gone for 1-2 days and Bill was responsible for the tofu shop from start to finish. Most of the tofu was delivered to huge supermarkets in Hiroshima. The villagers were amazingly kind to Bill.

But there were difficulties. The master belonged to several different Buddhist sects; Bill was required to go with the master to every religious meeting he attended. Bill hated this because he couldn’t speak any Japanese, he had to sit on his knees in seiza for hours at a time, and he was tired from 6 days of hard work at the tofu shop. He desperately wanted some time off from the long hours, both to rest and see more of Japan. At times Bill felt like he was being “used” to work long hours for meager pay, and at other times he realized that this was what a traditional Japanese apprenticeship required. Moreover he was delighted to have this opportunity, difficult though it was.

Returning to America, Bill attended Herman and Cornellia Aihara’s annual summer camp in California, then he returned to Boston on about 1 Sept. 1976. Ed Esko and Stephen Uprichard immediately offered him a job at the East West Foundation. He worked there until 1982, eventually becoming vice-president.

Bill was the second American (after William Shurtleff) to study tofu-making in Japan with a traditional Japanese master. Tims and William Shurtleff met in November 1976 at Ken and Ann Burns’ house at 16 Warren Street in Boston—shortly after Tims had returned from Japan. Tims was happy to see that Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi were doing a nationwide tour to introduce Americans to tofu. Before Bill Tims went to Japan in Jan. 1976 it was difficult to get tofu in Boston; it was considered a luxury. But after he came back, a number of tofu products were being sold commercially—including a tofu cheesecake made by a Boston woman. He also remembers big slabs of seitan (Wheatmeat) sold at Erewhon.

In 1982 Bill moved to Arkansas to start Mountain Ark, along with Frank Head, Joel Wollner, and Tom Monte. Frank was the only one who ever had any financial involvement in Mountain Ark, and he is the only one of the original four left at the company, which is currently for sale and will be liquidated if it is not sold by June 30. Bill never worked at Mountain Ark.

Four or five 5 years ago a news flash came on CNN that there had been a terrible earthquake in Otake, Japan, the little village where he had lived. He watched the destruction on TV with sadness. Several years ago he heard that the old tofu master had died.

Bill now runs his own business, Natural Health Center, which he and his wife Carol started in 1983. He does macrobiotic consultations and sells macrobiotic foods by mail order. Address: Natural Health Center, 45 North Hartman, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701. Phone: 501-521-9105 (or 9195).


**Summary:** Matthew’s brother, Richard Sandler, arrived in the Boston area on 1 Jan. 1968. Matt drove him to 29 University Ave. knowing nothing about macrobiotics except that he ate with Richard once at the Paradox restaurant in New York City. Those were the early days. Nahum Stiskin and Richard Sandler, were already in Boston when Matt arrived in about late 1968. Matt moved to Japan in about 1969; Nahum Stiskin was living in Kyoto, Japan (where he arrived in May 1969), when Matt arrived. Steve Helfer (a student of macrobiotics) had arrived in Japan before Matt. After a while, Matt brought Helen to Japan so they could get married—which they did in about 1971, at the Jewish Community Center. Matt had known Helen when they were in Boston; they lived together a macrobiotic study house.


While in Boston, Matt started a bakery named Matthew’s All Natural, located in Woburn, just outside of Boston. It’s first products were sweets such as carrot cakes. The discovery of barley malt, a complex carbohydrate sweetener, was a major breakthrough for the company. Helen Sandler developed a line of English Muffins sweetened with barley malt, and then a line of whole-grain breads which were introduced in 1979. The company soon became quite large and successful, and it is still in operation. The bakery did not use soy in any form in its products.

Evan Root started the original Sanae. Matt’s brother, Richard Sandler, who arrived in Boston before Matt, started
The Seventh Inn (also called Big Sanae). He rented the space and made it into a restaurant with his own hands; his partner was Warren Durbin (originally a film editor from California who came to Boston to study microbiotics and who now lives in Vermont). Richard is now a photographer living in Greenwhich Village (Phone: 212-777-7138).

Barry Creighton invested a lot of money in his Cable Springs Bakery; it was a good idea, but ahead of its time, so it wasn’t that successful. When it went bankrupt, Kathy Bellicchi took it over. Helen Sandler (who had her own company) then shared the bakery with Kathy, and baked cakes there starting in about 1975. Helen does not remember any commercial soy products in Boston, except the Tofu Cheesecake sold at Sanae (it was a Sanae special) and 1 or 2 other restaurants in the late 1970s. Matt liked the Tofu Cheesecake; Helen didn’t. Matt recalls that the Tofu Cheesecake was sold, pre-sliced, at a number of retail stores, including Erewhon. He thinks it was sold in the first tier of products that Erewhon sold out of the cooler. He thinks it was made by an underground business that made only this product. Helen experimented with “Tofu Cream,” made by mixing tofu, vanilla, and maple syrup–but it was never commercialized since it had such a short shelf life and the retail stores had no refrigeration.

Another excellent product in Boston was Tan Pups, made by Nik Amartseff and his wife. It was a natural meatless hot dog made of seitan, deep-fried on a stick. Nik was one of the most creative food product developers in Boston at the time. He also developed the formulations for most or all of the Erewhon cereals, granolas, and snacks, as well as their labels and packaging. “He was a real fertile mind.”

Matt is planning to launch a soy dessert named Luppy (in 2 flavors), within the next 6 months. The product will be aseptically packaged in tubs. His company is named Luppy Foods. He remembers Luppy soymilk from Japan as a soymilk sweetened with brown sugar and sold in little bottles.

When Yuko Okada first brought soymilk to the USA, he started by trying to make a deal with Knudsen. That didn’t work out and for some reason he had a problem with Eden Foods in Michigan at the beginning. So Yuko called Matt, who at that time was still owner of Matthew’s All Natural bakery, and asked Matt if he wanted to distribute the soymilk product over his route which extended from Maine to Philadelphia. Matt also distributed foods frozen and refrigerated as far west as Denver. The product Yuko was offering was quite similar to the Luppy soymilk Matt had enjoyed in Japan. Before Matt could say yes, Yuko had made a deal with Eden Foods to import.

Update on Matt’s soymilk dessert. 1992. July 15. It will be a pudding-type product, the soymilk will be supplied by American Soy Products in Michigan, and it should be on the market by about Nov. 1992. Address: P.O. Box 10277, Aspen, Colorado 81612. Phone: 802-869-2010.


Conducted by William Shurtleff of Soyfoods Center.

• Summary: Nahum Stiskin is now in New York City in the field of investments. His former wife, Beverly Stiskin, lives in Brookline, and is an Alexander therapist. Nahum has a black cloud and a real bitter feeling regarding his past life. He doesn’t like to talk with people. Lenny ran into him 8 years ago at an ABA show and he said to Lenny, “Don’t bother me.” Mr. Ehud Spurling, the owner of Inner Traditions Press in Rochester, Vermont also knows how to reach Nahum.

Bill Garrison is on the West Coast somewhere. He applied for the job of financial manager of the Kushi Foundation. Anthony “Tony” Harnett is owner of Bread and Circus in Newton, Massachusetts. Jim Ledbetter is in Southern California; the Kushis keep in touch with him. Jim started Order of the Universe magazine. Robert Hargrove is in the Brookline area where he owns Robert Hargrove and Associates.

Nik Amartseff got involved with cocaine at some point in about the late 1970s and his life fell apart. But now its back together.

Marcea Newman now lives in Australia; Lenny saw her at Anaheim not long ago and spent a lot of time with her and her husband (who has designed a very interesting Chinese herbal database on a Macintosh computer); its a very expensive diagnostic tool. You can enter your symptoms and it will suggest which herbs to take, or you can key in the name of an herb, and it will tell you all about it.

Eric Utne was the manager of Erewhon in about 1970 or 1971. He came to Boston in the late spring of 1969, at the same time as Lenny’s wife to be. Lenny arrived in Boston in the summer of 1969 from Chicago, Illinois. He left Boston for Minneapolis in 1971; then Eric Utne, Lenny, and Peggy Taylor (who is now the editor at New Age Journal) started a restaurant at the University of Minnesota named Whole Foods. They ran it for 2 years. Then Eric and Peggy returned to Boston, and Eric went to work at the East West Journal. Lenny left for Boston in the fall of 1973; he wanted to start a bakery, then he and Bob Phelps (who now runs Redwing Books) planned to start a seaweed harvesting business. The Robert Hargrove, Eric Utne, and several other people (the majority of the staff of East West Journal) asked Michio Kushi to either give them the magazine (free of charge) or they would quit. They did quit and started New Age Journal. Michio Kushi asked Lenny if he would please work for East West for a few months, which he did–though he ended up staying for years until he finally left to work at East West Journal.
The Seventh Inn was a really successful restaurant, but Michio refused to share any of the ownership with the people who ran it and he tried to control it too much. Originally called Sanae, it was started by Richard Sandler (who selected the location and designed the kitchen, but never really worked there after it was in business), Evan Root, and others. Lenny was a cook there. Richard and another guy named Warren Durban quit before the restaurant was finished, and they gave it over to Lenny and Bill Anton (who is still in Japan). Then Yuko Okada and Hiroshi Hayashi started to run it; they changed the name to The Seventh Inn. There were two Sanae Restaurants, one on Newbury St. and the other on Boylston St. Address: New Age, Brighton, Massachusetts. Phone: 617-787-2005.


• Summary: "Wilmington, Massachusetts—Nature Food Centres, a 94-store health food chain based in Wilmington, Mass., became the second major natural retailer this year to become a publicly traded company. On March 11, Nature Food Centres merged with the Revere Fund, a publicly owned company, enabling the chain to offer 2.5 million shares of its stocks. The deal raised more than $15 million and left a new entity called Nature Food Centres Inc. as the surviving company. 'It was one of those win-win situations where everybody came out doing quite well,' says Ronald Rossetti, president of Nature Food Centres... Rossetti says, 'in accounting terms, it's called a reverse acquisition.' Stocks are listed in NASDQ under Nature Food Centres name, with the trading code of NAFD."

Note: This news release also appeared in Health Foods Business (May 1992, p. 14).


• Summary: Muso was formed as an establishment in February 1966, and Yuko has worked for the company since that time. His current title is president of Muso Co., Ltd. for Export and Import division, a position he has held for the last 6 years. Yuko first went to the USA in April 1970. First he worked at the Erewhon retail store and at the Erewhon warehouse as production manager and import manager. After 2 years he began to manage a macrobiotic restaurant [the Seventh Inn] for 2½ years as executive vice president. After the restaurant had paid off all its debts, he returned to Erewhon as import manager, and was also in charge of determining the cost of all production. Yuko thinks that Muso began to ship foods to Erewhon in 1968. [Note: Kotzsch. 1984, Dec. East West Journal p. 14-21 states that Muso began to export foods in 1969.] The main food items shipped during the first year were shoyu (made by Marushima Shoyu Co.), several types of miso (made by Kanemitsu Miso Co. and Ohta Hatcho Miso Co.), black soybeans, azuki beans, many types of sea vegetables and teas, buckwheat noodles, umeboshi pickles, and takuan (daikon pickles).

The following Westerners have worked for Muso over the years: Paul Hawken (March-Oct. 1969), James Docker (several months), Jim Ledbetter (several months), Evan Root (several months), Tyler Smith (6 months), Steve Earle (4 years). Only Americans have worked at Muso.

Muso moved to their present address in the Kosei Building on 1 Dec. 1986. The company still maintains a domestic distribution company at its former address at Otedori 2-5-1, Higashi-ku, Osaka. Address: Muso Co., Ltd., Kosei Bldg., 2nd Floor, Tanimachi 2-5-5, Chuo-ku, Osaka 540, Japan. Phone: 06-942-0343.


• Summary: When Tom arrived in Los Angeles (he never did live or study macrobiotics in Boston), Bruce Macdonald was in charge of Erewhon’s West Coast operations and Jimmy Silver was in charge of the Erewhon retail store. In Sept. 1969 he moved into the Kushi House at 7511 Franklin Ave. in Hollywood. He shopped at the Erewhon retail store before he began to work there and he recalls it as being “very primitive.” Then in Oct. 1969 he went to work for the Erewhon retail store at 8003 Beverly Boulevard (one store down from the corner) just as Erewhon got their first warehouse, which was about 1,200 square feet, catty corner across the street.

Tom has kept the early leases for the Erewhon retail store. It has always been his understanding that he had all the leases, including the very first one. However during the first year that the store was in business (from the fall of 1969 until Sept. 1970) the rent may have been paid on a month-to-month basis. He has heard that Jacques Delangre and John Fountain paid the deposit and the first month’s rent. The first formal lease may have been necessary when Erewhon to make improvements—such as putting in a wooden floor and building nice shelves. The earliest lease he has was signed and executed on 8 October 1970 by and between Murray LaBell and Benjamin Izakowitz (lessors, owners of the building), and Erewhon Trading Company Inc., for a retail and wholesale grocery at 8003 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles. The 2-year lease commences on 1 July 1971 and ends on 30 June 1973. The amount of the lease is $225/month. The lease is signed by Murray and Benjamin (lessors), and Roger Hillyard (lessee), Executive vice president for Erewhon Trading Co. Inc. The second lease was signed and executed on 1 July 1971. Erewhon’s address is now given as 8001 and 8003 Beverly Boulevard. The lease is now for $800/month, reflecting the fact that
store has now roughly doubled in size by moving into the adjacent building at 8001 Beverly Blvd. So the store has expanded. For details see LaBell 1970, 1971, and 1973. Tom was managing the store when it expanded. Roger Hillyard sent a fellow named Jim (who is now a doctor) to Los Angeles to start the expansion. Jim burned out 2-3 months before the expansion was finished, so Tom finished the job and opened the expanded store.

In 1975 Tyler Smith became president of Erewhon in Boston, Massachusetts. In about July 1975 Smith told Tom that he planned to sell Erewhon–Los Angeles to John Fountain, and Smith asked Tom to stay on. At the time, John Fountain and John Deming were both in Boston negotiating this deal. In Aug. 1975 Smith sold off the West Coast operation, including the right to use the Erewhon name, to John Fountain, who was financed by John Deming. Fountain formed a new corporation named Mondo Trading Company (a name known to relatively few people) to acquire Erewhon–Los Angeles. Tom’s understanding has always been that John Deming loaned John Fountain the money ($200,000) he needed to buy Erewhon–Los Angeles. It was a 5-year loan. Erewhon folded after 5 years because Fountain couldn’t pay off his loan to Deming. Shortly after Fountain acquired Erewhon–Los Angeles, Tom went to work for him as president of the company–Mondo. Fountain wanted to stay behind the scenes. In essence, he didn’t want anyone to know him. Fountain worked at the warehouse. When he took over, the warehouse was in Culver City (about 15 miles west of downtown Los Angeles). Shortly thereafter Fountain purchased a warehouse in the City of Commerce and moved Erewhon’s warehouse operations there. It was larger and closer to Fountain’s home. Fountain bought a home in Huntington Park (about 10 miles south of Los Angeles), so the new warehouse was only 5-10 minutes drive from his home, instead of the former 45 minute drive. For Fountain the new warehouse was also a real estate investment; he leased it to the corporation (Mondo / Erewhon–Los Angeles). Continued. Address: Owner, Erewhon Natural Foods Market, 7660 Beverly Blvd. (at Stanley), Los Angeles, California 90046. Phone: 213-655-3537.


*Summary:* John Deming apparently had nothing to do with John Fountain’s operation of Mondo / Erewhon–Los Angeles. Deming had his own Erewhon store in Orange County. Fountain agreed to allow Deming to own and operate this store using the Erewhon name but with no connection to Mondo. Tom signed virtually every check paid by the Mondo and he does not recall any payments made to Deming during the 5-year duration of the loan. He is quite sure that Mondo had to make royalty payments (about 2 tenths of one percent of gross sales for use of the Erewhon name) out of operating income to Erewhon–Boston. Mondo had gross sales of about $10 million a year. It is Tom’s understanding that John Fountain retained the right to use the Erewhon name for the five years that he was involved with the corporation.

Both Fountain and Deming were heavily involved in and strongly influenced by the Free Enterprise Institute run by Andrew Galambos. Erewhon managers were encouraged to be involved with this institute. Tom felt that Fountain and Deming were trying to introduce to Erewhon a philosophy that was “impossible to implement under the circumstances.” It was a philosophy of free enterprise that was Libertarian to the extreme. Tom thinks that interfered with the growth of the company. Before Fountain bought the company, the employees were encouraged to be involved with Werner Erhard’s Est. “I did them both and survived.”

Erewhon, in both Los Angeles and Boston, was undercapitalized from day one. This created tremendous
problems, because the company’s sales grew so fast. Tom was constantly aware that Erewhon–Los Angeles was struggling financially. He does not know why John Deming wasn’t aware of this also. He wasn’t around much and part of the time he was busy with his store in Orange County—which never really got off the ground. “My main job was dealing with past-due creditors. Fountain had to factor his accounts receivable.” Tom used to like to get out of the warehouse one week, so he would drive down to San Diego, Riverside, and Orange counties and pick up produce in the farmers’ fields. He knew each of these men personally, and he had to tell them that he was unable to pay them amounts of $10,000 to $20,000.

In late 1979, John Fountain was obligated to come up with something like $200,000 that he owed John Deming. Being unable to, he had to relinquish the company to Deming. Deming was livid. Deming proceeded to sell off the assets piecemeal. John Deming was very conscientious and fair by eventually paying in full all monies owed to Erewhon’s creditors. He could have just filed bankruptcy (which he never did) and left them hanging. There was an Erewhon Natural Foods retail store in Northridge that had been opened after Fountain purchased the company. Tom remembers walking the property with both Fountain and Deming before Erewhon began renting it. Fountain sold that store to Deming for $50,000–presumably in cancellation of $50,000 of his debt. Deming had hired a man named Robert Jenkins as a consultant. In one day, Jenkins sold the store to Tree of Life for $100,000 (but not all cash; Tree would pay part of it in products), making an instant profit (on paper) of something like $50,000.

The corporation found difficulty selling the Erewhon store at 8001 Beverly Blvd. in Los Angeles. Tree of Life looked at it. Nobody saw the potential, partly because the store was somewhat run down. Erewhon needed to meet a part of its debt. Deming had hired a man named Robert Jenkins as a consultant. In one day, Jenkins sold the store to Tree of Life for $100,000 (but not all cash; Tree would pay part of it in products), making an instant profit (on paper) of something like $50,000.

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Jimmy Silver, who worked at Erewhon, Los Angeles, in the early days and knew Tom DeSilva well, adds (Jan. 2011): Tom was really good at running the business. And having been a lawyer he was particularly good at negotiating contracts and agreements. He understood the implications, which are often buried or hidden, and could reach understandings with the other guys that were fair to both. Not usually what the other guys wanted, of course—they would prefer something fair only to them. Libby [his wife] said he was great with leases.

“Libby said Hugo van Seenus had been in touch with her, and liked to send newly hired people from his store (he’s now got a location in Colorado, I believe) to Erewhon [Los Angeles] for a week or two to observe and train, which Libby said they were always willing to do for him.”

One of Tom’s boys died of cancer a few years ago. Tom went down hill after that and now basically has no memory—some form of dementia. Yet he seems happy and placid; he lives in a care facility in Torrance. Libby is running the store without Tom.

An undated photo sent by Patricia Smith shows Tom DeSilva seated in the full lotus posture of meditation, listening to the sound of one bell ringing. Address: Owner, Erewhon Natural Foods Market, 7660 Beverly Blvd. (at Stanley), Los Angeles, California 90046. Phone: 213-655-3537.

305. SoyaScan Notes. 1992. The remarkable food-related creativity that took place in Boston from the late 1960s until the late 1970s, especially within the macrobiotic community (Overview). July 13. Compiled by William Shurtleff of Soyfoods Center.

• Summary: A flowering of original food product development took place in Boston during this period. There were a number of reasons for this (1) The meeting of two food cultures, Japanese and American, together with new ideas related to diet and health, as embodied in the macrobiotic teachings of Michio and Aveline Kushi. Just as the meeting of two ocean currents leads to a region at the boundary of great biological activity and development, so does the meeting of two cultures. Young Americans were introduced to a host of new basic foods which they quickly began to use and process in new ways. These included miso, tofu, seitan, amazake, umeboshi salt plums, sea vegetables, rice syrup, rice cakes, azuki beans, mochi, and many more.

To cite but four examples: (A) Seitan: Japanese had used seitan as a salty condiment or seasoning. By late 1972 Americans had transformed it into a succulent meat substitute. (B) Tofu: It had never occurred to Japanese to put tofu in a blender. By the mid-1970s Americans in
Boston were combining it with a sweetener to make delectable dairyless tofu cheesecakes and cream pies, or to make low-fat, cholesterol-free salad dressings, dips, and spreads. (C) Amazake: Japanese serve this as a hot beverage like tea, most in teahouses; The only flavoring used is gingerroot. Americans transformed it into delectable ice creams (free of dairy products and sugar), or thick, sweet drinks resembling milk shakes sold refrigerated in plastic bottles. Americans also used amazake as an all-purpose natural sweetener in place of sugar, honey, or maple syrup. They also learned to make a rice milk resembling amazake using commercial purified enzymes instead of koji; at this point, the line separating amazake and rice syrup became somewhat blurred. (D) Rice Syrup: Japanese use amé or mizuamé, made from koji, as the basis for taffy-like candies or, in very limited ways, as a sweetener. Americans soon began to make rice syrup using commercial enzymes instead of koji and to use it as an all-purpose natural sweetener in place of sugar, honey, or maple syrup.

(2) The closely-knit, almost communal nature of the macrobiotic community in Boston, was one in which many people, mostly young people (including many women), were working closely together with a common vision. New ideas were shared more than guarded or patented. Joel Wollner notes that it was almost like the art community in Paris during the impressionist era of the late 1800s.

(3) The Erewhon retail store (opened in April 1966) provided a ready testing ground for new local products. Many got their start in one or more of these stores. The Erewhon Trading Co. (which started importing Japanese natural and macrobiotic foods in Aug. 1968), and which began wholesaling and distributing in the spring of 1969, greatly helped to expand the market for good products.

(4) The community was fortunate to have a number of exceptionally talented entrepreneurs in the food business, including Paul Hawken, Bruce Macdonald, Roger Hillyard, Bill Tara, and many others. Many of these individuals later left the area to start their own food companies.

(5) It was during this period that the natural foods, macrobiotic foods, organic foods, and vegetarian movements (all closely related, and often based on similar philosophical, ethical, and spiritual values) began to grow in the United States, in part in reaction to the overly-processed, overly chemicalized, unhealthful foods produced by big food companies, and the highly-chemicalized food growing techniques used by American farmers–and in part because of the leadership and inspiration of the community in Boston.


• Summary: Concerning creativity with foods in Boston from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s. Americans first really met Japanese foods in Boston via macrobiotics. There were very few Japanese restaurants in the USA before World War II. In Boston there was a sense that everyone was working with food in order to heal the world. Any person who had an idea for a food and made that food, even on a home scale, had access to the shelves of the Erewhon retail store. The early students of macrobiotics in Boston had a mission and felt inspired by Michio Kushi’s dream of One Peaceful World. “Michio was able to inspire every person, one by one. Each person felt like they were chosen and privileged. You could feel the winds of change all around you. Anything was possible. The answer to America’s problems was macrobiotics.” Many people had come to Boston after being heavily involved with psychedelic drugs. They found that the macrobiotic diet could heal the problems that they had developed from using drugs.

Matt Sandler’s first best-selling products were carrot cake, banana cake, maple-spice cake. Helen Sandler was known as the cake lady.

Both Yuko and Matthew stress that Paul Hawken was by far the most important person in building Erewhon into a major, pioneering company with a totally new vision. It was Roger Hillyard, rather than Bruce Macdonald who was the first to distribute Erewhon products, which he did out of the back of the Erewhon retail store. Roger cleared a space at the back of the store, bought a mill, and ground then wholesaled whole wheat flour. Bruce’s role was to showcase the Newbury Street store by making it into a work of art through creative carpentry and natural interior design. Paul Hawken was very interested in both Japanese language and culture. He learned the language in Kyoto at the Nihongo Gakko (Japanese language school). Paul lived in the Okada’s big manor home in Sakai city near Osaka for about 8 months. Then he moved to Kyoto, where he lived on a hill in Sakyo-ku; Alkan Yamaguchi lived right above him in a separate house on the same hill.

Matt thinks that Jeff Flasher played a major role in the fall of Erewhon because he (Jeff) made the decision to greatly expand Erewhon’s product line and move into a huge new warehouse. Matt feels that was the fatal decision; he believes Erewhon should have stayed with their good name and limited themselves to selling only high quality products. Flasher was in jail on a drug count and in order to get out he contacted (Matt thinks) Bruce Macdonald. Bruce said he would employ Flasher in his company. So the authorities let Flasher out and he went back to work for Erewhon and basically ruined the company. Address: 1. Muso Co., Ltd., Kosei Bldg., 2nd Floor, Tanimachi 2-5-5, Chuo-ku, Osaka 540, Japan; 2. P.O. Box 10277, Aspen, Colorado 81612. Phone: 1. 06-942-0341.

• Summary: Muso Shokuhin’s first account in England was Harmony Foods, which had been started by Greg Sams. Teizo Okada lectured in England. Either Greg or Craig Sams attended one of the lectures and had a consultation with Teizo about his personal medical problems. Greg later invented the idea of spreadable fruit, which later became a famous product worldwide. Harmony now has the lion’s share of the spreadable fruit market in the UK.

Peter Bradford founded Sunwheel Foods in England. Peter was in Boston, Massachusetts, working at Erewhon in about 1972-73. He returned to England and several years later he started Sunwheel in competition with Harmony Foods, which had been founded earlier. Muso Shokuhin was Sunwheel’s first source of Japanese natural and macrobiotic foods. Address: Muso Co., Ltd., Kosei Bldg., 2nd Floor, Tanimachi 2-5-5, Chuo-ku, Osaka 540, Japan. Phone: 1. 06-942-0341.


• Summary: Essene began in March 1969 as a macrobiotic natural foods retail store named Essene Macrobiotic Supply at 2031 Samson St. in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Primarily a juice and snack bar, it was founded by Denny Waxman, Charles Smith (Smitty), and Stanley Petrowski; Stanley left after several months. Howard was not involved with the company at that time. After about a year, the growing retail store moved to 320 South St. (at 3rd) in Philadelphia and changed its name to Essene Traditional Foods.

By Feb. 1971 a distribution company, also named Essene Traditional Foods, was started in the retail store—following the Erewhon model. An ad in East West Journal (Feb. 1971, p. 10) shows that “Essene,” at 320 South St., was a distributor and wholesaler of natural and traditional foods, including miso, tamari, sea vegetables, and organic grains, vegetables, and beans. They made stone-ground wheat flour on the premises. The distribution company soon outgrew the store and by May 1972 had moved into a small warehouse at 58th & Grays Ave., Philadelphia PA 19143. Then it moved to a larger warehouse in Boyertown, about 1 hour drive outside Philadelphia. The distribution company went out of business in about 1976-78; it had been in business for about 5 years.

In 1981, when Bill Tara returned to the United States to become director of the Kushi Institute of Boston, Massachusetts, Denny Waxman, head of the Philadelphia East West Center, went to London to run the Community Health Foundation and the Kushi Institute. He stayed two years. Denny now lives in Portugal.


• Summary: A colorful overview of the history of soybeans and soyfoods from 1100 B.C. to the present, worldwide. Discusses the history of tofu, Samuel Bowen, Benjamin Franklin, T.A. Van Gundy, Madison College, Henry Ford, Seventh-day Adventists, Erewhon, Asian Americans, Kikkoman, the $1,000 million soyfoods market in America, countries with the highest per-capita consumption of soyfoods, the future of soyfoods. Address: 1. NFM; 2. Soyfoods Center, P.O. Box 234, Lafayette, California 94549.


• Summary: Aveline calls to say that 3-4 days ago her attorney for 27 years, Morris Kirsner, showed her a book by Paul Hawken titled Growing a Business. She and Morris had to laugh when they read that Paul claimed at the start of the book to have started Erewhon and then to have sold it. She talked with Mr. Kirsner about this and they agreed on the following: Originally Aveline owned all of the Erewhon stock. Shortly before Paul left for Japan, she offered him 50% of this stock. At roughly the same time, she offered 50% of the stock in Sanae to Evan Root. Michio, Aveline, Paul, and Evan all went together to Morris Kirsner’s office to sign the documents. Evan was happy to sign the agreement, but Paul did not sign. Aveline does not know why Paul did not sign; he said he didn’t need the stock. Aveline can get copies of all Erewhon’s legal documents from Mr. Kirsner to show what happened.

After Paul and Evan went to Japan, Evan wanted to stay longer in Japan to study, but he needed more money. So Michio and Aveline bought back Sanae stock from Evan, and sent him money each month. After Paul returned from Japan, he went to Los Angeles, California, and stayed at the macrobiotic house there for 3-4 months. Aveline was also there and Erewhon–Los Angeles was now in business selling macrobiotic natural foods. Bill Tara and maybe Bruce Macdonald were in Los Angeles at the time.

When Paul and Aveline returned to Boston. Erewhon’s situation was completely different. It was now a fairly large
wholesale and retail company instead of just a single retail store as it was when Paul left. Aveline wanted to offer Paul (and other top managers) stock after Paul returned. There were many long meetings of the 3-4 main Erewhon managers, but no agreement could be reached about who should get how much stock. So in the end, Aveline continued to own all the stock. Neither Paul nor any of the other leaders/managers of Erewhon ever owned any stock. At one of these meetings, with Michio, Aveline, and various other managers present to talk about Erewhon, Paul expressed himself in a very negative way about many things related to Erewhon. Michio, uncharacteristically, got very angry at Paul. Paul organized at least one meeting of employees and explained his viewpoint. “Everyone (including Evan Root) was shocked. What he said was completely untrue. Not long after that, Paul left Erewhon. Aveline thinks Paul Hawken was a twin.

Aveline’s main project now is a prison project. This has been her dream for the past 10 years. She and Michio would like to offer their 400 acres of beautiful land at Ashburnham (near Gardner, about 1 hour drive northwest of Boston near the New Hampshire border), Massachusetts, to the state of Massachusetts. They could build a prison on the land and Aveline and Michio would be able to play a major role in determining the type of food that was served (macrobiotic natural foods), the daily schedule (incl. yoga and dô-in), and the policy. Her youngest son, who is now a lawyer in Massachusetts, is working on this project.

Follow-up talks with Morris Kirsner. 1993. March 22 and April 8. He will look for the early Erewhon legal documents. He handed them over to Hale and Door, the Boston law firm that handled Erewhon’s bankruptcy, and they have the corporate minutes stored in their warehouse. He will ask them to send the documents to him. Address: 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-232-6869.


• Summary: In April 1965 Fred bought Sunset Health Foods (at 1319 Ninth St. in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco) and by about April 1966 he had renamed and transformed it from an old-model health food store to a prototype natural foods retail store, named New Age Natural Foods, at the same address. New Age Natural Foods was one of the first and most famous of the new wave of natural food stores in California. In about 1967 he expanded the store across the street to 1326 Ninth Ave., keeping the original location as a granary which retailed bulk grains, seeds, and beans, and which also had flour mills that ground fresh flours.

In about the spring of 1970 Fred opened a huge natural foods supermarket in Palo Alto, also named New Age Natural Foods. David Manstandrea worked there.

Also in the spring of 1970, at about the same time as the supermarket, Fred started New Age Distributing Co. In those days it was very difficult for a natural foods retail store to obtain the basic foods and other supplies that it needed. New Age Distributing Co. was the first natural foods distributor of its kind in California. So as small natural food companies started in the early 1970s throughout northern California, they bought their supplies (especially bulk grains, beans, seeds, and organically grown produce) from New Age. Fred’s retail stores sold a small amount of food supplements (vitamins, minerals, etc.) but he never emphasized or distributed these.

Also in 1970 Fred started a poultry operation in the town of Freedom, south of Santa Cruz. He did that because there was no honest source of fertile eggs—they had discovered that the source they had been buying from for years was dishonest. He leased a ranch, hired a poultry man as manager (Bill Viebrock—who is still a wholesaler in the natural foods industry), bought and raised 30,000 pullets, developed a very special feed formula was entirely vegetarian, and soon began producing excellent quality fertile eggs—which the company soon discovered it could only sell at a loss, since they were so expensive to produce in this manner. The fertile egg operation proved to be a big mistake that was very costly. This hurt Fred financially in each of his other natural food operations so he got out of the venture at great cost. He was so financially stretched that he had to get out of wholesaling as well to try to save his two retail stores.

In about 1972 Fred sold New Age Distributing Co. to his shareholders. They kept the same name for a while, then changed it to The Well. Then it was also Pure and Simple because Bruce Macdonald got involved.

Note 1. According to Bruce Macdonald (March 2011) Fred Rohe and Paul Hawken were kindred spirits and became close friends. They were both pioneers in the natural foods industry in the mid-1960s. After Paul (now president of Erewhon Trading Co.) returned to California from Japan in Dec. 1969, he worked with Bruce at Erewhon West in Los Angeles for several months, then traveled to San Francisco for several months where he and Fred wrote a number of excellent pamphlets (“The Flour Story,” “The Sugar Story,” etc.) and worked to organize Organic Merchants, a trade association of natural foods distributors.

Bill Bolduc had gone to Michael a number of times before 1971 and asked him to move to Ann Arbor and work for Eden. But he was dedicated to making Joyous Revival successful. One day in the fall of 1970, while Mike was still engaged in Joyous Revival, Bill asked Michael to meet him at the retail store at Wayne State University that was partially owned by Eden Foods. Mike rode his motorcycle down to the appointment and saw the store for the first time. Michael used to live near Wayne State and he thought he could help develop the store. So Mike worked vigorously, as a volunteer, at the Eden retail store at Wayne State University for only a short period of time in the fall of 1970—before he was hired by Bill Bolduc of Eden Foods in Jan. 1971. By Jan. 1971 it had become evident that the store would not be able to survive financially.

Within 2 weeks after Mike was hired by Bolduc in Jan. 1971, he closed down his household at Walnut Lake in Oakland County, Michigan, and moved to Ann Arbor in Washtenaw County, Michigan, to work full time at the store. He moved to Ann Arbor in the fall of 1971 (conflicts).

“I got hired by Bill Bolduc and I went to work at 211 South State Street. I asked Bill what he wanted me to do and he told me to manage the store.” Royce Seeger was there; he had been involved with Vic Leabu (pronounced luh-BOE; he later changed the pronunciation to luh-BUU), Jimmy Silver, and many others. Mike did not get paid by Eden Foods until 1973; he worked as a volunteer. The company refused to pay him for the first few months because he was collecting unemployment compensation and why should he be paid by the company when he could get free money from the government—was the logic at the time. That seemed okay to Mike. He started to get paid by Eden Foods shortly after his unemployment benefits expired.

The first meeting of the Natural Foods Distributors Association that Mike visited was in Seattle, Washington. He was manning Eden’s booth there and Mr. Kazama visited the booth. Mike was not involved with imports at that time. Because Tim had lived in Boston, Massachusetts, and worked at Little Sanae there, he was basically Eden’s person in communication with the Japanese side of things at that time. Tim may have attended an earlier meeting in Florida. Mike attended all meetings after the Seattle meeting. Mike agrees that all initial Japanese imports had to bear the Erehwon brand. Before the first order arrived from Japan, Mike talked by phone with Yuko Okada, who worked with Erehwon in Boston at the time. At some time between when Tim placed the first order from Mitoku and when it arrived, Michael decided that Eden should get all future imports from the Muso Co.

Mike stayed at the retail store while it was down on Riverside Drive and at the end of Ann Street. He didn’t create an office for himself at the warehouse until they moved into Platt Road.

Michael met Clifford Adler for the first time when Ron Roller brought him over to Mike’s home on Oakwood in Ann Arbor. It was about the summer of 1978 and Cliff was a painter renovating apartments in Ann Arbor. Ron introduced Cliff as a person who might be good to help Eden Foods. About 7-9 months later, in the spring of 1979, Cliff began to work for Eden Foods; at that time Michael was living in the small town of Manchester, Michigan. Michael’s son, Jason, had finished kindergarten in Ann Arbor and they moved to Manchester in about Aug. 1978. Cliff definitely did not start to work at Eden in 1976 (as others recall). The date of his first paycheck could be obtained easily from the Social Security Administration. Eden needed a salesperson in Chicago. The company had been wholesaling foods for a while. The biggest nearby city was Chicago and they didn’t have much business there. As a challenge, Cliff went to natural foods stores in Chicago and tried to sell them Eden’s products. Where Cliff got $100,000 to invest in Eden Foods has been the subject of much conjecture.

After the chaos of the fire, decisions came first and the paperwork came later. The first decision, in early December (within 10 days after the fire), was to give stock to 6 key employees to try to motivate them to stay with the company and try to rebuild it—and to lay off about 35 people. These two decisions were announced as one on the same day. The second decision was that Cliff would convert his $100,000 loan to equity. The third decision, in early 1980, was Tim’s personal decision to leave, and to convert his Eden Foods stock into ownership of the corporation named the Maynard Street Connection, Inc.

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After the fire, Eden had a negative net worth of more than $800,000. Four things saved Eden Foods after the fire. (1) Cliff’s conversion of his $100,000; (2) The incredible cooperation, generosity, and kindness that Eden received from its suppliers in the natural foods industry, and their trust that Eden would do its best to pay back they money at a time when interest rates were over 20%; (3) Frank Dietrick’s investment of $100,000 in the company; and (4) The great effort made by natural foods retail stores and consumers to go out of their way help Eden survive by purchasing more Eden products.

From the insurance company Eden ended up receiving $400,000 net, or $0.50 for each dollar Eden felt it was owed. Eden had sued its insurer, the Hartford Insurance Company. Eden’s lawyer told Michael that Eden would win the case, but the insurance company was planning to appeal it. He asked Michael if Eden could go 2 more years without the money. Michael said “Impossible.” The attorney said, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. You’d better settle.” Michael told the attorney, “If they’ll give us $400,000 plus $45,000 (which is what the insurance adjuster wanted), I’ll take it.” The insurance company accepted the deal. Mike feels that the insurance company ended up paying Eden $400,000 less than they owed Eden.

Michael has quite a few important documents from before the fire. Continued. Address: Chairman, Eden Foods, Inc., 701 Tecumseh Rd., Clinton, Michigan 49236. Phone: 517-456-7424.


• Summary: Fred Rohe started out working for Thom’s Natural Foods, a retail store in San Francisco. Then Fred bought Sunset Health Foods (a health foods retail store at 1319 Ninth St. in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco) and renamed it New Age Natural Foods—at the same address. Roger thinks it was in about 1965 or 1966, because he was living in San Francisco at that time and had just gotten involved in macrobiotics—in Jan. 1966. He started buying his foods from Marina Health Foods (on Chestnut) but when Fred opened his store, Roger started buying his foods there.

At some point Fred bought a chicken farm, transformed it into a natural chicken farm, and created New Age Resources as the company that owned it.

Then Fred teamed up with Phil Parenti / Parente and they did two big things at about the same time: (1) They opened a second store on California Street in Palo Alto, which was a natural foods supermarket (perhaps the first of its type in the USA). David Mastandrea was the manager and Nik Amartseff may have run the deli. At the time the store opened in Palo Alto, Roger was on the East Coast in Boston with Erewhon. (2) Fred and Phil started a distribution company named New Age Distributing.

Then they got into financial difficulties; they had tried to do too much too fast. The stores reverted to Fred and the distribution company and chicken ranch went to Phil. That’s when Phil renamed the distribution company The Well. But legally and corporately, it was still New Age Natural Foods—which was the parent company of The Well. Phil was active from day to day at The Well. Then The Well purchased Pure & Simple from Bruce Macdonald; the products at that time were apple juice, corn chips, and fruit butters. By the time of the natural distributors conference at Pajaro Dunes, California, the line had expanded to other fruit juices and Japanese imports, which were coming from Mr. Kazama of Mitoku—all sold under the Pure & Simple brand and distributed by The Well, which was now a master distributor. Some of these products were sold to other distributors, and all were sold to retail stores.

Irwin Carasso, the founder of Tree of Life, sponsored the natural food distributors conference in St. Augustine, Florida. Roger thinks Irwin was the 2nd or the 3rd person who began importing natural foods directly from Mr. Kazama in Japan—First Erewhon, then Pure & Simple, then Tree of Life. Eden Foods started importing after Tree of Life, and after that St. Augustine conference; but they imported from Muso. Initially Erewhon had insisted that everyone import the Japanese products under the Erewhon brand; they maintained that monopoly for quite a while.

At the time the Deaf Smith Country Cookbook was published (1973), Roger and his ex-wife Susan (and 2 kids) were living and working in Hereford, Texas. They spent a year there. While Susan was working on the cookbook, Roger was contracting with local farmers for everything from grains to maple syrup, helping to establish Arrowhead’s line of consumer packaged products (graphics, copy, etc.) and (most important) he got Arrowhead’s distribution system and network going, selling to other distributors. Roger was employed by Arrowhead. Irwin Carasso was one of the first to be named a wholesaler of Arrowhead Mills’ products. Next came Shadowfax. The NNFA convention that year was in Washington, DC.

When they left Texas, after a year, they hopped back in the school bus, drove to Los Angeles and hung out there for a couple of weeks (staying with Bobby Orgo, who worked for Erewhon in Los Angeles), then they drove to Atascadero, but they had no destination. They went to visit Bruce Macdonald (who at that time was living in Santa Cruz, California, and working each day for The Well–Pure & Simple). He sold the Pure & Simple brand than went along with it from Southern to Northern California.

Roger, Susan and their family ended up living in Soquel, California (near the Pacific Ocean and Santa Cruz), in about mid-March 1973; his youngest son was born on
March 29, right after they got settled. Jean Allison (from Boston) came out and helped Susan for a while.

The Well went out of business in about 1979. It continued to grow and expand. In very few years, it grew from $3 million to $10 million in sales. The peak year was in about 1978, then it went rapidly downhill. It had the wholesale distribution entity, a small production facility in San Jose where it manufactured fruit butters and bottled tamari and some oils, and also raised alfalfa sprouts. Then (in about 1976-77) it bought out Max Kozek, the organic wholesale supplier from Los Angeles. It also had a project to produce 40 acres of organic carrots in the San Joaquin Delta, and about 10 acres in Borrego Springs (east of San Diego). It also had some acreage of organic apples and peaches (small, real old, so there was not production and it was not of high quality), and substantial crop investments in organic produce via contracts with individual growers, as with John Mason who was a hothouse tomato grower in California. Then it bought a wholesale distribution company [Essene Traditional Foods] in Boyertown, Pennsylvania. With all those ventures, scattered near and far, The Well was (1) undercapitalized, and (2) it lost an incredible amount of money on some of its individual ventures, such as the organic carrots (nematode problems). Phil Parenti owned most of the stock at this time, but he did not have a controlling percentage. The other main stockholder was not a regular participant in the company; Roger does not remember his name. Roger had only stock options. The Well just folded up shop and disappeared; it was not sold to anyone. But the Pure & Sample brand name was sold to Jimmy Silver and John Fountain. Phil Parenti went to Monterey, California, and worked with his father in property development. Roger does not know where he is now. Address: Farley’s Coffee Shop, #1315 18th St., Potrero Hill, San Francisco, California 94107. Phone: 415-648-1545.


Note: This book was first published in serial form in the magazine Inc. in 1992. Address: Mill Valley, California.


*Summary:* Louis played a major role in developing America’s first commercial tofu cheesecakes—which were named Tofu Cream Pies and were delicious. The product was originally developed by Sprucetree Baking Co. in Maryland. From the outset, it was sold with two different toppings: Blueberry and strawberry. Louis was not with Sprucetree when the product was launched in about 1976 by Howard Grundland, who started and owned Sprucetree on Belair Road in Overlea, a suburb of Baltimore, Maryland. Several people helped Howard start the bakery, including Murray Snyder and Norman Zweigel. Louis does not know who first had the idea for the tofu pies and who developed the first recipe.

Louis started working at Sprucetree right after the first East Coast Macrobiotic Summer Camp in about August or September 1977. [Note: In Oct. 1973 Sprucetree began operations on Belair Road in Overlea.] Sprucetree was making the tofu pies when Louis arrived in 1977 but it was only one of about 30 baked goods (including bread, cookies, other desserts, etc.) that they sold. Louis left Sprucetree twice. The first time was 6-8 months after he first arrived; he was lured back to New York City by Jim Guido, who used to own two East-West restaurants in the city. Louis worked there as a baker, and made tofu pies (which he now called “Tofu Cheesecakes”) for the restaurant. He made many tofu cheesecakes and improved on the original recipe. John and Yoko Lennon used to come in to the restaurant (on 74th Street and Columbus Ave.) almost daily and enjoy Louis’ tofu cheesecakes. The restaurant was crowded every night and was one of the hot, chic places to eat on the Upper West Side. Louis hired Alan Hoffman to be his assistant at the East-West restaurant. Alan later became the baker at Souen.

In about June 1978, after about 6 months in New York City, Louis returned to Sprucetree. He helped finance Sprucetree’s move across town from Belair Road to 4105 Aquarium Place at Reisterstown Road in Baltimore. The company continued to make its tofu pies and other baked goods. In late summer of 1980 Louis found a new job as production manager at Erewhon Natural Foods. So he moved to Boston, Massachusetts, and soon hired Alan Hoffman (a baker at the Souen restaurant, who baked tofu cheesecakes using Louis’ recipe) to be his assistant. Within 18 months he was married, with a child on the way, and Erewhon had declared bankruptcy. Next he worked briefly for Great Eastern Sun in North Carolina. Louis and his family moved to New Jersey where his mother was living. There he took jobs to make money, such as selling cars. At this time Tofutti was becoming famous; Louis (now living at 436 Jefferson Ave., Staten Island, New York) considered opening a tofu shop that made fresh tofu in New York City. He and Alan Hoffman even looked at some locations for the tofu company. While waiting for customers to come into the car showroom, he planned a company to make tofu pies.
which would be profitable and widely distributed. He found some friends who had a food shop in northern New Jersey with an oven and mixing machines. In 1983 Sprucetree stopped making tofu pies/cheesecakes. Continued. Address: Abraham’s Natural Foods, P.O. Box 4201, Long Branch, New Jersey 07740. Phone: 908-229-5799.


* Summary: Murray remembers that Sprucetree Baking Co. made a tofu cheesecake, but he does recall being the source of the recipe. He was the originator of the Sweet Rice Cookie—which Sprucetree also made. When Murray thinks of that cheesecake, he thinks of Marcea Newman (who was married to Dan Weber in December 1982 in Australia, so her name is now Marcea Weber. She and Dan and her children live in Faulconbridge, NSW, Australia). Marcea is a native of New York, but in about 1969-1970 she went to California to study macrobiotics (perhaps with Herman or Cornelia Aihara); she ended up at a macrobiotic study house in San Francisco run by Nan and Dave Schleiger. Murray first met Marcea in California, then she returned to New York.

Murray arrived in Boston on Valentine’s day in Feb. 1971. He stayed there studying macrobiotics until Oct. 1972. A little later in 1971 Marcea Newman moved to Boston from New York. He and Marcea got their own apartment and lived together in Boston during 1971 and 1972. At this time Marcea was baking (very carefully testing and converting old family recipes to macrobiotics; her mother was an excellent baker) and she taught Murray how to bake. At the time she did not sell her baked goods. It was from some recipes that she gave Murray that he evolved into the Sweet Rice Cookie, the Babka, etc. Using recipes given or taught to him by Marcea, Murray rented out the kitchen in the Erewhon warehouse and started to do some baking.

In 1974 Marcea’s pioneering book titled The sweet life: Marcea Newman’s natural-food dessert book was published. It contains a recipe for “Cheesecake Tofu Pie” (p. 37), as well as many other innovative desserts and dairylike products that use tofu as a major ingredient. “Marcea was the person who developed the Tofu Cheesecake that Souen, a macrobiotic restaurant in New York City, eventually made and sold. She was very friendly with them and she lived nearby in New York. She also knew the people at The Caldron restaurant.”

Murray still has a book of large-scale recipes for baked goods that he made at Erewhon from 1971 and later gave to Howard Grundland. It contains recipes for Sweet rice cookies, Dried fruit square, Babka peanut square, Chestnut bar, Kanten cake, Apple crunch, Apple-tahini juice pie, Rice bread. There are no tofu recipes in that book.

Murray can think of only two ways that he could have been the source of the recipe for tofu pie [cheesecake] made by Sprucetree starting in 1975 or 1976: (1) He suggested that Howard Grundland use the recipe in Marcea Newman’s book The Sweet Life; (2) He brought Howard a tofu cheesecake made in New York City by either The Caldron or Souen; (3) He could have learned the recipe from his ex-wife, Pam. Note: For more on America’s first tofu cheesecake see letter from Marcea Newman Weber, Oct. 1994.

People that Murray remembers living in Boston during 1971 and 1972 were Michael Rosoff, Lenny Jacobs, Jim Ledbetter, Eric Utne and his brother (Tom?), Phil Levy, Paul Hawken, Bruce Gardner, Tom Hatch, and Matt Chait. Matt Chait used the Erewhon kitchen before Murray began baking there. Matt developed the Ricycle, which were bikes with food trays that went out to the colleges. Tony Harnett also worked in that kitchen; he went on to do Bread and Circus. Matt and Murray created Macrojacks—the original caramelized popcorn with barley malt, raisins, and peanuts “which is now made by 2-3 other companies and sold all over the place.” In late 1971 or early 1972 they had purchased their heat sealer, boxes, and labels, and they began to make and sell Macrojacks–fairly large quantities. They were all ready to make this into a big business, but circumstances prevented that from happening.

Murray was in Brazil from Oct. 1972 to April 1973. He returned to Baltimore, Maryland, and in 1973-75 he probably made trips up to New York. When he thinks of early tofu desserts, he thinks of the cheesecakes made at Souen (in New York City; it was started and owned by Yama, a Japanese man) and The Caldron (in New York City; it was originally owned by a man named Marty Schloss, plus his wife, Glory, and mother [Seea], who were a good friend of Marcea’s). The Caldron had an extensive baking operation, and they may have made a tofu cheesecake even before Souen. Whenever Murray went to New York he would always go to The Caldron to see what innovative new products they had, and he would always bring a number of items back to Baltimore for people to taste test. Marcea would probably remember if The Caldron was known for making a cheesecake, and when and where they got the idea and recipe.

Murray agrees that a remarkably large percentage of macrobiotic students and teachers in the early days were Jewish. He would guess that in 1971-72 roughly 30-35% of the macrobiotic students in Boston were Jewish. “One reason is that many Jewish people of that era were seekers. They were looking for answers; they wanted to know what life was all about and how they could help society. There were unexplained things that were not being talked about in
their religion, culture, schools, etc. Historically, there is a strong thread of humanistic ideals within the Jewish culture.

The macrobiotic movement, as he used to know it, is presently very stagnant. Many old problems have never been resolved. Not everybody wanted to follow a strict, Japanese model—and rightly so. “But I think more people are eating what we would consider to be macrobiotic-type food and loosely following what we consider to be a macrobiotic diet. There is definitely a lot of literature and books being sold under the guise of macrobiotic education. Somewhere down the line, macrobiotics may even become invisible because the basic tenets are going to be integrated a lot of educational and wholistic teachings.” Murray is a macrobiotic counselor and teacher, but he is “trying to offer a much broader, more flexible, more embracing way to present macrobiotics without creating a dogma.”


* Summary: John was born on 27 June 1947 in Tacoma, Washington, where his parents were stationed after World War II, though they came from the South. His mother, who was from Arkansas, was the daughter of the founder of Murphy Oil, and the sister of the man who made it into a Fortune 500 company. So John’s family was in petroleum business and quite wealthy. Coincidentally, Murphy Oil is also a major soybean grower. John grew up in Louisiana. He attended Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, until 1967, majoring in English. He spent his junior year in Europe (Wales and Spain), then returned to Tulane. He was active with SDS and psychedelics, then dropped out in early 1969.

Buying an old Volkswagen bus with tuition money from his parents, he drove to Vermont. There he helped to develop one of the first communes in Vermont—named Johnson’s Pasture and located 15 miles west of Brattleboro—and played a key role in making it work. There were no “macroids” [followers of macrobiotics] in the commune. In May 1969 Deming met John and Chris Abrams at the commune; they would later introduce him to macrobiotics and become close friends. Realizing he had some money from an inheritance (he began to receive substantial amounts of money from various trusts starting at this time) and tired of the commune, he decided to move to California. “That was where the hippie scene was most intense, and I wanted to do my own thing.” So he got in a Volkswagen bus with 9 other people and drove to Mendocino County, California.

There, in Sept. 1969, he used part of his inheritance to purchase (from his great aunt who lived in Berkeley) 55 acres of beautiful land, an old fishing camp on the Noyo River and on the Skunk Railroad Line west of Fort Bragg, California. On the land he started his own commune and lived lightly on the land (which had no electricity) until Aug. 1970. In the summer of 1970 John and Chris Abrams came to California to live with John on his land. (John’s father was a well-known heart surgeon and professor at Harvard Medical School). Chris developed terrible eczema on her hands soon after they arrived, but she cured it with a 10-day rice diet—based on the macrobiotic teaching of George Ohsawa. She gave John Ohsawa’s book Zen Macrobiotics, which he read in one or two nights. This was his introduction to macrobiotics. “I was so taken by the book and so impressed by Chris and by the cure of her eczema, that I decided very quickly to dedicate much time and energy to the philosophy and diet of macrobiotics. I got deeply into it. I read everything George Ohsawa wrote and I was just floored. I went for the whole thing hook, line, and sinker. I wanted to save the world and I thought that this was the way to do it. After using pot all summer, I went on a 10-day rice diet. I had never felt better in my entire life.”

John now had long hair and a big beard. He soon began to visit Herman Aihara about every two weeks and to learn about macrobiotics from him. After a while, John was the only person left on the land, so in late 1970 he decided to give it to Herman Aihara. Herman later cut down all the redwood trees, sold them for cash, and finally sold the land for cash.

John got into the natural foods movement in 1970. New England, New York, and California were hotbeds of this new-age, vegetarian type activity and John wanted to bring it to the South. He hoped to become a leader of this movement. So he drove to Jackson, Mississippi, where he met a Jewish woman named Renée Rosenfeld, about 55 years old from Belgium, who was really into macrobiotics. They started a little macrobiotic restaurant in her house; they typically served 5-6 people lunch that they prepared themselves. After about 2 months, in Nov. 1970, they started a small natural foods store (about 3,000 square feet, paid for by John) named the Singing River Granary. It was successful as a business. At his store John read a short essay by Paul Hawken published as a brochure, which he felt was the best single statement he had seen about why he was interested in macrobiotics and what the philosophy meant to him. John thought, “I’ve got to meet this guy Paul Hawken. He has a gift with words.” One day in early 1971 Roger and Susan Hillyard from Erewhon drove into town to find out who was buying so much macrobiotic food from Erewhon. Roger was going from Boston to Los Angeles to set up Erewhon–Los Angeles. He loved the store and he said “Any time you want to come to work with us, you’re welcome.” John took a trip to visit Erewhon–Los Angeles, arriving
right after the big earthquake struck the San Fernando Valley near Los Angeles on 9 Feb. 1971. He liked what he saw. Aveline was there, living in a big macrobiotic study house with Tom DeSilva and others. Returning to Mississippi, John sold Singing River Granary in Aug. 1971, moved to Los Angeles, and went to work with Erewhon. He began by helping Jim Gronemeyer (a very colorful figure) to expand the Erewhon retail store. John met Paul Hawken when Paul came to Los Angeles and invited all the Erewhon employees down to a beach house he had rented at Carlsbad (about 80 miles southeast of Los Angeles). Dora, Paul’s wife, was also there, wearing a bikini on the beach, about 6 months pregnant, and looking lovely.

In mid-Sept. 1971 John flew to his cousin’s wedding in Boston, then visited the Erewhon warehouse (at 33 Farnsworth St), where he talked to “Big Bill” Garrison, the manager, who offered John a job. “I realized that here I was in Boston at the center of the center, the heart of the heart of everything. A stoned-out hippie in Tucson, Arizona, once told me that Michio Kushi knows more about the Universe than any other person on the planet. I knew I wanted to study with Michio.” Continued. Address: 555 Bryant St. #255, Palo Alto, California 94301. Phone: 415-853-1231.


• Summary: Continued: So after 2 months in Los Angeles, John moved to Boston, arriving on 1 Oct. 1971. Other people who were there when John arrived were Bill Garrison, Jimmy Silver, Bill Tara, Paul Hawken and his wife Dora Coates Hawken, and Judy Coates. John moved into the macrobiotic study house on Gardner Road that was under the direction of Jimmy and Susan Silver. He began to work at the Erewhon warehouse. There he met Judy Coates, Dora’s elder sister, who was the cook at the Erewhon warehouse. “She was cute as a button, and she was the girl that everybody had their eyes on—though her boyfriend at the time was Norio Kushi. She was just popping around, cooking these great meals.”

After 2-3 months of living at the Gardner Road house, John was invited by Aveline Kushi to move into the Kushi house at 62 Buckminster Road in Brookline. John considered this an honor and accepted. Shortly thereafter he grew to know Paul Hawken better. After John had worked for about 3 months in the warehouse (it was run very efficiently and everybody worked very hard), in early 1972, Paul called John into his office and asked him to be Erewhon’s first official “salesman.” However John was to take no orders, but instead be Erewhon’s “ambassador.” He would just visit natural foods retail stores across New England and talk about Erewhon’s philosophy and products. He drove around in the snow and usually spent the night with one of Erewhon’s customers. By the spring of 1972 John had had enough of the job, so Paul asked him to co-manage the Erewhon retail store (which was having problems) at 342 Newbury St.—together with Wesley and Jane. John soon became the sole manager—at $2.50/hour. “That’s where I really came into my own.” The store began to do very well financially. Sales doubled. Paul and John became very close friends. “He was a great guy. Just a wonderful guy, and so charismatic. We felt alike together we could take this company to the moon. He urged me to get involved with Judy Coates. The macroid community was very in-bred.”

On 27 June 1972 John celebrated his 25th birthday, and to his great surprise discovered that funds from a trust were now available to him. During the next few months he decided to give, then (at Paul Hawken’s insistence) to loan roughly $50,000 to Erewhon—at a time when Erewhon was facing its first major financial crisis. John’s loan saved the growing company. He and Judy Coates were married in Aug. 1972 in Boston. Paul Hawken and John Deming married sisters, Dora and Judy Coates. John and Judy went to live in Allston, Massachusetts (not far from Boston); Nik and Joanne Amartseff moved in with them. John remembers Nik as a very interesting person whose ancestry was Russian and East Asian. John and Judy’s first child, Lhiania, was born in Boston on 27 Sept. 1973.

At some point in about the fall of 1972 John talked to Paul about his wish to invest $150,000 (a new portion of his inheritance from trusts from his parents and grandparents that had recently become available to him) in Erewhon in exchange for stock. Erewhon was in financial difficulty and needed the money. “We were all new-age guys and we were saying, ‘We’re doing this for the good of humanity, we don’t care about the money.’ We were going to set up a foundation, and set up a village outside of Boston where all the people would live and work in harmony on a farm. We had great dreams. I was a good right-hand man to Paul.” Paul also worked with a company named Advest, a venture capital company in New England, that planned to raise $350,000 in a private stock offering for Erewhon. But at the last minute Michio Kushi nixed both deals; apparently he wanted to be the sole owner of Erewhon. Paul Hawken believed that he owned 25.5% of Erewhon and Michio told him repeatedly that he did, but John thinks Michio would never give Paul a document which proved this ownership. Whenever Paul would broach the matter, Michio would create some kind of an excuse, such as saying to him, “Well, actually we’re all in this together. There’s not really any need to put it down on paper.” There was also a little naïveté on Paul’s part. John is quite sure that Paul did not actually own any Erewhon stock.

In the Aug. 1973 issue of East West Journal Paul Hawken wrote a long, excellent article about Erewhon titled “Erewhon: A biography. The view within.” He had some
nice words for John Deming: “If there is one person who is ‘most’ responsible for Erewhon being here today and not bankrupt, it is John Deming, who brought a sense of joy and happiness wherever he went in the company. He assumed the manager’s position at the retail store and made it the finest part of the company. His positive attitude was in contrast to the apprehension that all of us shared about the future. He gave Erewhon some money without which we would surely have failed. On his twenty-fifth birthday John came into a trust which sort of blew his mind. He had known nothing about it. He wanted to just give it to Erewhon, but it is on the books as a loan. It came just in time to pay back overdue creditors and panting bank officers.”

John left Erewhon in late 1973, at the same time Paul Hawken left. Paul went to Findhorn alone in Scotland, came back to the USA and told John how great it was. Paul and Dora lived for 2 months in John and Judy’s house in Lexington, Massachusetts. There Paul and John went into business together, starting a little rice brokerage company named Winton-Gerard (after their two middle names). They sold organically grown brown rice. Then in Nov. 1973 they went back to Findhorn together with their wives and children. Dora was pregnant with her second child, Iona Fairlight Hawken, a girl, her first child was Palo Cheyenne Hawken, a boy [born in 1972]. They were in Scotland for the winter solstice in Dec. 1973, watching the sun barely rise then set in a period of 2-3 hours. Peter Caddy had a charismatic personality. John was the head gardener at Findhorn for the last 2-3 months he was there. To grow those huge vegetables, “We trenched down about 3 feet and put in this incredibly powerful, all natural compost of seaweed and manure. I don’t think it was the elves and fairies that grew those huge vegetables. During the summer the sun is in the sky almost 24 hours a day for 2-3 weeks.”

John and Judy returned to America after the summer solstice in 1974.

John and Paul continued to run their rice brokerage company from Findhorn, had many misunderstandings, and later had a big blowup. “Looking at it later, I was very self righteous, and I think we were equally at fault. I would even be willing to shoulder more of the blame. Paul wasn’t an easy guy to work with.”

“I’m very proud of what we did at Erewhon in Boston and the people I worked with. It was one of the high points of my life. The esprit de corps that we had rolling back then was superb. For the rest of my life I have been searching to find that same kind of feeling we had. It was a privilege to work with Paul Hawken and to get to know him as well as I did, even though we had a tremendous falling out later. I went through a period of about ten years when I absolutely hated the guy. But now I like and admire him very much. “The two people who deserve the most credit for Erewhon are Paul Hawken and Michio Kushi. Continued. Address: 555 Bryant St. #255, Palo Alto, California 94301. Phone: 415-853-1231.


• Summary: Continued: In 1975 John got involved with Erewhon again, when the company decided to sell its West Coast operations. John had a lot of dealings with Ty Smith, and he loaned some money. It is an unpleasant memory for John. He had met John Fountain when Fountain was living in Michio Kushi’s home and studying macrobiotics in Boston, Massachusetts, in the 1972. Fountain ran an ice cream factory in Southern California. They became close friends and are still close friends–Fountain got Deming interested in the philosophy of Andrew Galambos. Deming and Fountain reconnected over an interest in buying Erewhon L.A. “We had decided to go into business together. We looked around, one thing led to another, and we finally decided to buy Erewhon–Los Angeles. I financed the purchase.”

On 1 Aug. 1975 Erewhon, under Ty Smith, sold substantially all of its assets used in operations in California. The selling price was $350,000, payable as follows: $100,000 in cash within 15 days of closing, $100,000 due 90 days from Aug. 15, $50,000 due in 3 installments in January, April, and July 1976, and $100,000 due in quarterly installments of $12,500 each from 31 Oct. 1976 to 31 July 1978. John Fountain was responsible for coming up with all this money.

“I thought I was purchasing it jointly with him, but it turned out I wasn’t; I discovered that I was basically a passive investor in John Fountain’s venture. I had a lot of respect for John’s business talent which, it turns out, was somewhat misplaced. I let John run the business, but I felt very frustrated. If the company had made a lot of money, I would have made a lot too. But the company never made any money. I was pretty naive, though John Fountain didn’t do anything dishonest. It was probably the stupidest business decision of my entire life. The basic problem was that at the time Erewhon was a declining business. Other people were coming along and doing everything better. Erewhon West had financial troubles trying to compete with Nature’s Best and K&L (Kahan & Lessin)–big, established distributors. Erewhon was essentially a middle man, and that was the problem; the middle men were getting squeezed out of that business.”

During this time, John and his family were living in Pacific Palisades. He was studying the philosophy of Andrew Galambos (a brilliant, complex, and learned astrophysicist) largely by listening to him talk. The basis of Galambos’ philosophy was the concept of non-coercion. John notes: “Very briefly, the free market is simply the
phenomenon that emerges from all non-coercive interactions between human beings (and ultimately all animals). The political state is the phenomenon that emerges (or results) from all coercive interactions. Property is a human being’s body (biological entity) and all non-procreative derivatives thereof. Coercion is any attempted interference in the property of another without that other person’s (the owner’s) permission.”

John Fountain attempted to apply the ideas of Galambos among employees in the daily operations of Erewhon West. For example, he tried to credit and pay people for their ideas to the extent that these ideas contributed to the success of the business.

That year Deming and Fountain decided to expand Erewhon by opening another retail store—to be named the Erewhon Natural Grocery. Deming, who was living in Irvine, built (from the foundation up) the ultimate natural foods store in nearby Santa Ana, California, about 30 miles southeast of Los Angeles. It was located in South Coast Village, a little shopping center associated with South Coast Plaza—the largest shopping center in Southern California. John’s dream was that this would be the first of a chain of beautiful natural foods retail stores, named Cuisine, which would also cater to the gourmet food crowd. In retrospect, John spent much too much money in building this beautiful store—which came to represent another bad business decision. He hired Bill Bolduc to manage the store, and also hired a professional produce manager. The store opened in Jan. 1977. John and Judy’s second child, Emily, was born on 10 June 1977. At the end of the summer of 1978 John and his wife Judy separated. Continued. Address: 555 Bryant St. #255, Palo Alto, California 94301. Phone: 415-853-1231.


* Summary: In late 1979 John Fountain was obligated to come up with some money for John Deming. Being unable to, Fountain had to relinquish the company to Deming. Deming fired Fountain and ended up taking over Erewhon L.A. under very bad circumstances ("which again proved to be a very dumb mistake"), brought in some professional business consultants to look at the entire operation, we tried several different things but nothing worked the way John wanted to see it work, so John decided to liquidate the entire company and get out. Deming proceeded to sell off the assets piecemeal. There was an Erewhon Natural Foods retail store in Northridge. Fountain sold that store to Deming, and the same day Deming sold it to Tree of Life West. John does not think he made a profit on the sale. Deming found difficulty selling the Erewhon retail store at 8001-03 Beverly Blvd. in Los Angeles, partly because the store was somewhat run down. John Deming (d.b.a. Erewhon–Los Angeles) needed to meet a payroll payment, so he offered to sell the store to Tom DeSilva if he could make the down payment they were asking. Tom got Tyler Smith and Jeffrey Flasher to go in as partners with him and they bought the store. On 13 Jan. 1980, the new owners took over.

Deming sold another large part of Erewhon–Los Angeles to an East Coast vitamin company (sort of a competitor to GNC) that was a division of the same company that owned Marvel Comic Books.

Jimmy Silver and Jeff Hilgert bought the remaining assets from John Deming and in June 1980 they transformed Erewhon West into Pure Sales. Then they defaulted on their payments to Deming, after writing him a note saying they weren’t going to pay him for various reasons. John was infuriated—it was the last straw. John sued Silver and Hilgert for the money they owed under the contract. They counter-sued him for $1.5 million. That scared John, so he proposed that they just forget the suits. He got no more money from Silver and Hilgert.

Also in 1980 John and his wife, Judy, were divorced. The divorce was not related to John’s financial problems. He still feels that Judy is a great person. “Her mother’s a saint. I love her dearly. And you’ll never hear a bad word from me about Judy. She is just a fabulous person, and she has been a great mother to our children.”

John returned alone to Boston, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1981 and “basically went into a depression for about a year and that caused me to change my life. I really thought everything through. There were 2 or 3 week periods when I didn’t get out of bed except to get food. I wasn’t married. I had only one close friend (a fellow named Kristen Carlson) but I was ashamed of my poor state of mind and did not allow him to know how bad of I was. Several other friends I had weren’t interested in seeing me because I was such a downer. That was probably the most important year of my life because I came out the other end of it realizing that you’ve got to be master of your own fate. You’ve got to learn—learning is the only option we have in life—and just keep learning and growing. Since that time my life has done nothing but get better and more successful in all ways.” Sober self analysis made John feel down. “I got out of it by dropping that sober self analysis and learning how to think more clearly about life. I read a book by David Burns titled Feeling Good and I think that was the turning point of my life. I learned that my feelings were more or less derived from my thoughts.”

After 10 years of being single, John married again in 1988 to a Korean-American woman named Tabitha Lee; they have a 7-month old baby.

John is now thinking seriously about getting back into the natural foods business, in the nutritional supplement
market, with some very professional people. They are engaged in negotiations right now.

John believes that one should live without in any way coercing others, and that society should be governed by that principle. He feels that gratitude is one of the most important things in life.

“...I believe any social movement is dangerous the moment it turns to political organization or organizations (hence coercion) to achieve its ends. The whole environmental/new-age movement has turned into a horror story. I think the environmental movement is one of the most dangerous forces on the earth right now. There is a very serious and long-term danger to the environment. But the environmental movement response will, I think, cause more pollution and environmental degradation because they call for more and more government control and regulations. Yet bureaucrats generally don’t care about the environment. I think Newt Gingrich and the Chamber of Commerce are just as dangerous in this regard as the environmental movement. Idealists often turn to coercive means, without understanding the social ramifications of coercion—which are horribly dangerous. For example, they want to force everybody to recycle. I also think the women’s liberation movement is another very dangerous movement.” There were and are very good reasons for concern by women about the way they have been traditionally treated, but their response has been really dangerous. “I am a strong libertarian. I don’t even believe in voting. I think it’s dangerous.”

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• Summary: Bill Tara was born and raised in Santa Cruz, California. Bill and Paul Hawken were roommates in San Francisco, living in a studio in the warehouse district. Paul was single and Bill had a girlfriend named Renee. Bill and Paul worked together, doing light shows for rock and roll concerts. They also produced some concerts together. They began practicing macrobiotics together in San Francisco in about mid-1966. They learned about macrobiotics from Roger Hillyard (who was also doing light shows in San Francisco), who gave Paul the little yellow-covered book by George Ohsawa titled Zen Macrobiotics. Paul started following the diet as prescribed in the book in an attempt to cure his asthma. Bill became interested in macrobiotics at about the same time because he had always been interested in Eastern philosophy, but he had never realized that it might be applied to diet and food. A young architect, Peter Milbury, was also in San Francisco and interested in macrobiotics. Note: Dave Schleiger was the architect.

Paul left San Francisco in about mid-1967 to visit a rock and roll club in Washington, DC, for whom he was designing a light show. After that meeting, he went to Boston to meet with Michio Kushi. He was impressed, so he returned to San Francisco, settled his affairs, and moved to Boston. A month or so later, Bill and his girlfriend Renee also moved to Boston, where Bill began to work at the Erewhon retail store at 303-B Newbury Street (below street level).

In Nov. 1968, on Thanksgiving day, the Erewhon retail store moved up and across the street to a much bigger and nicer location at 342 Newbury St. The next day, after moving the store and attending big party to celebrate the move, Bill left Boston for Chicago to start his next venture. Michio has asked Bill if he would like to go to Chicago to help set up a macrobiotic store and center. Several people in Chicago were already interested in macrobiotics—Vincent (a jeweler) and Lillian Barsevich (who later went to Boston and lived and cooked in the Kushi house for a long time). Bill found the idea to be interesting and it also gave me an opportunity to do a little teaching about macrobiotics, which was becoming his main interest. In downtown Chicago, several weeks after arriving (in December 1968) Bill opened a little macrobiotic food store, named the East West Center, on the tenth floor of an office building in the Loop. Vincent and Lillian had the space ready when Bill arrived with a stock of foods from Boston. He sold foods, gave lectures several nights a week, and organized potluck dinners. Later John Palumbo (a shiatsu practitioner, still works in Chicago as a shiatsu therapist) also starting giving some talks.

After about 9 months, in the autumn of 1969, Bill received a call from Aveline Kushi in Los Angeles, who asked him if he would go to Los Angeles to help her there. Again, he liked the idea so he moved to Los Angeles, taking up residence in the study house started by Aveline at 7511 Franklin Ave. He was soon at work starting another macrobiotic and natural foods retail store, called Erewhon–Los Angeles, at 8001 Beverly Blvd. He started the store because Aveline felt the need for a good place to buy macrobiotic food in Los Angeles—and because he was bored. Two students of macrobiotics, Don Honoroff and John Fountain, found the store location; they were two of the first students to live at Aveline’s study house. Bill did the carpentry and soon opened the store in about September 1969. In October Bruce Macdonald arrived from Boston and helped Bill finished construction, building a walk-in and build more shelves. Bruce took over as manager of the store almost immediately. Bill focused on building up a wholesale distribution company, driving food up and down the Pacific Coast. Since the store was not capitalized at all, Bill needed to sell food fast to pay the bills. Distribution began in about November 1969, as soon as they got their first drop shipment of natural foods from Japan. Paul Hawken, who was in Japan, arranged to have part of a container dropped in Los Angeles, then the rest shipped on
to Boston. That was probably the first shipment that Paul supervised from Japan. The first food was wholesaled on a delivery basis. Bill got a pick-up truck and, as driver, began delivering to about 10 small natural food stores, often run by hippies, in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo. He sold the food out of the back of the truck—cash and carry. “Come out to the truck and look what we’ve got here.” Without knowing it, Bill had started America’s second natural foods distributing company—After Erewhon—Boston. Erewhon—Los Angeles also bought foods from Arrowhead Mills and a few sources in California. Bill also taught macrobiotic classes in the big living room of Aveline’s study house. Other speakers included Jacques Delangre, Herman Aihara, and Teizo Okada (of Muso Shokuhin). Bill also taught some classes up the Pacific Coast, as in Santa Barbara (surfers had a little natural foods store) and San Francisco (at a house where Peter Milbury lived on the Panhandle). Bill taught things he had learned from Michio Kushi’s lectures and George Ohsawa’s books.

After about 9 months in Los Angeles, Bill returned to Boston and started to work at the Erewhon warehouse that was just about to open at 33 Farnsworth Street. He helped renovate the building. Other people who Bill worked with were Roger Hillyard, Wally Gorell, Jim Docker, and a guy named Richard (from New York) who eventually started Erewhon Farms. Erewhon Farms was composed of a group people who went back to the land near Keene, New Hampshire, started a sort of commune with a little natural foods retail store, and were growing produce (such as kabocha and daikon) organically for Erewhon. They struggled there for several years and then dispersed.

After Paul Hawken returned from Japan, he (and maybe Roger Hillyard) began to push for a stock option program in Erewhon for the people who had worked for the company for a long time, basically free of charge. Nik Amartseff was included in these talks, since he had brought in a lot of expertise. That is when the trouble started. Michio said, “We’ll work this out, but right now the company is willing to give all of you a kind of bonus. You can either decide to travel for a while at Erewhon’s expense, or you can take a cash payout.” Bill decided to travel, so Erewhon agreed to send him around the world, and to pay both his transportation and living expenses. That is when he made his first trip to Europe (including London), across the Middle East, and into India. He was supposed to collect information for the company on business opportunities in various countries, what products were available, etc.

Address: Nova Healing Arts, 370 South 43rd St., Boulder, Colorado 80303. Phone: 303-499-7234.


• Summary: Llama was started Jan. 1973 by Bob Swanson as a little nameless natural food distributor in the basement of The Good Life, a natural food retail store in Brattleboro, Vermont. Swanson was employed as a clerk at the Good Life. The distribution operation started because The Good Life found it difficult to get good natural foods as far north as Brattleboro; Balanced Foods was the only distributor of any consequence in the area at the time, and their service was irregular, their products were expensive, and they carried more pills than foods. Swanson would drive his pickup down to New York and buy foods from a distributor named Mottel (run by a man named Lenny). Soon other natural food stores learned of Swanson’s activities, contacted him, and he began buying for those stores as well as for The Good Life. Soon Swanson’s natural foods distribution business outgrew the basement of The Good Life, so in 1974 he moved his operations into a small building in Greenfield, Massachusetts, located about 20 miles south of Brattleboro.

Bob Swanson, Howard Rower, and one other person [George Hannides, pronounced HAN-uh-dees], had all put money or sweat equity into the company as it was getting started. They were having a difficult time agreeing on a name. Barclay has heard that when they couldn’t come to an agreement, they each decided to choose their favorite animal. Barclay thinks that Swanson chose the llama, he would bet that Rower chose the crow, and the third person must have chosen the toucan. So the company was named Llama, Toucan & Crow. In 1975 the company moved back to Brattleboro, where they bought an old 5-story frame building at 21 Frost St. The building was a logistical disaster, and it was not the same building that Bob Swanson had occupied prior to moving to Greenfield. They had their own flour mill.

In late 1975 and early 1976 the company got into financial difficulty. In May 1976 Barclay bought 95% of the business from Swanson, Rower, Petty Perry (the former owner of the Good Life), and many small shareholders. Some of the original shareholders kept the remaining 5% of the stock, but Barclay bought them out 7-8 years later. Barclay acquired Llama immediately after graduating from the Business School at the University of Virginia. He had some experience in the food business while working for Distribuco, an institutional food service distributor in California. He also spent a year in the cotton business.

One of the first things Barclay did after becoming the majority shareholder was to change the company name to Llama Trading Company.

In 1976 Jane McFadden, Barclay’s wife, opened a natural food store named Llama, Toucan & Crow in downtown Brattleboro, Vermont, but it had no financial connection with the wholesale distributing company which had formerly had the same name. Nor was Jane ever actively involved with Barclay’s distributing company.
In the spring of 1977 Barclay moved his distributing company to 33 Riddell St. in Greenfield because that was the only building he could find in the area that was suitable, i.e. that was large enough, that the company could afford, and that was located reasonably close to where the company’s employees lived. The company stayed in Greenfield for a few years, but then outgrew their building.

In 1979 Bill Miller decided to sell Stow Mills. The company was an old-line pill distributor that was started in 1969. Since Stow had a large share of the food supplement business in the region and Llama carried almost exclusively food products, Barclay thought that a merger would make a lot of sense. He knew he could hold onto his natural food customers, but he was not sure he could hold onto Stow’s pill customers, so he decided to keep the Stow Mills name for the company formed by the merger, even though Llama bought Stow. Richard Youngman had joined Barclay as a shareholder at the time they bought Stow Mills; Richard is still a shareholder.


During these years, about 70-80% of the company’s growth has been internal and the remainder has been as a result of acquisitions. In the summer of 1993 Stow opened a new facility (a distribution warehouse plus offices) near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Today Stow is primarily a natural food distributor, with about 85% of their sales being of natural foods, and with most of the rest of being supplements. Stow is the second largest natural foods distributor in America, after Tree of Life. Stow and Tree (through Balanced Foods, which is owned by Tree) are strong competitors in New England, the Northeast, and the Mid-Atlantic regions.

Barclay does not know how to contact Bob Swanson. Address: CEO, Stow Mills, Inc., P.O. Box 301, Stow Dr., Chesterfield Corp. Park, Chesterfield, New Hampshire 03443. Phone: 603-256-3000.


• Summary: Howard grew up in a Jewish family in Boston, Massachusetts. In about 1964 or 1965 he got interested in macrobiotics. John Hammond, his next door neighbor and a blues singer, was involved in macrobiotics and he told Howard about it one day. So Howard went to the Ohsawa Foundation in New York City, which was run by Irma Paule in those days. He bought some groceries from her and began practicing macrobiotics. George Ohsawa came to New York in 1965 for a summer camp (See Kotzsch 1985, p. 137) and Howard met him. “Ohsawa said he was looking for a guy like me and he wanted me to grow rice in New York state. I found out that was a pretty impossible task so I asked him to pick something easier. He said ‘Okay, grow kuzu.’ I said, ‘Okay, when you get back to Japan, send me some kuzu plants.’ And he said, ‘Oh no. That’s not the Zen way. The Zen way is for you to do it yourself, now.’ I spent about 6 months finding out what a kuzu plant was. Finally I got some old agricultural bulletins that described how good kuzu was, then later described how bad it was. I finally managed to find somebody in the South who dug up some kuzu in the winter and sent it to me. I grew it in my garden in New York. The next year when Ohsawa came, I sat him down under this huge kuzu vine, like an arbor, at the back of my house. I said ‘There’s the kuzu you wanted.’ I took some of the kuzu roots and actually extracted kuzu from them and put it in a test tube. I showed it to Ohsawa, told him it was the first kuzu ever extracted in New York, and gave him the test tube. He was astonished and delighted. He said, ‘Now we have to begin to work. I knew I was right. You are the man I’m looking for. You must begin to import macrobiotic food products from Japan at once. I will ship them to you.’ So we started this relationship and in 1965 I began importing foods from Ohsawa in 1965. He used to send me tamari [soy sauce] and miso in beautiful little 18-liter wooden kegs, tied with rope.” Howard sold these products to health food stores and to Michio Kushi.

Also during 1965 Howard read a book about grain and he got very interested in freshly-ground flour. A grain of wheat is alive, but as soon as you mill it, it dies. After 5 days the taste and nutritional value have both declined. So people should mill flour, then keep it refrigerated, and use it as soon as possible. So Howard bought a little home flour mill, and set it up in his house. He ground some wheat flour, his wife made some bread, and they really liked the bread. They served the bread to friends who came to dinner, then they wanted fresh flour, so he made flour for them. Pretty soon he was delivering flour to people, then a health food store wanted to sell it, so he had a label made, even though he didn’t have a company name at all. So he threw the J-Ching to help him choose a name. The hexagram was “Perseverance Furthers.” He was going to name the company “Thomas J. Perseverance” so it would sound like a real person. His brother, who was visiting at the time, said “That’s a stupid name. You might as well call it Infinity if you’re going to have a dumb name.” Howard liked the name Infinity, and decided to name his company The Infinity Co.
However, later he did have some labels printed on which Perseverance Foods was the company name—just for fun. He once had a lawyer named Bill Pratt, so he sold “William Pratt Old Barrister” brand honey. One of his children pinched his thumb in the flour mill at home and his wife became concerned that a more serious injury could happen. Moreover everything in the house began to dusted with a thin layer of flour.

Howard started The Infinity Company in about 1965 at 188 Duane Street in New York, in the lower Manhattan neighborhood named Tribeca. It distributed, imported, and manufactured natural foods. George Hannides (pronounced HAN-uh-dees) came to work with him, and he later became a minor working partner.

Howard had a friend who practiced karate in a loft at 188 Duane Street, and his landlord gave Howard a small space that had a desk in it on another floor of the same building. So Howard moved in his mill and started doing business as The Infinity Company. Within 2-4 years Howard incorporated the company and changed the name to The Infinity Food Company. Then the health food stores began asking Howard to make other kinds of fresh flour, such as rye flour or corn meal. He did, and soon the product line had expanded to 250 different products. Eventually he had two 30-inch flour mills plus a 24-inch mill and some little 8-inch ones. He had a room full of mills, and milling was a large part of Infinity’s manufacturing business. In addition, at one point, the company was getting truckloads of dried fruit and of fruit juices from California, plus jams and jellies made without sugar from the City of Industry, California.

“Michio Kushi was operating out of a house on Harvard Square in Cambridge. He was selling groceries in the hallway. He had started out in New York, then he ran into some kind of terrible financial trouble. He fled to Cambridge to avoid his creditors. His wife, Aveline, ran the business and he was the guru. In the early days, Michio was Erewhon’s biggest asset. He used to go around and lecture, then people would say ‘Where can we get this food,’ and he’d say ‘Go to Erewhon.’” Howard is not sure whether or not he ever sold products to Erewhon in the early days. Howard is not sure whether or not he began importing foods before Erewhon. “Erewhon didn’t have any kind of an operation going on when I had my warehouse. They became important later. In the beginning, they may have been getting some products from Ohswawa in Japan at the same time I was. Erewhon was located in the Kushi house in Cambridge, where a few of the real loyal macrobiotics lived with the Kushis and helped to pay the rent. They had sort of a grocery display in the hall, and they sold some foods. In the early days, Erewhon bought miso, tamari and other typical macrobiotic products from Infinity.” Continued. Address: 84 MacDougal St., New York, NY 10012. Phone: 212-982-3620.


• **Summary:** “A Rabbi came and inspected, and we had a kosher seal on everything, because there were Hassidics who wanted to become macrobiotic and couldn’t eat our food unless it was certified by a Rabbi—who we paid $500 a year.” As he spent time with owners of health food stores, he became interested in organically grown foods. Then he began importing—peanut butter in 500 lb pails from Argentina because the peanuts there were grown without any chemicals.

Within the first two years Jason Hammond, John Hammond’s younger brother, began to work for Howard. John Hammond also worked with Howard for a while, milling flour. The company grew very quickly. So Infinity was moved from 188 Duane St. to 171 Duane St., then to 173 Duane St., and finally in about 1974 to a 30,000 square foot warehouse 157 Hudson St. By this time Infinity was a big macrobiotic and natural food distribution company.

In April 1966 George Ohswawa died. Shortly thereafter Howard went to Japan. He found that Ohswawa did not own or control any companies. “He just went around to traditional Japanese food manufacturers whose methods he liked, he bought the foods and just re-sold them to me.” Mitoku and Muso still operate this way, as trading companies. So Howard traveled around to visit various food producers, made contracts with them, and began importing directly from them.

In about 1967 Bob Kennedy from Chico-San in California came to New York and offered to buy Infinity Foods. “He felt we were a threat to each other. He feared me as a competitor and wanted to eliminate me. Erewhon wasn’t that big yet; they only started in April 1966.

In 1968 Howard got involved with scientology and “that just destroyed my life. It was also the downfall of Infinity Foods. It took all of my energy, and eventually I had no energy left to run my company. So in about 1976, the year the company had its largest sales ever, I just went out of business. I declared bankruptcy and closed the doors. It was the saddest day in my whole life. It was horrible. George Hannides’ doctor told him that if he kept working at Infinity his wife would soon be a widow, so he left, exhausted from the stress, and started selling restaurant equipment. And Jason Hammond was in the army by then. I still have scars from that. My whole family does. It’s a terrible and scary thing. You just have to really be careful.”

Howard didn’t even try to sell his growing company which was in a growing industry. “When one is half crazed from being part of a religious cult, one isn’t really sane. I wasn’t trying to get out. I was trying to focus on straightening my life out when actually my life was already straightened out. It was a terrible trap. In the end I had to
choose between scientology and Infinity, my company, and I chose the wrong thing. I lost it. It’s really sad. I feel like I’ve always been in a hole, and always climbing out of the same hole. I’m just like anybody else. I just lead my life. I just keep trying to move forward.”

Howard describes himself as a “pack rat” and a Gemini. He has an entire warehouse full of “stuff,” including documents, including some early catalogs from Infinity. Howard now owns and manages real estate in lower Manhattan, and he raises beef cattle on a big ranch (1½ million acres) in Central Australia. He had a gallery in Soho where he sold Australian aboriginal art; he closed it 3 months ago but he plans to re-open it soon in Tribeca.

Long after he closed Infinity, Howard spent time in Australia with aboriginal people, and he has been adopted by an aboriginal family. Now he rarely goes to his offices any more. He now runs his businesses mostly from his home at 84 MacDougal St. in Greenwich Village by talking with secretaries by phone. Address: 84 MacDougal St., New York, NY 10012. Phone: 212-982-3620.


• Summary: Bill left Eden Foods in 1973. Then he spent some time in India, where his spiritual teacher, Muktananda, had an ashram in Ganeshpuri. Shortly after returning to America, he helped a fellow from Ann Arbor, Michigan, start a business importing products (such as incense) from India to be sold at Muktananda’s ashrams around America.

Then he was contacted by John Deming, who asked him to help build, open, and manage his state-of-the-art natural foods store in Santa Ana, California, about 30 miles southeast of Los Angeles. Bill moved to California in 1 Oct. 1976 to begin work on renovating the inside of the building, which was part of a small shopping mall named South Coast Village. He and his wife flew to California and rented a house nearby. The interior of the store was gorgeous, with custom bulk bins built specially for the store, etc. Bill hired the staff and the store (named something like Erewhon Natural Foods) opened in Jan. 1977. As manager, Bill was responsible for making the store profitable. By about Feb. or March 1977, Bill had mapped out an entire solid advertising and promotional program, with sales projections and all. He asked Deming how much money he could spend on advertising. Deming said he was sorry but had no money to spend, not even for printing leaflets to distribute by hand. Bolduc quit on the spot. He had no idea of the other financial problems related to Erewhon–Los Angeles that Deming was facing at the time.

After leaving Deming’s store, Bill did a few odd projects, then in about August 1977 was hired on a project basis to help Phil Parente / Parenti to ease out of Pure & Simple in San Jose–after Roger Hillyard quit. He worked in and around a huge warehouse in San Jose; there was still a sprouting operation and they made nut butters. All of the operations staff left San Jose in Dec. 1977 so no shipments were made after that, but the accounting staff stayed as the business was being closed.

After that Bill was hired as marketing manager by Larry Brucia at Marin Foods. He had an office in San Rafael and commuted to the store across the San Rafael bridge. Bill worked at this job for several years, then he had to move back to Cincinnati with his two boys (of which he had custody). Address: Owner, 4015 Cherry St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45223. Phone: 1-800-514-3683.


• Summary: From the day that Jimmy began to work for Erewhon–Los Angeles in 1976, he always believed that John Fountain owned the company and that John Deming was only an investor. “For years, John Fountain ran that company into the ground. I have no idea why Deming wasn’t paying attention to what was happening. Then Deming showed up and said to me ‘Listen, this company really belongs to me, and I need to know what you think about what’s happening.’ I told him, then he said ‘I’m going to get rid of Fountain and I really need to have you stay. It’s going to be a great opportunity for you.’ But when he found out what was really happening, and there was going to be work involved, he became somewhat dismayed by the whole thing. It was totally bizarre.”

So Jimmy stayed on and worked for John Deming, who sacked John Fountain in late 1978 or early 1979. Jimmy then hired Jeffrey Hilgert. In early 1980, Jeffrey negotiated with Shade Foods (a maker of yogurt toppings in Belmont, California) for Erewhon–Los Angeles to buy the Pure & Simple name, plus a few jam products, from Shade. No physical assets were purchased. Payments were made over a period of several years.

Jimmy had recommended to John Fountain that Erewhon–Los Angeles be converted from a wholesale distributor to a master distributor of branded products that were sold nationally. When John Deming came in, he liked the idea and told Jimmy to make the change. So Jimmy arranged for K&L, Nature’s Best, and many other distributors to take on the line of products that Erewhon–Los Angeles had formerly distributed for itself. The Erewhon–Los Angeles warehouse and offices were moved from Vernon to Santa Ana, California. The Santa Ana warehouse was much smaller–no more than 8,000 square feet. It housed only the imported Japanese products and Johnson’s Spaghetti Sauce.
When Jimmy and Jeff Hilgert bought Erewhon–Los Angeles from John Deming in mid-1980, they basically wanted the right to use two names: Pure & Simple, and Erewhon. Erewhon–Los Angeles was a very small company, with sales of only about $35,000 a month at the time, and there were large debts which Silver and Hilgert agreed to pay off for Deming. “He said, ‘I have to have this amount of money’—which was a ridiculous sum. He should have just given us the company and walked away. It wasn’t really worth anything, except that it had these two valuable names—if it could control them.

“John presumably had an agreement with Michio Kushi which allowed him to use the name Erewhon in exchange for paying royalties—a percentage of the sales of the business—to Michio. This is what all the subsequent problems hinged on. After Erewhon went bankrupt, they informed John (without our knowing it) that they were going to require us to stop using the Erewhon name—because we had no right to it, because Deming had never executed the appropriate documents with Michio and wasn’t paying Michio any royalties. The agreement that John had told us he had with Michio—that he had sold us—did not exist! By the time we discovered this, we had already paid him something like $80,000 to $100,000. I didn’t find out until much later that Erewhon notified him that they were going to withdraw the use of the name from him. At that point, John came to us and said ‘Look, you still owe me several hundred thousand dollars for the business, but I’d like to accelerate the payments because I really need cash, and in exchange I’ll reduce the amount of money you owe me to $250,000.’ He wanted us to pay the balance due over 6 months rather than over something like 5 or 10 years. So we began accelerating the payments. He knew that both he and we would be sued by Erewhon, but we didn’t know it. After we had paid him $180,000 of the $250,000, Erewhon sued us. We went to John and asked him to defend us against the Erewhon suit since we still believed he had this agreement with Michio. Even though we had paid him $180,000 and were in the process of paying the rest, he refused to defend us. He told us it was our problem, that he didn’t think it was a productive use of money, and that he thought he should just walk away from it. So Jimmy hired a lawyer to defend himself, and asked John to produce a copy of his signed contract with Michio. I guess we neglected to scrutinize his agreement with Michio at the beginning because we trusted him and he had been using the Erewhon name for years. John did show us a copy of a written agreement at the time we made the deal, but the agreement had time frames on it, and it had to be renewed and renegotiated, and he said he was in the process of doing that. I learned a lot from this experience, but the tuition was high.

“In June 1980 we signed the agreement to purchase Erewhon–Los Angeles from John Deming, then we renamed it Pure Sales, which had two major lines of branded products: Erewhon, and Pure & Simple—plus Johnson’s Spaghetti Sauce. At the same time we were paying Deming, we were also paying Shade Foods for rights to use the Pure & Simple name. We took Deming’s business from $35,000 sales a month to about $350,000 a month within about a year.

Concerning names: Erewhon–Los Angeles had been a natural foods distribution company in Vernon, California, run by John Fountain. There was a time when Jimmy used both the names Erewhon–Los Angeles and Erewhon West, then Erewhon West took precedence as a name when the company became a master distributor of branded products and its products began to be distributed nationwide. The name change took place before Erewhon–Boston declared bankruptcy.

“After Erewhon refused to allow us to use the Erewhon name, we had to come up with a new name and re-label all our products in 90 days at a cost of something like $50,000 to $90,000. I called the pasta “Johnson’s” and the tamari So’ Tamari, So’ Pasta, etc.” John had had his lawyer, Fred Marks, write several very specific sentences into the agreement describing the conditions under which we would not have to pay John. There was a hearing in Boston, Massachusetts, and we had to go before a bankruptcy judge there. When we lost the lawsuit, because there was no valid agreement between Deming and Kushi, our lawyer asked the judge to issue the order in the language that Deming’s lawyer had written into our contract. And he did and the judge did. We got a court order losing to Erewhon but it was worded in John’s lawyer’s language. So we went back to John and said ‘We’re not going to pay you for the balance due.’ We told him we thought he should pay back the $180,000 we had already paid. He refused. After a month or two he sued us for the $50,000. So we counter-sued him for everything that we had paid him plus our costs of relabeling—a total of about $250,000 to $350,000. John came to us and said that he would drop his suit if we would drop ours. We did not pursue our case because we wanted to focus on our booming business and we did not have the resources to prosecute a lawsuit—nor were we willing to go through the emotional energy drain. So we walked away from it. John had lots of money and for him the whole thing was like a monopoly game. Address: President, Pure Sales, P.O. Box 5116, Irvine, California 92716-5116. Phone: 714-540-5455.


• **Summary:** It was Bill’s idea to start The Good Life, which opened in March 1971 as a natural food retail store at 80 Main Street in Brattleboro, Vermont. Brattleboro was a very active center of the counterculture in the late 1960s and
1970s. In 1964-65 he had lived in Indonesia, where he was doing research for his PhD dissertation on a peasant revolt in West Java, and he grew to be very fond of tempeh. Back in the USA, he entered academia at Lyndon State College in Lyndon, Vermont, teaching Chinese and Southeast Asian History during the Vietnam War. Bill was partners in The Good Life with Peter Strong and Patricia Perry. Bill and Peter were hippies at the time. Peter, who had been a student of Bill’s, had worked with David Hatch, who owned and ran Hatch’s, in Saint Johnsbury, Vermont. Hatch’s may have been the earliest natural food store in Vermont; they did not carry supplements. For a while Peter Strong ran Hatch’s.

When the three partners opened The Good Life in March 1971 they sort of used Hatch’s as a model. Many of their original employees came from the Total Loss Farm Commune at Packer’s Corners in Halifax, Vermont. The commune still exists (they used to make many baked goods for The Good Life), and a book was written about the group. There were some problems in getting good quality natural foods. The Good Life didn’t carry vitamins or supplements. Like Hatch’s, they would buy some foods from Erewhon in Boston, Massachusetts (Paul Hawken served as a wise advisor for them), and they would also drive a van farther south to New York City, where they would buy from Richter Brothers, Bazzini Nut Co. and others. In New York they would go to Chinatown and buy tofu from a Chinese manufacturer on Mott St. [probably Fong-On]. Prices of some goods were lower in New York City, Erewhon didn’t carry everything, and “frankly they were very disorganized as a business. Paul Hawken was more of a thinker than a manager—a fascinating person.” They were buying hard red winter wheat (organically grown) from Ted Whitmer in Montana. They would pay 8-9 cents a pound for the wheat plus 7 cents a pound to have it shipped to Vermont. Ted Whitmer said that if they bought a truckload of 40,000 lb, they could have it shipped on a back-shipment under an exemption for agricultural products; the ICC was still setting rates for freight shipments. So The Good Life took the plunge and in June or July of 1971 bought a 40,000 lb shipment of winter wheat from Whitmer, and paid only 2¼ cents per pound to have it shipped to Brattleboro. So the cost delivered to their store was about 11¼ cents per pound—a great price, compared with the 19-20 cents per pound that they would have to pay for Deaf Smith organic wheat from Erewhon [purchased by Erewhon from Arrowhead Mills in Texas]. Ted Whitmer gave The Good Life his list of all his wheat customers (about 25, including a nunnery and some co-ops) in the New England area to help his customers reduce freight costs. So The Good Life contacted all of Ted’s customers and started selling their organic wheat to other food stores and groups for 14-15 cents per pound. Most of the stores picked up the orders of wheat at The Good Life, but some of it was delivered to the stores. All the wheat was sold within a month. The origin of Llama, Toucan & Crow can be traced directly to this shipment of wheat. Bob Swanson joined The Good Life as an employee after the first big shipment of wheat, and he used to do a lot of the driving. By the second year, the Good Life contracted with Ted Whitmer to buy 500,000 lb of his wheat, with payment in advance.

Since The Good Life was selling wheat to a growing number of stores, they wanted to buy other foods as well. They drove to New York and picked up several thousand pounds of food each week at special discounted prices, as the retail store thrived. They began to sell some of this food from New York at wholesale prices to customers who purchased wholesale wheat. So they soon found themselves in the wholesale business, and by early 1972 they were delivering foods at wholesale to more than 5 accounts. Then they discovered that the commodities law that enabled them to ship large amounts wheat inexpensively from Montana, would also allow them to ship other foods, such as dried fruits from California, at ridiculously low prices. So they put together a 40,000 lb shipment of dried fruits from California, consisting mostly of dried organic dates, then used organic raisins and other fruits to make a total of 40,000 lb. Now they were really in the wholesale business. Bob Swanson’s job expanded from just delivering the food to taking the orders and ordering the food. By the end of 1972, The Good Life found itself with a thriving wholesale business, doing about $3,000 to $4,000 a week—about the same as the retail store. They were making two delivery runs a week, one north to Vermont and New Hampshire, and one south to Connecticut and Massachusetts. And people still came to The Good Life to pick up their supplies—at excellent prices. The tail was now wagging the dog. By this time Peter had gone off to Nepal—to discover himself. Patricia and Bill were running the retail store, which had always carried, in addition to natural foods, imported cheese and wines. They sold no vitamins until many years later. Bill and Patricia decided that, as from the outset, they wanted to be in the retail store business, so they said to Bob Swanson, “If you want this wholesale business, its yours, free of charge.” Why free of charge? “It was right, and it was the right thing to do. You’ve got to remember, this was the early 1970s.”

Bob accepted their offer, and in Jan. 1971 he began running the business out of the cellar of The Good Life for several months, until he located a very tumble-down warehouse facility for his new company in Brattleboro, at 21 Frost Street. The building has since been demolished. It had been owned by DeWitt Beverage Company, a beer distributor, and Swanson’s business occupied only one floor of about 5 floors. Swanson operated out of this location for about 8-9 months, then he moved the company down to Greenfield.
Bill has no idea how to contact Bob Swanson now; later Bob went to his home town in Woodbury, Connecticut, where he helped a friend run a natural food store. Then he may have moved to Colorado. Peter Strong, who is now somewhere in Texas, might know how to reach Swanson.

When Barclay McFadden purchased Llama, Toucan & Crow, he had no background in the natural food business. Bill thinks that he was in the military, perhaps either a career officer or he may have been a graduate of West Point.

Bill and his wife now have a consulting company that works with country inns and bed-and-breakfasts in Vermont–mainly helping them to get started or to buy. Address: Box 1162, Brattleboro, Vermont 05302. Phone: 802-254-5931.


• Summary: “This spring, as we complete our sixteenth year of operations at the American Miso Company, we are moved to reflect back on the path we have traveled to reach this point. In the spring of 1979, a group of people approached Michio and Aveline Kushi with the idea of forming a new company to produce miso in the United States using traditional methods and only the finest organic ingredients. With the Kushi’s enthusiastic support, the Erewhon Miso Company was created to supply Erewhon with miso to distribute throughout the United States. From this distant perspective, it is difficult to remember how powerful a force Erewhon was in the natural foods industry at that time. Dominating the market in the Northeast, Erewhon was the largest distributor of natural food in the United States with strong connections to distributors for its name brands in other regions.

“With Erewhon as our partner, master distributor, and a major investor, we moved ahead confidently with our plans to build a miso factory in the Piedmont Region of North Carolina. The Kushis entreated Akiyoshi Kazama, founder of Mitoku Trading Company, a major supplier then as now of high-quality Japanese natural food to the U.S. market, to put aside any narrow concerns of self interest and find us someone to train our would-be miso makers in the rapidly fading art of traditional miso manufacture. In a selfless spirit of international cooperation, Mr. Kazama searched for someone who still made miso the old-fashioned way, yet was open-minded enough to invite strangers into his home (literally).

“After many false starts amid a lengthy search, Mr. Kazama finally located, in the mountains of Yaita Prefecture north of Tokyo, Takamichi Onozaki, a country miso maker of the old school. Mr. Onozaki, generously opening his home and his heart to gaijin [foreign] seekers after knowledge from half a world away, agreed to house and train an American couple, John and Jan Belleme, for an entire miso-making season. From November, 1979, until June, 1980, Mr. Onozaki taught his students all the miso lore he had accumulated from a lifetime of miso making in his small, rural miso factory staffed entirely by local farmwives. This was intermediate technology with a vengeance!

“Upon the Bellemes’ return to America, we rapidly constructed our factory building near Rutherfordton, North Carolina, and Mitoku arranged to ship us our new equipment from Japan. By late 1980 we had begun to make our first experimental batches of rice miso. As the miso slowly aged in its huge cypress vats, great events developed hidden from our eyes which were to have a profound effect on the young Erewhon Miso Company. In July, 1981, Michio and Aveline Kushi journeyed to Rutherfordton for the official christening of the miso plant. The beautiful and joyous ceremony left not a dry eye in the gathering; later we discussed Erewhon’s ambitious plans to package and market the rapidly ripening miso.

“A glorious road into the future seemed to lay open before us, but Erewhon’s financial condition was rapidly deteriorating as too rapid expansion took its toll on a company stretched to the limit by its success. One month later we received the stunning news that Erewhon had filed for bankruptcy. In one of the saddest stories we have ever had the misfortune to be a part of, the Kushis lost control of the company they had nurtured from its birth, and we lost our only customer, a major investor, and our major source of inspiration and guidance.

“At first we were devastated by the blow fate had dealt us, but we had nowhere to go but forward as we had already made a huge financial and emotional investment in our project. Severing our ties to the past, we renamed our enterprise the American Miso Company and began a desperate search for marketers for our product. When we were unable to find anyone to help us, we resolved to set up our own marketing company and do the job ourselves. Thus, out of the direct necessity, Great Eastern Sun was born in December, 1981. Mitoku, itself almost destroyed in the storm of the Erewhon disaster and eager to rebuild, agreed to export Japanese natural food to Great Eastern Sun. GES processed its first order in April, 1982, and sold the first American Miso in September of that same year.

“In the fall of 1981, Mr. Onozaki came to Rutherfordton on an inspection trip to see exactly how well his students had learned their lessons. He stayed and worked in the factory alongside our own crew, patiently reviewing our practices and refining our procedures until he pronounced himself fully satisfied. He had never left Japan before in his life. In the fall [sic, spring] of 1982, Mr. Onozaki dispatched his daughter and son-in-law to America to work for several months in the miso factory just to make absolutely certain that everything remained kosher. In late 1985, John and Jan Belleme turned over the operation of the
factory they had built to their successor, Don DeBona, who remains as miso factory manager to this day. Three books and many projects later, the circle comes round again as the Bellemes are now Mitoku’s U.S. representatives.

“Although our miso was sold only in bulk for its first two seasons, our familiar tubs with the Miso Master logo soon arrived on the scene and sales slowly but steadily grew. Starting with eight barrels, we added six in 1986, seven in 1989, five in 1991, and fifteen more in 1993 for a total of 41 of these leviathans, each holding over four tons of two-year miso. In order to house our expanding activities, we built a second factory building as big as the first in 1992, and we are already experiencing a shortage of space once again as demand continues to grow. Two years ago we began to export our miso to Europe where it is distributed by Lima throughout the continent. The American Miso Company story continues on into the future.”

Address: Owner, Great Eastern Sun, Asheville, North Carolina 28806. Phone: 704-252-3090.


**Summary:** Tyler Smith negotiated the sale of Erewhon, Los Angeles, to John Deming and John Fountain. Tyler recently told Patricia that when John Deming and John Fountain took over Erewhon, Los Angeles, it was their intent to use it to test the ideas of Andrew Galambos in practice. John Fountain tried to apply the ideas of Galambos among employees in the daily operations of the company. Patricia could feel the changes immediately—even though she didn’t find out until much later that John Deming owned the company. “We were all committed to Erewhon as a macrobiotic food company.” New words and language started to be used. Patricia eventually took Galambos’ basic course.

Tyler first met Michio Kushi through a series of lectures at Stanford University in May 1968; the lectures were organized by William Shurtleff as part of an Esalen at Stanford program, of which he was head. Tyler was a first-year student at Stanford Law School at the time. Address: Radical Food, P.O. Box 952, Mill Valley, California 94942-0952.


**Summary:** Barry was born on 25 Feb. 1947 in Reading, Pennsylvania. His father was in the army reserves. He has been an avid reader since he was about age 9. He did very well on his SAT exams, and entered Princeton University in the fall of 1965 on an ROTC scholarship; there he majored in history, a subject in which he is deeply interested to this day. After 3 years he left Princeton (in a scuffle over a project) and attended Temple University in Philadelphia for one year. Returning to Princeton for a fifth year in college, he graduated in 1970. He has been a “natural foods enthusiast” since he was in college. He entered the U.S. Army in Feb. 1971, living off post at Fort Knox (Kentucky), formally applied as a conscientious objector, and was honorably discharged in Aug. 1972 with full veteran’s benefits. He returned to Temple Univ., enrolled in a PhD program in history, but left after 3½ semesters. In June 1974 he became a vegetarian—though he regularly eats fish. In 1977, while living in Coconut Grove, Florida, he first heard about macrobiotics and heard Michio Kushi speak in Coconut Grove. He became a devoted follower of macrobiotics, which he still is. Barry heard about the miso venture through Kathy Kashdan, his housekeeper, who was the sister of John Bellemme’s ex-wife. Sandy Pukel (pronounced pyu-KEL), who owned the Oak Feed Store, was the pasha (local chiefman) of the large macrobiotic community (satrapy) in Coconut Grove. Sandy was also extremely close to Michio, and they were often in touch. Sandy was probably Michio’s closest friend among American followers of macrobiotics. The day after Michio’s lecture, Barry went to Sandy’s Oak Feed Restaurant (where he had previously spent much time) and asked to see John Belleme, the manager of Oak Feed Restaurant (where he had previously spent much time) and asked to see John Belleme, who was seated at a table in the Oak Feed Restaurant with Sandy Pukel, talking with Edmund Benson about the miso company idea. Barry walked over to the table and introduced himself, and said he might like to be involved with the miso company; neither he nor John knew one another, but their paths were soon to become deeply intertwined.

1978 fall–Sandy Pukel, John Belleme, and Michio Kushi start to discuss the idea of a miso manufacturing company in America. John Belleme became interested in this idea in the fall of 1976 in Brookline, Massachusetts.

1978 fall–Various people buy shares in the new miso company. Jim Kenney $5,000. Frank Head intended to buy shares, but never did. At either that time or later Edmund Benson invested about $25,000 of $50,000 that he had formerly pledged.

1978 fall–Pukel and Belleme make a deal through a real estate agent to buy the property in Rutherfordton, North Carolina, on which the American Miso Co. now stands. As Barry recalls, this was the very first concrete move toward starting a miso company other than John taking Japanese Berlitz lessons, which he started at about the same time. They bought something like $1,000 to $5,000 down as good-faith money and had about 6-12 months to come up with the rest of the down payment of $15,000 to $20,000. John Belleme rode up to North Carolina on his motorcycle to help make
the down payment and sign the original land deeds before Barry invested any money. Maybe John also rode up again later.

1979 Feb. 28–Oak Feed Miso, Inc. is incorporated. The initial directors and officers are Sanford J. Pukel (President, 3030 Grand Ave., Coconut Grove, Florida 33133) and John Belleme (Secretary-Treasurer, 5490 W. 1 Ct., Hialeah, Florida 33012). It is not clear who owns how much stock at this time. Oak Feed Miso was discussing a joint venture with Erewhon to establish the actual factory, which would then be called the Erewhon Miso Co.

1979 April–Five of the six months have passed. Barry (now age 32) becomes involved as an investor in the miso company, contributing initially $50,000, which more than covers the urgently needed down payment. He thinks Sandy could have found a way to make the next land payment without his money, but perhaps not easily. Barry had not been previously involved in the miso project in any way. Barry believes that by this time Sendai Miso-Shoyu and Mitoku (Mr. Kazama) had very little interest in serious participation in the Erewhon Miso Co. Michio may have wanted them to be involved, but they did almost nothing to demonstrate their interest. At best they may have said “keep us posted.” But nothing ever happened.

1979 Oct.–John and Jan Belleme leave for Japan to study miso making. After “camping out” in Mr. Kazama’s office for a while, he ends up studying with Mr. Onozaki. Barry’s investment helps, but the checks sent to the Bellemes in Japan are written by Sandy Pukel on the Oak Feed Miso account.

1979 Nov. 18–Barry is in a horrific bicycle accident in Pennsylvania. He flies over the handlebars, into a field, breaking 5 vertebrae and 9 ribs. After a 14-hour operation, he spends 6 months flat on his back in the hospital and 1 year in a full-body cast. He was paralyzed from the waist down for quite some time. He did not eat one bite of hospital food; he had all natural-food meals brought in.

Continued: Address: Owner, American Miso Co., Inc. and Great Eastern Sun, Asheville, North Carolina 28806. Phone: 704-252-3090.


• Summary: Continued: 1980 June–John and Jan Belleme return to the USA from Japan. A letter shows that by late summer John had started to order miso-making equipment. Barry is sure that the wooden vats come from Arrow Tank Co. (Buffalo, New York) the only traditional barrel maker left in the United States–a very interesting place. The vats are all traditionally made, from old recycled wine barrels and other old wood. Over the years, the miso company has bought all its vats from Arrow Tank Co. The first 35 vats were cypress, but when those ran out, the next five were fir (they took a long time to season), and last 5-6 were redwood (they worked better).

Concerning Joseph and Patricia Carpenter: Barry never met them and he understands that their being asked to leave when the Bellemes returned was a traumatic, landmark event in their lives. Barry was once in prison for 32 months, and was on probation for three years after that, and was awaiting prison for 2 years before he actually went. But when it was over, he let it go and went on with his life.

After John returned from Japan, Barry heard about the Carpenters situation from John and Sandy, who said (generally) that they had not done much while they were there, and they did not seem very motivated. But, in all fairness, maybe they didn’t have any clear instructions as to what they were supposed to do. For him, their whole role in the miso company was always very hazy. But until Barry took a hand in things, the whole company was very “loosey-goosey.” Nobody had any clear instructions as to what was to be done. Only John and Jan Belleme know the details of what actually happened. Sandy is a “conflict avoider” so he would have been ambiguous. John was not a conflict avoider. John, who was never a hippie and was very yang after his stay in Japan, came back to find these two hippie types on the land. “This culture clash may have had a lot to do with it.” Also, there was only one house, so the two families would have had to live together.

1980 summer–Each time the company needed more money, they would come to Barry–since he was the only one they knew who had any and was willing to invest it. This summer, when the building had to be constructed, the equipment ordered and paid for, and land payments made, Barry started to invest a lot more money, and to own more and more shares. When he invested his second $50,000 he began to pay more attention to who else owned shares. “As I began to sniff the wind a little more, I sensed that I was surrounded by phantom shareholders, and was the only one actually investing any money.” Sandy and Michio didn’t want Barry to be on the board of directors, and they wanted his stock to be Class B, which did not enable him to vote–even though he was now the leading investor. Barry confronted Michio on this while on an airplane en route from Boston to Florida; Sandy was also on the plane. Barry made it plain that he would not invest any more money (he was being asked for about $90,000 more) unless he could be on the board of directors, and all the stock (not just his) would be voting stock. Michio and Sandy reluctantly agreed. All this came to a head at an important meeting in Miami in the summer of 1980, shortly after John and Jan returned from Japan.

When the Belleme’s returned from Japan, people began to realize that this miso company might really happen. Negotiations had been taking place throughout 1979 and 1980. Three or four versions of an ownership contract /
agreement had been presented but never signed; there would be 14-15 more over the next year, and none of those was ever signed either. The negotiations ended with Erewhon’s bankruptcy. The discussions were really between the Erewhon group (comprised of Michio, Aveline, Morris Kirsner—their attorney—and Evan Root) and the Oak Feed Miso group (comprised now of Barry, John and Jan Belleme, and David Young—their attorney). Sendai Miso—Shoyu and Mitoku were not even mentioned; they were out of the picture. Mr. Kazama, owner of Mitoku, probably feared and doubted the potential new American miso company. “The issue was: Who would control the company, Erewhon or us? And how many shares would each person or company own?” Each group wanted to own a majority of the shares. This meeting went on for several days at various places, including restaurants, the Oak Feed Store, and the office of David Young—the Oak Feed Miso group’s attorney. Note: See also meeting of 27 Sept. 1981.

Barry, who was on crutches, flew in from Reading, Pennsylvania, accompanied by his close friend and confidant, Saul Goodman, a macrobiotic healer and shiatsu practitioner. Barry could not travel by himself, and this was the first trip he had taken after his bike accident. David Young was concerned that the Oak Feed group was being asked to put up almost all of the money yet would not have control; yet he was ambivalent. Sandy Pukel was a member of the Oak Feed Miso group, but he was also ambivalent; he was really on Michio’s side. He felt that Erewhon’s participation was absolutely vital, and whatever had to be given up to get that participation was appropriate. Everyone should trust in Michio, and Michio would provide.

Sandy was and is one of Michio’s closest friends and confidants in the whole world. Sandy and Mona Schwartz were the co-heads of the Florida Macrobiotic Association. An excellent macrobiotic teacher and cook, Mona ran a study house in the Miami area, where Barry ate many of his meals for the first several years that he was practicing macrobiotics. So did Dr. Keith Block. Mona first told Barry how close Michio and Sandy were, and how much each influenced the other’s thinking.

Barry recalls that Michio and his attorney, Morris Kirsner, were so demanding and unreasonable in what they wanted that even Sandy hesitated. He wanted to give them more than Barry and John, but he didn’t want to give them everything they wanted. Negotiations dragged on and on because they were taking this unrealistic negotiating stance. So it was easy for Barry and John, who saw increasing signs of weakness in Erewhon, to begin to fight a war of attrition and prevent anything from happening.

The Board at that time had five members—including John Belleme, Sandy Pukel, Edmund Benson, Barry, and one other person—which was probably not Michio. Only four other people besides Barry invested money in the miso company: Edmund Benson $20,000, Frank Head (who started Mountain Ark) $5,000, the Japanese cook at the Oak Feed Restaurant (Yozo Masuda) $10,000, and Jim Kenney $5,000. Barry bought out the first two, and Jim died before the company began operations. Sandy Pukel, as one of the company’s founders, got a number of “founders shares” for free, which Barry eventually bought back from him.

1980 fall—A document shows that at this time “John and Jan go on Erewhon payroll and start construction of Erewhon Miso in Rutherfordton, North Carolina.” They begin by leveling the land. They went on the payroll of the Erewhon Trading Co., not the Erewhon Miso Co., since the latter company did not have a payroll and never really existed. Of course, Michio and Aveline owned Erewhon and all or most of its stock. Barry recalls that Erewhon was supposed to put up a certain amount of money for their share of the joint venture, and then provide the additional services of buying all miso made by the new miso company, packaging, and distributing it.

Barry recalls that much of the automatic miso-making equipment came from Japan—some or all of it from the Fujiwara Brewing Co. in Hiroshima. John visited them in 1983 when the miso company was considering adding a soy sauce plant near the miso plant. Continued. Address: Owner, American Miso Co., Inc. and Great Eastern Sun, Asheville, North Carolina 28806. Phone: 704-252-3090.


• Summary: Continued: 1981 Jan. 31–Oak Feed Miso, Inc. IRS tax returns (for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31) show losses of $89,000 for the last year with no sales. Note: The land was purchased on a mortgage, with about $20,000 down payment.

1981 March–The miso building is essentially complete, but some equipment still had to be ordered—from Japan and the USA.

1981 early—Michio and Aveline Kushi can see that Erewhon is heading for bankruptcy. They try urgently to raise money. Sandy Pukel loans the Kushis $100,000—and thereby wins their eternal gratitude and friendship. Sandy never gets the money back. Barry is upset, because he believes that this was money he gave to Sandy as his investment in the miso company. Essentially, Barry then had to give Sandy more money which he finally did invest in the miso company—as follows: Sometime later in 1981, to make things more complicated, Sandy (who is now short of cash) asks Barry if he would be willing to invest in Oak Feed Store and Restaurant with the understanding that Sandy will use the money to buy the shares he had pledged to buy in Oak Feed Miso, Inc. Barry accepts the deal, and Sandy invests the $80,000 to $90,000 in Oak Feed Miso—which makes Barry happy.
1981 July–The opening ceremony for Erewhon Miso Co. is held at Rutherfordton, North Carolina. This was “the crowning moment of the early phase of the miso company. We were all still together at that point, including Michio. We had a big, beautiful sign out on the road in front of the factory, put up for the opening ceremony, that read ‘Erewhon Miso Co.’–even though that was never the name of the company. The delegation from Erewhon was Michio, Aveline, and Evan Root. Evan was overwhelmed by the emotion of it all–just crying like a baby. John and Jan Belleme were there, as was a woman from Asheville who did the photography. Sandy Pukel must have also been there, though Barry has no clear recollection of this. Yet tension between Barry and Sandy had been growing. “Without Sandy and Michio, the project never would have happened.” By now many people could see that Erewhon was headed for bankruptcy, but “Even at the time of the opening, everyone thought Michio would pull another rabbit out of his hat in the end,” to save Erewhon. In late summer and early fall Barry attended several meetings called to discuss Erewhon’s perilous financial condition. These meetings were all held in the area of Boston, Massachusetts, sometimes in the office of Morris Kirsner, the Kushi’s attorney. Barry was invited largely because they hoped he would help bail out Erewhon.

1981 Aug.–John and Jan Belleme start making miso in North Carolina; the soybeans and grains are contributed by Erewhon Trading Co. But by August or September the Kushis can see that Erewhon’s bankruptcy is imminent, so they stop sending John his paycheck and additional raw materials. This creates a crisis; everything must be rethought with Erewhon out of the picture. John may have sent out feelers to Westbrae and Eden to see if they wanted to take over Erewhon’s role as distributor of the miso–they didn’t.

1981 Sept. 27–At an annual meeting of Oak Feed Miso, Inc. all shares are converted to Class A voting shares. Major shareholders are: Barry Evans 1400 shares. Sandy Pukel 1400 shares. John Belleme 900 shares.

1981 Nov. 18–Erewhon Trading Co. files for bankruptcy protection under Chapter 11 of the federal Bankruptcy Act. For the next several months, “various wolves were circling around, trying to grab hold of the half-dead body. Finally U.S. Mills and Nature Food Centres Inc. grabbed it and dragged it off to its lair.” As part of the deal, Michio had to agree that he would only do endorsements through the new owners. So Michio, who had lost control of his own destiny for quite some time, could not be involved with the miso company any more. Barry thinks Sandy realized that and his heart went out of the miso company project at that point. Consequently, all deals between the miso company and Erewhon come to an end. Barry thinks that Erewhon Trading Co. invested a total of about $15,000 in the miso company in the form of payments and miso ingredients. After Erewhon was purchased out of bankruptcy, the new owners, Chuck Verde and Cynthia Davis, never got this investment back. When they called, Barry took the position that the costs and difficulties the miso company had endured because of Erewhon’s collapse were much greater than $15,000. Barry added that if they took the matter to court, he would sue them for breach of contract. In fact, the miso company barely survived that collapse.

Over the past four months Barry, who admires Michio as a spiritual leader, has come to realize that he cannot be counted on to help establish the new miso company. He has grown tired of all the difficulties with Erewhon and Michio; as a practical businessman, he was “a nightmare.”

1981 late–Marty Roth now enters the picture. When John Belleme left his job as manager of Oak Feed Store to study miso in Japan, Jim Kenney took over from him. Jim was an epileptic; while traveling on vacation in East Asia about a year later, he died tragically at about age 27–Barry heard he choked on the seed of an umeboshi salt plum that he was using to try to control an epileptic fit. So in about July or August 1981 Sandy brought in Marty Roth, who had been running the Natural Cafe in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Marty was soon working as manager (or assistant manager) of Oak Feed Store. Marty (a very inventive and creative guy) and Barry (a co-owner of the store) quickly find they get along well and work together effectively. Marty didn’t want to stay in Miami, and his job with Sandy wasn’t working out. When Marty told this to Barry, Barry said that he was planning to establish his own import company in North Carolina, and that company was also going to take over distribution for the miso factory. It is not crystal clear to what extent Barry lured Marty away from Oak Feed Co. and to what extent Marty would have left anyway.

1981 Dec.–Great Eastern Sun (GES) is organized. The first employee and manager is Barbara Arrow, who arrived in Dec. 1981.

1982 Jan.–Barry makes another investment in the miso company and thereby replaces Sandy Pukel as the largest shareholder. Barry buys out remaining shareholders–except Jim Kenney who is no longer living. Sandy proposes to Barry a deal whereby he would trade Barry all of his stock in the miso company for all of Barry’s stock in Oak Feed Store. Barry accepts, but with the added condition that Barry could import goods from Mitoku in Japan.

1982 Jan. 4–Barry Evans sends out a letter on American Miso Co. letterhead to potential customers that begins: “Dear Friends–We at The American Miso Company are proud to announce the opening of our miso shop in Western North Carolina.” It ends: “The Lindensel Foundation,
doing their business as Linden’s Elf Works, located in Piedmont, North Carolina, has been appointed as the sole agent in marketing and distribution of The American Miso Company brand products... Your phone contact is John Troy at... 919/364-2723. Enclosed is the Linden’s Elf Works distributor price sheet which includes all the pertinent information for your upcoming Spring catalogue. With kindest regards, Barry Evans, President.” When Marty Roth sees this announcement, he argues that GES should distribute AMC’s miso; Barry agrees. So John Troy and Elf Works never did distribute any AMC miso.

1982 Jan. 31–Oak Feed Miso has losses of $67,000 for the previous year with no sales. Total loss: $157,000.

1982 Feb. 26–Sandy Pukel and Barry Evans sign an agreement whereby Sandy gets out of Oak Feed Miso and Barry gets out of Oak Feed Store and Oak Feed Restaurant by an exchange / trade of stock. Barry recalls that Sandy left the miso company reluctantly for two reasons. First, because he saw the miso company as “his baby” and he liked to be in control—not so much because he saw it as a company with a bright and profitable future. And second, because Michio wasn’t involved any longer, and couldn’t be because of what had happened to Erewhon. Barry never asked Sandy (or any of the other shareholders) if he could buy their shares. They all approached him with the idea. First, for example, Edmund Benson wanted to get his money back, so Sandy bought his stock. Yozo Masuda’s stock was included in the deal with Sandy.

1982 March 22–Great Eastern Sun is incorporated.

1982 April 19–At the annual meeting of the shareholders of Oak Feed Miso, the name is officially changed to American Miso Co. This change is filed with the state of Florida on 5 May 1982, and signed by Barry Evans and Janet Belleme. The final stamp of filing is 19 May 1982. Barry notes: “In numerology, this date (May 19) is a 44 number, since 5 + 19 + 1 + 9 + 8 + 2 = 44. Forty-four is the number of ultimate business success.” Barry did not plan to incorporate the company on this date. “It was just the order of the universe.”

1982 May 18–Great Eastern Sun sells its first food products to a natural food store; they were imported from Japan.

1982 mid- to late- The principals of the American Miso Co. are now Barry Evans, John and Jan Belleme, and Mrs. Kenney. Barry started with 1,400 shares, got 1,400 from Sandy, 100 from Yozo, 250 from Edmund, and 200 from Gary Dukeman (a friend of his)–for a total of 3,350. John and Jan had about 850 shares. John had been given about $20,000 worth of shares as a founder of the company, and because he went to Japan to learn how to make miso, and because he had worked for a modest salary (less than $20,000/year) as a miso maker in North Carolina. Mrs. Kenney had 50 shares. On a percentage basis, Barry owned 78.9% of the miso company, John and Jan Belleme owned 20%, and Mrs. Kenney owned the rest. Continued. Address: Owner, American Miso Co., Inc. and Great Eastern Sun, Asheville, North Carolina 28806. Phone: 704-252-3090.

333. Ott, Katherine. 1996. Re: Interest in the possibility of adding Michio Kushi’s papers and materials to the archival collections of the National Museum of American History, at the Smithsonian Institution. Letter to B.G. Mancini at the Kushi Institute, P.O. Box 7, Becket, MA 01223, March 4. 1 p. Typed, with signature on letterhead.

• Summary: “It was a pleasure to speak with you recently about the work of Michio Kushi. We at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, are interested in the possibility of adding Mr. Kushi’s papers and materials to our collections. The kinds of things we are most interested in include: manuscripts; notebooks; correspondence; photographs; objects used in diagnosis, treatment, food preparation, or otherwise unique to Mr. Kushi’s system; video and audio tapes of his work; and records and reports chronicling both the philosophical and business growth of macrobiotics. It would be helpful to know the potential size of Mr. Kushi’s collection and to have more specific information about the nature of the materials. His donation would be made available to researchers, students, and the general public free of charge, as part of the national collections here at the Museum.

“We are well aware of the importance macrobiotics has had upon American nutrition and lifestyle over the years, as well as the importance of Mr. Kushi to it.”

Talk with Katherine Ott. 1996. July 22. Her Division has not yet decided whether or not to add the Kushi papers to their collection. Money must be found to finance the accession and cataloging.

Talk again with Katherine Ott. 1997. Feb. 24. She is personally very interested in having the Smithsonian acquire the Kushi papers for its archives center. The acquisition has not yet been approved, but she is 99% sure it will be. It is taking a little longer than usual because of the size and importance of the collection, and the “controversy around macrobiotics,” and also because Katerine is only at the Smithsonian one day a week. The Kushis have been willing to help organize the collection and finance its cataloging, which has helped a lot. The Smithsonian budget is so small it is depressing, and they have a huge backlog of uncataloged materials. Her field is “History of Medicine–Objects.” Traditionally in the area of medical science, the Smithsonian has collected “Big Science and Technology,” and they are very conservative. She has been working to educate her co-workers on the importance of alternative health care and practice. This is an area that appears to have a bright future in America, yet the Smithsonian has very little material about it; it is a field in which macrobiotics was clearly a pioneer. Erewhon was also an interesting and important business which played a leading role in the
“transformation of the American diet” and the interest in whole foods, and the archives center also collects important businesses records. The Smithsonian already has a fellowship program and she would like to raise money for a research fellowship to study the material on macrobiotics, alternative health care, and natural foods—with the goal of writing a history of the subject. Address: PhD, Div. of Science, Medicine and Society, National Museum of American History, MRC 627, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560. Phone: 202-357-2413.


• Summary: Michio and Aveline have big problems on their hands at their new company Kushi Macrobiotics. “Basically, you’ve got a bunch of high rollers from the commercial food industry thinking that, with slick packaging and cheap ingredients, they can create a product line that is double the price of Fantastic Foods’ and not nearly as good in quality... They just don’t have a clue of the sophistication of the natural foods shopper. They’ve got five guys each making $125,000 a year, and they haven’t sold a thing yet. Norio Kushi is making $80,000 a year, and he is barely at the level of knowing how to brush his teeth in terms of business experience.”

Its just amazing. They raise $1 million privately to start off with. They blew through that with surveys, etc. As Jimmy Silver said aptly, ‘Basically what they found out with their million dollars was that people weren’t interested in what they were selling.’ What they are doing is basically the antithesis of what macrobiotics stands for. Then they proceeded to use no organic ingredients and made it a corporate policy to not use anything from Japan—except brown rice vinegar, of which they are buying a low quality product from Eden Foods. They then raised 6 million with a public offering, and now have less than $4 million left. They are going through money like crazy. When he acquired it, sales were less than $900,000 a year. This year he will probably do $3 million. Everyone from Lenny Jacobs on down told Bruce that macrobiotics was dead. True, it has changed, but it alive in new ways. For example, a guy name Horse Schultz is the chairman of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Chain; he is having his chefs trained at the Kushi institute, and has sent out a memo to all of his hotels worldwide that by a certain date they will be offering macrobiotic quality meals at all hotels in addition to the traditional fare. They are converting one hotel at a time. Bruce is now flying miso down to Cancun. Horse Schultz’s cancer is now in remission. Address: President, Macrobiotic Company of America, Asheville, North Carolina 28806. Phone: 704-252-1221.


• Summary: Patricia Smith organized a party for Michio and Aveline to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of Erewhon in Massachusetts. About 20 people came. Unfortunately Paul Hawken and Bill Tara were unable to be there.

Michio just received a letter (fax) from the Smithsonian Institution that they wish to consider doing an archival collection of his personal papers. Address: 62 Buckingham Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-232-6869.


• Summary: A good, concise history of Erewhon.

“In April 1966 the Kushis opened a retail shop in a tiny basement storefront on Newbury Street in Boston. The
store, run by transplanted New York actor Evan Root, was named after the novel *Erewhon* by British writer Samuel Butler. In *Erewhon* (an anagram for the word ‘nowhere’), Butler describes an imaginary island in which lawbreakers are put in a hospital and where people who get sick are put in jail. Since the story reflected the Macrobiotic principle that each person was responsible for his or her health, the name seemed appropriate. In the rustic, cramped store, plank shelves resting on Cinder blocks were filled with hand-lettered brown paper bags of rice, grains, flour, and beans. During the summer of 1967 when I tended the store, daily receipts averaged about twenty-five dollars.”

In the fall of 1967 Paul Hawken and “several other veterans of the San Francisco ‘Summer of Love’ arrived in Boston to study and work with the Kushis. They took over the running of Erewhon, moved the store to larger, brighter quarters across the street, expanded the product line, and began a mail-order business. Idealistic, smart, energetic, and hard-working, these and other young men and women dedicated themselves to Erewhon as a means to improve the quality of the nation’s food and thus to improve the national health and well-being. Over the next decade, Erewhon grew into a large and important retailer, manufacturer, and distributor of natural foods. In 1971, it had sales of about $500,000, and in 1977 it had gross sales of about $10 million. During this period the average age of Erewhon’s employees was about twenty-two!”

One interesting illustration shows the front of the Erewhon Trading Co. store on Newbury Street in Boston, Massachusetts. This illustration appeared in the October 1980 issue of *Erewhon Monthly*, the newsletter of the Erewhon distribution company.

There follows a good discussion of Erewhon’s contributions to the natural foods industry. Address: Massachusetts.


• **Summary:** This beige mug, with a sturdy handle, is 3.75 inches high and 3.125 inches in diameter. On one side, in red and purple letters, is written “1966–1996 Erewhon. The quality standard for 30 years.” Above that are three ears of wheat in purple, green, and blue. On the other side, in red letters, is written “Bill Shurtleff.” Address: Newton, Upper Falls, Massachusetts. Phone: 617-969-5400.


• **Summary:** On the front of this large black T-shirt, in gold, red and purple letters, is written “1966–1996 Erewhon. The quality standard for 30 years.” Above that are three ears of wheat in purple, green, and blue. Nothing is written on the back of the T-shirt. Address: Newton, Upper Falls, Massachusetts. Phone: 617-969-5400.


• **Summary:** Since the late 1970s, almost all of the soybeans in American have had yellow seed coats. Most Americans, including soybean farmers, have never heard of soybeans that were black, green, brown, white, red, or bicolored. But have yellow soybeans always predominated in America?

“Previous to the numerous introductions by the United States Department of Agriculture beginning in 1898, there were not more than eight varieties of soy beans grown in the United States, namely, Ito San, Mammoth, and Butterball, with yellow seeds; Buckshot and Kingston, with black seeds; Guelph or Medium Green, with green seeds; and Eda and Ogemaw, with brown seeds.” Thus of these eight pre-1898 varieties, 3 varieties (37.5%) had yellow seeds, 2 varieties (25%) had black seeds, 2 varieties (25%) had brown seeds, and 1 variety (12.5%) had green seeds (Source: Piper & Morse 1910, “The soy bean: History, varieties, and field studies,” p. 27).

In this same important 84-page report, the authors describe in great detail the 285 soybean varieties that have been introduced into the United States as of 1909. Of these 285 varieties, 152 varieties (53.3%) have yellow (straw-yellow or olive-yellow) seeds, 55 varieties (19.3%) have black seeds, 44 varieties (15.4%) have brown seeds, 24 varieties (8.4%) have green seeds, and 10 varieties (3.5%) are bicolored (p. 37-39).

Thus, as late as 1910, only about half of all soybean varieties in the United States had yellow seeds. But yellow soybeans were already coming to be preferred. Why? “Yellow or green seeds are preferable to darker colors, as the shattered seeds are more easily found by hogs pasturing the field or stubble” (p. 36).

The first black-seeded soybean was probably introduced to the USA from Japan in 1889 by Prof. W.P. Brooks of the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station, who traveled to Japan to collect seeds. He had named this variety “Medium Black” by 1895 and in 1893 it was grown at the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, from which the U.S. Department of Agriculture received it in 1903 under the name “Japanese No. 15.” By 1910 it had been officially named “Kingston” (p. 31).

In 1910 the following named, black-seeded (or partly black) soybeans (listed alphabetically) were being grown in the USA: Arlington, Auburn, Black Beauty, Brindle (brown and black), Buckshot, Chernie, Cloud, Early Black, Ebony, Extra Early Black, Fairchild, Flat King, Hankow (brown banded with black), Hongkong, Jet, Kingston, Large Black, Medium Black, Medium Early Black, Meyer (black and brown), Nigra, Nuttall, Peking, Pingsu, Riceland, Shanghai,
In 1899 Walter Blasdale, Instructor in Chemistry at the University of California, studied the vegetables sold at Chinese markets in San Francisco. He reported that year in USDA OES Bulletin No. 68 that two varieties of soy beans were found, a yellow and a black. “The black is known as ‘hak tau,’ and is designated by the characters ‘black’ + ‘bean.’ Both varieties obtained from the Chinese market in San Francisco grew readily in Berkeley, attaining a height of about 3 feet, and in spite of a very dry season produced an abundant crop of seeds.” In this bulletin, Blasdale included a good, full-page photo of “The upper portion of a plant of the black soy bean.” He then analyzed the nutritional composition of both the original Chinese soy beans and their progeny grown in Berkeley, and presented his results in tabular form. On a dry-weight basis, the original black soy beans contained, on average, 0.35% more protein (39.62% vs. 39.27%) and 0.72% less fat (18.77% vs. 19.49%) than the yellow soy beans.

On 28 August 1906 the USDA, as part of its major seed and plant introduction, received the first black soybean [SPI #19184] noted for its food use. It came from Newchwang, Manchuria, from Plant Explorer Frank N. Meyer, who wrote: “A large variety of the black soy bean. This is a very rare variety and is used for food: also for making a superior oil.”

The first American recipe for using black soybeans was published in May 1917, during World War I, in the Wisconsin Agricultural College, Extension Circular No. 79, titled “How to Cook Soy Beans,” by the University of Wisconsin Home Economics Department. The one recipe titled “Black soy bean soup” called for “1 pint black soy beans.” This same recipe appeared the next month, in the June issue of the Journal of Home Economics in an article titled “Soy Bean Cookery,” by Nell Beaubien, of the University of Wisconsin Home Economics Department.

In 1960 the first recipe for black soybeans [called “black beans” after the Japanese term kuro mamé which means “black soybeans”] appeared in America in a cookbook, Zen Macrobiotics, by George Ohkawa. It was recipe No. 118 for Boiled soy beans. But the “black beans” were used only as an alternative ingredient. Most of the recipes for black soybeans in American cookbooks after 1960 were in macrobiotic cookbooks, where they were consistently called “black beans” rather than black soybeans–and one can only wonder if the authors realized that their recipes were really calling for black soybeans. The first macrobiotic recipe calling for “Black soy beans” was published in 1973 by Chico-San in a product catalog which contained many recipes. The first real macrobiotic cookbook to use the term “black soybeans” in a recipe title was Aveline Kushi’s Complete Guide to Macrobiotic Cooking, published in 1985 by Warner Books (see p. 257-58).

The first packaged black soybeans sold in America for food use appeared in 1959 in New York City. They were imported from Japan by the Oriental Food Shop, and received a write-up in the May 1959 issue of House Beautiful magazine. In 1962 Chico-San Inc., in Chico, California, one of America’s first macrobiotic- and natural foods companies, began selling “Black Soybeans,” imported from Japan. By January 1970, Erewhon Trading Co. in Boston had followed with a similar product named “Kuromane, a black soy bean import.” In August 1996 Eden Foods introduced America’s first canned black soybeans—which were also organically grown in Michigan.


Summary: From the rear cover: “Art Kleiner has uncovered a kind of secret history that links the medieval monastic orders, the counterculture of the sixties, and the key agents of corporate change in the modern world. I think its a landmark for people both inside and outside the most influential institution of the modern age–the corporation”–by Howard Rheingold, author of Virtual Reality, Virtual Communities and Tools for Thought.

Chapter 8, titled “Millenarians,” begins with a history of Erewhon Trading Company (p. 273-89), which makes it appear that Paul Hawken was the only important person in the company. Nevertheless, the history is full of interesting insights, many related to Erewhon’s role as a pioneer in the countercultural natural foods industry and (for a while) the largest distributor of natural foods and macrobiotic foods in the United States. Kleiner is a engaging and insightful writer. Erewhon was started by Michio and Aveline Kushi who, in the 1950s, had met at La Maison Ignoramus [literally, The House of Ignorance], a macrobiotic institute founded by renegade philosopher George Ohkawa outside Tokyo. Ohkawa claimed to have cured himself of tuberculosis by eating a diet of brown rice, miso soup, and cooked vegetables (from both land and sea). Ohkawa came to believe that a good (macrobiotic) diet is the foundation of both personal and societal health. The first step is to change your own diet, then to help others change theirs. Ohkawa was a Japanese writer, had lived in Paris in the 1920s, and was deeply interested in world government–as well as in Zen. Ohkawa recruited the Kusis to go abroad (Michio was the first to leave Maison Ignoramus and to do so) to promote world government. Michio and Aveline fell in love in the United States and were married. They eventually started teaching young Americans in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Before long they were prosecuted for practicing acupuncture without a medical license–but they...
prevailed and stayed. In the mid-1960 macrobiotic diets called for staples that were rarely found in East Coast food stores: brown rice, miso, tamari, etc. The Kushis started to sell food and books out of their home in Cambridge. Then [in April 1966] they moved the little store out of their home into a basement retail space at 303-B Newbury Street–and named the fledgling company Erewhon. “... one of their students, Paul Hawken, took over as clerk”—or at least so says this book. Hawken was only eighteen, a lean young man from California. The rest of the story is how Hawken (apparently single-handedly) built Erewhon and the early natural foods movement.

From the publisher’s description: “The author explores the nature of effective leadership in times of change and defines its importance to the corporation of the future. He describes a heretic as a visionary who creates change in large-scale companies, balancing the contrary truths they can’t deny against their loyalty to their organizations. This book reveals how managers can get stuck in counterproductive ways of doing things and shows why it takes a heretical point of view to get past the deadlock and move forward.” Address: Former editor of The Whole Earth Catalog and freelance business reporter during the 1980s, Oxford, Ohio.


• Summary: Cecile Levin (a woman, who was Patricia’s first macrobiotic teacher) bought Muramoto-sensei’s Herb-T Company. She paid too much for it (the records and inventory were very disorderly) and is struggling to keep it alive. Mr. Muramoto may have been using money he got from his salt company to cover losses on his tea company. Merle Hayward is getting married next week in Hilo, Hawaii, and Patricia is going to the wedding; Merle was Tom DeSilva’s girlfriend at Erewhon. “She is a wonderful person; high integrity, hard working. She was the one who did a lot of the detail work when Tom, Jeff [Flasher], and Tyler Smith bought the Erewhon Los Angeles retail store, after it failed.” Address: Radical Food, P.O. Box 952, Mill Valley, California 94942-0952.


• Summary: In Oct. 1974, Michael Potter visited Yuko Okada at the Muso Company in Osaka, Japan, then decided to import Japanese food products exclusively from Muso. Then in Jan. 1984 (following major losses from the bankruptcy of Erewhon (in Nov. 1981) and other American natural foods distributors–including Shadowfax, Laurelbrook, and Good Food Company), the MCOA. Address: President, Macrobiotic Company of Japan appointed Eden Foods its General Agent for North America. But in subsequent years, as the value of the dollar continued to fall against the yen, making Japanese imports more expensive, Eden began to buy less expensive grades of some products (especially seaweeds and umeboshi) from Muso. In this way, Eden avoided price increases. But strains grew in the relationship. Muso did not like being dependent on one wholesaler in America and Eden wanted the freedom to shop around. So in the mid-1990s there was an above-board agreement that Muso no longer had to sell its products in the USA exclusively to Eden. But even before that, Yuko had been selling to other companies such as Republic of Tea, Smith & Hawken (Japanese tools), and Gold Mine Natural Food Co.

Jean Richardson of Gold Mine trademarked the name “Ohsawa,” much to the chagrin of Ohsawa Japan. When Bruce working at MCOA, he thought of challenging this trademark, and he feels he could have done so successfully, but at a cost of at least $30,000 in legal fees. This is even more ironic because MCOA is the exclusive importer of products from Ohsawa Japan. So the trademark borders on misrepresentation. The Ohsawa Japan story goes back to Bob Kennedy, who had been dealing with Ohsawa Japan since the beginning. When Michio Kushi began importing, he did so from Muso—not from Ohsawa Japan. Several years later he also began to import from Mitoku; today Michio recommends only Mitoku products. When Bob Kennedy stopped importing foods from Japan, he sold his business (after Heinz returned the rights to him) to what had been the warehouse of Rainbow Foods. Rainbow started as a store in San Francisco, California, then they grew a wholesale business. A religious group ended up buying that wholesale business from them, and they renamed it Sierra Natural Foods. Sierra bought the rights to import from Ohsawa Japan from Bob Kennedy, then started importing containers. They had also gotten the Soken distributorship, and they started expanding so fast that they couldn’t finance the rapid growth; this (and perhaps some mismanagement) soon led to their bankruptcy. At the time they owed Ohsawa Japan about $200,000. Ohsawa Japan decided to stop selling foods to America. So they asked Mitoku to be their sub-distributor for America. So even today Bruce buys his Ohsawa Japan products through Mitoku. But Gold Mine can’t buy from Mitoku because Mitoku won’t give out any more distributorships. Mitoku’s main distributors now are U.S. Mills (Erewhon brand), Great Eastern Sun, Granum, and MCOA. Address: President, Macrobiotic Company of America, Asheville, North Carolina 28806. Phone: 704-252-1221.

William Shurtleff of Soyfoods Center.

• Summary: Sheffield Seitan is a very small company that makes natural seitan directly from wheat—without using vital wheat gluten. The company was started in 1979 by Don & Karen Smith in Wheelock, a tiny remote town in Vermont. They started in a log cabin which had been built by Frank and Phyllis Head, and which was available when the Heads went on a long trip to Mexico in about 1977. (The year is firm because one of the Head’s daughters was born in Mexico on 2 May 1977.) The cabin had no electrical power and was accessible only by a road through the adjacent town of Sheffield. They had a post office box in Sheffield, so they often gave their address as Sheffield. Don worked as a chef, both were interested in macrobiotics, and they learned how to make seitan when they worked for Erewhon in Boston, Massachusetts. Their seitan was all hand-made and fresh—because they had no refrigeration.

Their first product (introduced in 1979) was the Wheat Puff, which was a version of the Tan Pop that was sold at the Erewhon retail store in Boston; each Wheat Puff was quite large (about 5 oz), made of seitan on a stick and deep fried in a tempura batter. Their second product was named Wheat Meat Burger, a seitan patty introduced in about 1980. They sold most of these Burgers to a restaurant in Concord, New Hampshire, where they were used in sandwiches. The rest were sold to delis and natural food stores. Leo still has the labels from this Burger. Then the Smiths moved to the town of Newark, Vermont, but they kept their original business name, Sheffield Seitan. Now they made the seitan in a food preparation place that was closed at night, which was when they used it. They built their own home. In 1981 they moved themselves and their business back to Wheelock, to South Wheelock, where they were sharing space and their equipment with a baker named Leigh Pierce. She used to make a bread called Gentle Wind, and had a pretty good business going. Don’s brother, Ron Smith, would deliver her bread, and he would also deliver the Wheat Puffs to the same stores, which were health food stores and food co-ops across the state of Vermont.

Leo and his wife Christina bought the company in 1981, when it was located in South Wheelock. At that time the Smiths were heading to Arkansas, with plans to live in a macrobiotic community [Mountain Ark]. Leo thinks they had 1 or 2 children; not long after leaving Vermont, he thinks Don and Karen separated. Karen lived for a while in Fayetteville, Arkansas, but has remarried (last name Harple) and now lives in Pennsylvania (Phone: 717-466-6050); Don Smith is presently in Thailand. Sheffield Seitan wasn’t making any money at the time. At that time there was a homeopathic/alternative directory named Earth Star, located in Temple, New Hampshire. The owners of the directory allowed Sheffield Seitan free advertisement space in exchange for delivery (once a month) of their directories to the health food stores and food co-ops along the way.

Leo decided to try to use the directory to expand into the frozen food market, by making full cooked, frozen seitan. The idea worked well, so in 1983 they started to make a patty called the Seitan Wheat Meat Pounder, whose weight is given as 1 pound plus. Each one weighs slightly more than a pound. It is 1 inch thick and 6 inches in diameter—much bigger than a typical burger. Nobody else makes such a patty. It can be sliced very thin into strips or cut into chunks for kabobs. Eventually they turned the delivery over to UPS and now they are going through a distributor named Associated Buyers based in New Hampshire.

In about 1985 they introduced Wheat Meat Balls, which were about 1 inch in diameter and weighed about ½ ounce each. But it was too labor intensive to try to roll all the little balls then cook them in broth—so they dropped the idea. In about 1986 they launched Seitan Wheat Meat Pieces, which are the 3-ounce patties that have been cut into finger strips.

In about Leigh Pierce decided to get out of the baking business—which she had been doing for about 10 years. So the Denbys had to find a new location, because they were sharing the shop that was built onto her house. The Denbys owned the mixer (an old 80-quart Hobart) and they were getting a very good rate on the rent because she used their mixer.

So in 1990 they moved Sheffield Seitan to Lyndon. Leo built their house, then designed a shop adjoining their house—which several contractor friends constructed. They had to have electrical power brought in. The company now makes: (1) The Wheat Puffs (about 600 every week), but the size is now smaller and they have no label. (2) Seitan Wheat Meat Burger (3 oz.) sold in three different packaging sizes: 2 patties, 4 patties, and 6 patties. They are also sold in two different packages: A simple poly bag with a twist and a label, or a deli tub. (3) Seitan Wheat Meat Pounder. and (4) Seitan Wheat Meat Pieces. Today they make about 300 lb/week of seitan, which is used to make all four products. They also make some custom products. About half is sold via mail order to buyers groups, meditation retreats, colleges, and the other half is delivered to retail stores.

Address: Owner, Sheffield Seitan, Box 1, Lyndon, Vermont 05849. Phone: 802-748-3327.


• Summary: Bill’s full name is William Theodore Bolduc, Jr. The people whose names are on the Articles of Incorporation all sat down together and prepared that document. The move to establish Eden as a non-profit organization was precipitated by the decision of Ronnie and Iona Teeguarden to move to California. When they were gone, the group of people who met to buy food together would have no place for their food to be delivered. You
could call this group an informal food-buying co-op but the co-op had no name, no bank account, no property, and no organization. Everybody who wanted to participate had a copy of the Erewhon catalog. Once a week or so they would go down to Ronnie and Iona’s store and give their order and money. Ronnie and Iona compiled the orders and sent one order off to Erewhon. Roughly ten days later the goods arrived at their store—that a truck would deliver to.

Once the Teeguarden family decided to move out, the big question was—is anybody going to keep the co-op going? “If I hadn’t stepped in with that $170, it would have died. Nobody else wanted to take the responsibility. That $170 was my wife, Judy’s money. It was one week’s pay. She had a good job as a secretary at the University of Michigan music school in Ann Arbor. Once the Teeguarden store was gone, there was not place for the truck to deliver our food to.

“I had just returned to Ann Arbor from the summer in Berkeley. I couldn’t find a job, and couldn’t get my old job back. Thank God Judy got a job. There were a bunch of people really interested in seeing food co-op continue, and they were all, like ‘God Bolduc. Why don’t you do something. You’re not doing anything.’ Jimmy Silver, Mark Retzloff, Linda Succop, Gloria Dunn. They were all pointing the finger at me, wanting me to take it over. I had to think about it for a while. Then I said, ‘What the hell! Sure, I’ll do it.’ Once I was convinced that this was the thing to do, then it was like there was a fire under me. The Succop girls, Linda and Judy (Bill’s wife) had a little money. Their mom and dad kicked in some of it, and Judy had a good job. We used that money, $120, to pay the first month’s rent on the store at 514 East William Street, upstairs above the bike store. The people who supported this effort were all idealistic and altruistic—as I was—at that time. It was the spirit of the ‘60s.”

One day, about a year after Eden opened, Bill was sitting up in 514 East William St. when in walked Cynthia Chevelle, a very prominent and successful entrepreneur. She owned Middle Earth, which was “the No. 1 head shop in town. She leased the entire main floor (street level) at 211 South State Street. She came to ask if Bill wanted to sublet about one-quarter of the space at 211 South State Street. They walked over together to look at the space. Bill decided to go for it; it was a much better location.

“We changed the name to Eden Foods Inc. and made it a for-profit corporation at about the time when Tim and his dad came into the business, which was just as we were moving into 211 South State Street—about Nov. 1970.” It shouldn’t be difficult to order a document from the State of Michigan showing exactly when Eden became a for-profit corporation. Address: P.O. Box 2708, Crestline, California 92352-2708.


• Summary: Aveline calls to say that she is writing the story of Erewhon in Japanese and asks if William Shurtleff will send her (free of charge) all his information on the subject, including the many interviews he has conducted. Shurtleff suggests that she call Katherine Ott at The National Museum of American History (NMAH), at the Smithsonian, and ask her to please order the material. Aveline says that her daughter, Lily, kept a very detailed dairy, starting in about 1965, of all the events related to macrobiotics and Erewhon—including the exact dates that key events happened, including students arriving in Boston.

Shurtleff asks Aveline why Erewhon, once the leading natural foods distributor in America, went bankrupt. First she says they hired a professional accountant, who wasn’t very skilled, and that turned into a big problem. Second there were rumors of people stealing food from the last big warehouse. And third food was sold to Tony Harnett at Bread and Circus at too small a markup, so that Erewhon ended up losing money.

Shurtleff says that he thinks there were more fundamental reasons. Finally Aveline agrees with two of these: (1) Michio was interested in teaching, and not much in running businesses or money, so all of the business responsibilities were given to Aveline. But her main interest was in teaching cooking. (2) Aveline had responsibility for quite a few businesses that were growing very rapidly. She did not have the experience or skills to manage them successfully. In retrospect she believes that after Paul Hawken returned from Japan, she should have given Paul and several other of the talented Erewhon managers (such as Bruce Macdonald) a significant minority ownership of Erewhon. Address: 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Phone: 617-232-6869.


• Summary: The Expo at Anaheim this year was the biggest ever, attracting some 30,000 people. It was so crowded, one could barely walk down the aisles. “The soyfoods category has just exploded. Everyone was excited; you could feel the buzz.” Patricia collected lots of printed information for Soyfoods Center.

Patricia also organized the first “In the Spirit of Macrobiotics” award, which was presented to Tom DeSilva of Los Angeles, who was a pioneer with Erewhon, Los Angeles, and has continued to run a very successful natural foods retail store. Forty people came to honor him at drinks, and 16 stayed for dinner—including Chuck Verde of
Erewhon, Lenny Jacobs, and Michael Potter. The award focuses on the business side of macrobiotics.

Update: 1999. Nov. 19. Patricia just received an e-mail from Norio Kushi saying that Lima Ohswa died this month in Japan.

Update: 2000 May 2. There was a continuing explosion of soy products at the Natural Products Expo at Anaheim. She saw former macrobiotic friends, Rus Postel and Francis Pintel (who ran the Erewhon warehouse in Los Angeles). Jacques DeLangre has died, and his charming wife Yvette remarried to a childhood sweetheart and now lives in Louisiana, where she still runs the Grain and Salt Society. Patricia wishes that Trader Joe’s would take a stand on genetically engineered foods. Address: Radical Food, P.O. Box 952, Mill Valley, California 94942-0952.


• Summary: Without John Belleme’s perseverance and determination, the American Miso Co. would almost certainly never have come to be.

John was born on 3 Jan. 1943 in Union City, New Jersey—right across the Hudson River from the Empire State Building. His father died when he was young, so he and his brothers and sisters were raised by their mother. Years later John found that he was dyslexic—but in school this undiagnosed dyslexia caused him many problems and great frustration. He failed first, second, and third grades, so he was much older than his classmates. The frustration sent him to reform school at age 13½ and at age 14 he was “kicked out of New Jersey.” His mother moved the family to Miami, Florida. He was old enough to drive a full-sized motor cycle to the sixth grade. He managed to graduate from high school (just short of age 21) in Miami, went to junior college in Miami for two years, then won a scholarship to the University of Miami. He had liked biology, science, and research since age nine, so once he settled down he became a good student—though because of dyslexia he could barely read or write when he started college. In the mid-1970s he graduated from the University of Miami after two years with high grades in science, and got a job at the Veteran’s Administration (VA) hospital in downtown Miami. He was put on one of the first teams in the United States that used and did research using a Phillips electron microscope. Soon they were doing pioneering research. Soon John was quickly promoted to the position of research biologist, a title usually reserved for those with a PhD degree. Soon the team’s research was being published in scientific journals. “It was very exciting.” This job, which paid very good money, was mostly a photography job and the hospital had a huge, state-of-the-art darkroom. John worked with an amazing older man from Germany, who required him to carry a camera everywhere he went and to shoot and print his photos as a way of developing his photographic skills. Before long John was a very skilled photographer—and electron microscopist.

But after a while he was transferred to a chemotherapy, a job which he disliked. So he started graduate school to be a school psychologist—and first realized that he had dyslexia.

Sandy Pukel (pronounced pyu-KEL) was the center of a small but growing community of people interested in macrobiotics and natural foods in Coconut Grove, a suburb of Miami. Sandy had a tiny food store. John was with a girl who asked him to buy her some foods at this store. Before long, he was a regular shopper. Then he started to get interested in macrobiotics, and before long he found himself doing volunteer work at the little store on weekends. Sandy suggested that, to study macrobiotics in depth, he should go to Boston and study with Michio Kushi. After attending a few of Sandy’s macrobiotic classes in Coconut Grove, John quit his VA job and left for Boston.

1976 July 4–John arrives in Boston and starts to live at the macrobiotic study house of Ken and Anne Burns. John wrote in 1987 that he “stayed for what was to be one of the most exciting years of my life.” Ken is an exceptional teacher, and the house has a dojo atmosphere—like that of a martial arts practice place or Zen monastery. The temperature is kept at 40°F during the winter, and life is sparse but rich and deep. Through Ken, John and Jan got very interested in wild foods, and planned to publish a book on the subject. By the fall of 1976 John is interested in miso. He had read The Book of Miso by Shurtleff and Aoyagi and on Nov. 17 he attends an afternoon miso class and workshop they conduct at the Burnses’ house. John is intrigued by the romance of going to Japan to learn how to do something. After the workshop he decides that he wants to travel to Japan, learn all he can about making miso in the traditional way, then come back to America and help to start a miso factory. John recalls: “I wanted to go to Japan and bring something back. I was going to do this or die.”

After a year in Boston, John worked at Harvard Medical School for a while. Then he and Frank and Phyllis Head drove to Mexico in Frank’s van with the idea of teaching the Mexican people about macrobiotics—with whole grain tortillas, etc. Living in a little village in rural Mexico in a house with no electricity and no running water, they managed to tough it out for one summer. Then multiple scorpion bites and general hardship drove them back to America. From Frank’s father’s estate in Texas, John phoned Sandy, who offered him a job.

1978–John had heard Michio Kushi talk about starting a shoyu factory in America. Michio hoped to involve Sendai Miso Shoyu Co., Erewhon, and some Oak Feed people such as Sandy Pukel and some of Sandy’s investor friends. One
day John—who was still a pretty small man on the totem pole—he said to Sandy, “Let’s start a miso factory in America—rather than a shoyu factory.” He then explained his idea about studying miso in Japan. Sandy’s response was “Good! Michio and I have been wanting to do that for a long time too.” John then started to take Japanese language lessons from Berlitz. Sandy established an Oak Feed Miso account on which John could write checks to pay for these lessons, for his travels related to miso in the USA, and for legal fees to form a corporation, etc. Sandy’s main concern was running the Oak Feed Restaurant next to the store.

1978 Aug. 6—William Shurtleff is in Miami, Florida, visiting Robert Brooks and Mary Pung of Swan Foods, a soyfoods manufacturer. He presents a slide show (2-3 blocks from Oak Feed Store) on miso at which John Belleme, Sandy Pukel and one other person are present.

1978–Various groups come together in an attempt to start a miso company in America. The “Oak Feed group” initially consists of Sandy Pukel of Oak Feed Co., John and Jan Belleme, and a few other investors. The “Erewhon group” was composed of Michio and Aveline Kushi, Mitoku, Sendai Miso-Shoyu Co., and a few people from Erewhon. Michio communicated with the Japanese members of the “Erewhon group” (Mitoku, Sendai) by phone; they never attended meetings.

1978 Dec.–The Oak Feed and Erewhon groups meet shortly before Christmas at Michio and Aveline’s home on 62 Buckminster Rd., Brookline (Boston), Massachusetts. Those present were Michio Kushi, Sandy Pukel, and John Belleme. They begin discussions about starting the “Erewhon Miso Co.” Everybody agreed on that company name. John recalls: “It couldn’t have been called anything else.”

What was the need for a miso company in America? First, they wanted to have unpasteurized miso. All the miso being imported by Erewhon from Japan was pasteurized in sealed plastic bags. Cold Mountain miso, made near Los Angeles, California, was sold unpasteurized in 14 oz plastic tubs. So the people interested in the new company began to criticize this product as being made with machines, non-organic, etc. Where would the factory be located? What might it be called? How big might it be? Who might be involved from Japan?

Sandy, Michio, and John all deserve some credit for the original idea of starting a miso factory in America. During 1978 and 1979 every time that Sandy or John went to Boston, they would talk with Michio about the miso company idea. Continued. Address: Honto Press, P.O. Box 457, Saluda, North Carolina 28773. Phone: 704-749-9537.

location. “What would be a 2-year miso in Massachusetts using Mr. Onozaki’s basic formula, was a 1-year miso in North Carolina.” Moreover, Great Eastern Sun and the Macrobiotic Wholesale Company, and a large community of macrobiotic people in Asheville are in North Carolina because of this sequence of ‘accidental’ events born largely of ignorance.

After the land had been purchased, John and Jan rode to North Carolina from Miami on John’s motorcycle and saw the land for the first time. They took $20,000 cash, which belonged to the new Oak Feed Miso, Inc., and deposited it in a safe-deposit box at the BB&T Bank near Rutherfordton; John kept the key. Sandy flew up to North Carolina while John was there. John and Jan, and Sandy and Jackie (his wife) all went together to the First Citizen’s Bank in Tryon, North Carolina; after signing something, they returned to Miami. John purchased two round trip tickets to Japan, and set aside $5,000 for living expenses which he would take to Japan—using corporation funds from the safe-deposit box.

1979 Oct.–John and Jan Belleme (who have just been married) leave Florida to travel to Japan. On the way they visit Thom Leonard at his new Ohio Miso Co.; he has already made several thousand pounds of miso. Arriving in Japan in late October, they spend several weeks in Tokyo with Mr. Kazama “hanging around his office.” The plan had been for the Bellemes to study miso making at Sendai Miso Shoyu, but basically John refused because he knew they had a big factory and he wanted to learn the more traditional way that he planned to use when he returned to America. After John handcuffs himself to Mr. Kazama’s desk, he arranges for the Bellemes to study miso-making with the Onozaki family 10 miles north of Yaita city, in Tochigi prefecture. They pay the family a certain monthly fee for room and board, and an additional fee for the teaching and training. He and Jan also received a small monthly wage. At one point John requested an additional $5,000 from the corporation. The Onozaki family made and sold both miso and koji. About half the koji was sold, mostly 1-2 pound bags to individuals who used it at home, mostly to make amazake. When John was there, the Onozaki family made much more miso than koji. The Bellemes’ study and training continue until the next summer. While in Japan, John wrote many letters back to macrobiotic friends in America as part of campaign to (1) try to prevent Sandy from giving away the miso company to the “Japanese group,” (2) show that he was learning how to make the real traditional Japanese miso, and (3) argue that much of the so-called “traditional” miso being imported from Japan was actually made in modern factories.

1980 April–A letter from John Belleme, titled “Making miso in Japan” is published in GOMF News (Oroville, California). It is the first published account of his experiences with the Onozaki family. 1980 May–According to Mitoku’s records, the first shipment of Onozaki rice miso from Onozaki Kôji-ten in Tochigi prefecture is sent by Mitoku to Oak Feed Store in Miami, Florida; 84 cartons and 4 kegs. John Belleme contacted Mr. Kazama and arranged this shipment. At the time, Oak Feed Store was importing Japanese products from Mitoku and distributing to stores across the USA. Michio Kushi set up the connection and it was all done with his blessing.

1980 May–After their apprenticeship with Mr. Onozaki, John and Jan spend 3-4 weeks at Sendai Miso Shoyu—at Michio’s request. Mr. Kazama drove them to Sendai. John studied the process and took lots of photographs.

1980 June–John and Jan Belleme return from Japan. The Oak Feed and Erewhon groups meet at Oak Feed Co. in Florida to determine ownership of Erewhon Miso Co. There were various contracts. In one, for example, said that Sendai Miso Shoyu and Mitoku would each own 15% of the company—even though it was not clear what they would contribute to the venture. It is finally decided that each of the two groups would own 50%.

1980 summer–John starts to locate and order the miso equipment he needs, which falls into three categories: (1) Purchased from USA: He orders wooden vats from the Arrow Tank Co. in Buffalo, New York. The pressure cookers (for soybeans) and boiler also came from the USA—mostly New Jersey. (2) Purchased from Japan: Two steamers for rice and barley, a rice milling machine, an automatic koji inoculating machine (“rice rocket”) (which they never used until many years later; John did all inoculating by hand), soybean washing machine, soybean crusher (to grind and crush the cooked soybeans), miso mixer (to mix the crushed soybeans with the koji and salt), the foot-activated piston filling machine, which originally filled bulk tubs, and later filled coffee bags and small plastic tubs. (3) Designed by John and fabricated locally: The tilting cooling table to cool hot soybeans then dump them into the soybean crusher, the conveyor that transports raw miso from the miso mixer up into the tall wooden vats, the clam that would come down from the ceiling and lift 400-500 lb of finished miso out of the vats; John also used it to mix miso from one vat to another in mid-season. Everywhere (except in the koji-making process) that Japanese miso makers used intense labor, John tried to use machines.
1980 fall–John and Jan Belleme go on the Erewhon payroll at $400/week, break ground, and start construction of the miso plant in Rutherfordton, North Carolina. On Sept. 29 the land for the new factory is being leveled. John pays initial expenses using funds in the BB&T safe deposit box.

1980 late–John starts to make small, experimental batches of miso in his house, in the sauna room. In his spare time, John starts to grow shiitake mushrooms, behind the main house, up on the hill. He and Jan had brought shiitake plugs from Japan. They used a chain saw to cut oak trees into logs for growing. He sold small amounts to Great Eastern Sun, but he was too busy with other things for shiitake to become a business, as he had once hoped.

Continued. Address: Honto Press, P.O. Box 457, Saluda, North Carolina 28773. Phone: 704-749-9537.

349. Belleme, John. 1999. The story of how the Oak Feed Store, John strains his relationship with Sandy. If Barry had abandoned the miso project, all of John’s work in Japan might have been in vain. Moreover it would have left the land and the new building unpaid for—a total mess.

Soon John finds that his role had changed from potential miso maker to miso promoter and educator. His articles must put the wind in the sails of a ship that has stalled in the doldrums. “Every one of those stories had all kinds of intricate purposes to it.” And each is written for various audiences with different goals. John has to convince: (1) All his readers that he is an expert on miso and that his miso would be unique—the best available. (2) Potential macrobiotic customers that the lighter, sweeter misos are good tasting and good for health. He could never build a company solely on long-term salty miso. (3) Michio Kushi, and macrobiotic counselors and teachers, not to say bad things about his miso. “I kept putting pressure on them until some were afraid of me—the miso mafia.” (4) Barry Evans that the company would succeed and be a good investment. John sent Barry a copy of everything he wrote. John was not sure that Barry was completely committed until about 1984.


1981 early spring–Increasingly, the much-needed money starts to arrive from Barry. At about this time, and perhaps again earlier, “Barry Evans’ money saved the company—there is no doubt about it.”

1981 May–All of the miso-making equipment has arrived in North Carolina.

1981 July–The two groups meet at the newly constructed Erewhon Miso Co. plant to have an opening ceremony and celebration. About 25 people are present. The Shinto ceremony is conducted by Michio, with salt, daikon, azuki beans, etc. He goes from door to door, putting Japanese symbols on each door. Evan Root, who was there, was deeply moved by this ceremony. The Kushi’s stay on the land for 3-4 days. John remembers that there was a lot of stress during this time. Barry and Sandy were in the middle of resolving their problem.

1981 Aug.–John and Jan start full-time, large-scale production of Erewhon Miso. They have not made any miso on a large scale for more than a year. Erewhon Trading Co. contributed the soybeans, grains, and Lima sea salt; they probably arrived a month or two earlier. Money is still in short supply.

• Summary: Continued: 1982 Jan. 4–Barry changes the name of the company to American Miso Co. and announces that it is open for business.

1982 Jan. 31–Sandy Pukel and Barry Evans agree to an exchange of stock whereby Sandy gets out of Oak Feed Miso and Barry gets out of Oak Feed Store and Oak Feed Restaurant. They finalize the deal on Feb. 26, but it is retroactive to Jan. 31.

Barry starts The American Trading Co. (soon renamed Great Eastern Sun) to distribute their miso which would soon be ready for sale. For a while, Barry Evans and Sandy Pukel had been in a partnership in that import and distributing company. When Barry and Sandy split up, and Barry started Great Eastern Sun, Mr. Onozaki’s miso started going to both companies. Marty Roth soon begins running GES.

1982 Jan.–At about the same time, during the first season, after John has made quite a bit of miso Mr. Onozaki visits the American Miso Co. in North Carolina for about 2-3 weeks at the Bellemes’ invitation. They are interested in his comments on their miso plant and process, and they pay his way as a consultant and friend. He works with them making miso and gives them some very valuable suggestions (both big and subtle) for improvements–mainly in making the koji. Formal dinner is held in his honor.

1982 April–Mr. Onozaki’s eldest daughter, Kaoru, and her husband, Haruo (Mr. Onozaki’s adopted son), visit the miso factory and work for 3 months, living under the same roof as the Bellemes. Jan is pregnant when they arrive and they are housed in the trucks of the Bellemes. Jan is pregnant when they arrive and the Bellemes’ son, Justin, is born on 24 May 1982 in North Carolina.

1982 April 24–Richard Leviton, editor and publisher of Soyfoods magazine, visits the American Miso Co. in Rutherfordton, North Carolina, and writes an in-depth cover story about the miso-making process, equipment, and company, published in the summer (July) 1982 edition of his magazine. The best, most detailed coverage to date. The color cover photo (taken by Leviton) shows John, Kaoru, and Haruo making miso.

1982 fall–The Bellemes’ first miso is ready for sale. It is a red miso made, Onozaki style, with approximately equal parts soybeans and rice. It is sold only in bulk. The logo is two crossed sheaves of grain in a circle–drawn by an artist friend of John Troy’s. This miso is shipped to Great Eastern Sun and sold in bulk under the American Miso label.

Prior to about 1983-1984 all of the company’s miso was sold in bulk through Great Eastern Sun to stores. Over the years, John had been working on selling miso refrigerated in one-pound plastic bags, each having a pressure-release valve. The unique bag was designed for coffee and made in Italy. Finally, at a food show in Atlanta, Georgia, two big refrigerated distributors– Cornucopia and Tree of Life–decided to carry the new products. Soon refrigerated distribution trucks began stopping by the miso factory in North Carolina to pick up 7 varieties of miso in 1-pound bags. It was a breakthrough. Demand increased dramatically.

1983 Oct. 1–At John and Janet’s request, Barry Evans buys all their shares (900 shares, 35-45% of the ownership) in the American Miso Company. John agrees to work as a consultant for 6 months and to train a person to take his place. John Fogg has been handling the marketing account for Great Eastern Sun. John Bellem asks him to design a retail marketing program, logo, and label for American Miso. He comes up with the idea of “Miso Master.” John cringes, because it implies that he is a miso master, whereas he still considers himself a beginner, and he is developing many new types of sweet miso that he has definitely not yet mastered.” Peter Harris draws the Miso Master logo, an illustration showing the head and shoulders of a Japanese miso master, with a knotted headband, in front of a large wooden vat of miso.

1984 Feb.–At the time he sells his stock to Barry, John establishes a new marketing company named Just In Foods, Inc. (John’s son is named Justin) for his miso and miso products. It is owned by John and Jan and Barry Evans. John is training Don DeBona to take his place at American Miso Co. His new responsibility will be to work as a marketing person between the miso factory and Great Eastern Sun (a distributor).

1985–John creates another entity named Institute of Fermented Foods (it was never registered or official) as part of his ongoing struggle with Barry Evans. The name appears on the label of many creative miso products Chick Peaso (Chick Pea Miso) and Mellow Ebony Miso (with Black Soybeans).

1985 Dec.–John and Jan leave the American Miso Co. due to ongoing conflicts with Barry Evans. Over the years, John had negotiated with Barry to give him more and more ownership in the company–because he was doing all the work. He eventually owned about 30% of the shares, which
Barry bought back from him a year or two before he left—at John’s request.

1985–John (who has nothing to do), with Sandy and Blake Rankin form a company named Granum East, based on Sandy’s wholesale company in Florida. They plan to sell macrobiotic foods to distributors. It was nothing more than a telephone in John’s home office. John would call up Great Eastern Sun (GES) customers and offer them a 10% larger discount than they could get from GES. Within 18 months the company had $700,000 worth of GES’ business. Barry was forced to buy the company from them.

John reflects on Sandy’s financial role in the company: Sandy has an incredible money karma; he lets it go out and come in without holding onto it, without any attachment.

John was later in a seitan business with Sandy; it failed and lost about $300,000. When Sandy found out about these losses, he hardly batted an eyelash—and he’s not a rich person. He helped people out all over Miami, and not only with money. He’d give them food, or whatever they needed. It was just amazing to see. Then all of a sudden a large amount of money or good fortune would just drop in his lap.

This deepened his interest.

In April 1970 a childhood friend from Queens, Willy Rosenfeld, introduced Sandy to macrobiotics. Willy had gone to Harper College (SUNY) at Binghamton, New York, where he met Michel Abehsera. Sandy went to a lecture in New York City by Rebecca Dubawsky. “From that night on I became macrobiotic; I went ‘cold turkey.’” He stopped using psychodelics and quickly got interested in the philosophy of macrobiotics; he wanted to “turn the world on” and saw this as one way to do it. That summer he went to a macrobiotic summer camp / retreat at Awosting in upstate New York with 30-50 other people. There he first met Michio Kushi, who was in short pants and knee-sox. This deepened his interest.

In August 1970 Sandy and five of his closest friends started Oak Feed Store. One partner was Leon Matsil, a dentist and Sandy’s boyhood friend from Queens; the other was Joel Magazine, an attorney and public defender in Miami, who also went to law school with Sandy in Oklahoma and who Sandy turned on to macrobiotics. They just wanted to have food available. They did not go into it thinking it would be a business—Sandy’s father lent them $4,000 to start the store. It was named Oak Feed Store because the law library was on Oak Avenue. The word “Feed” was used because the purpose of the store was “to feed the people the good food.” They name came spontaneously; no one person thought of it. This was the first of many enterprises that Sandy would help to finance.

They stopped by Greenberg’s Natural Foods at 125 1st Ave. in New York City. Located on the lower east side of Manhattan, it probably had the largest selection of macrobiotic foods in America. There they bought provisions for the trip: a 100-lb sack of brown rice, a keg of Hatcho miso, aduki beans, and soba noodles. They got non-tourist visas, and settled down in a lovely rural spot. The dentists in the group had hoped to open a clinic. But it didn’t work out; the local people saw them as white hippies so they kept trying (unsuccessfully) to sell them drugs. The local people just wouldn’t let them alone, so after about 6 months, one by one, they returned to the United States. Sandy was the last to leave. He went to Coconut Grove to stay with one of his roommates in law school, Roger Schindler, who happened to live there. But there was no place to eat or to buy macrobiotic foods. So in Nov. 1970 Sandy and two of his close friends started Oak Feed Store. One partner was Leon Matsil, a dentist and Sandy’s boyhood friend from Queens; the other was Joel Magazine, an attorney and public defender in Miami, who also went to law school with Sandy in Oklahoma and who Sandy turned on to macrobiotics. They just wanted to have food available. They did not go into it thinking it would be a business—Sandy’s father lent them $4,000 to start the store. It was named Oak Feed Store because the law library was on Oak Avenue. The word “Feed” was used because the purpose of the store was “to feed the people the good food.” They name came spontaneously; no one person thought of it. This was the first of many enterprises that Sandy would help to finance. It was located on the second floor walk-up of the law library of the lawyer of one of his friends. The room was about 10 by 15 feet. This was the first macrobiotic food store or organization in the greater Miami area. They ordered their foods via common carrier (truck) from Akin, a distributor in Jacksonville, Florida. Akin distributed many Erewhon products. They also ordered quite a bit of food via mail order direct. They carried relatively few foods: Bulk brown rice, almonds, miso, noodles, noodles, apple juice, plus one cosmetic (Oregene shampoo). “It was really a strict, strict macro kind of place.” There was a commune in Coconut Grove named the Maya House, and its members were regular workers at Oak Feed Store. Sandy also worked there regularly.

Also in about 1970 Sandy and his two friends started another communal affiliation that they called LJZ Enterprises–Leon, Joel, and Zuni; Sandy’s nickname was Zuni. Everything went into one pool and they shared everything 100%–totally. All money from Joel’s law salary, all money from Leon’s dental practice and investments, all money Sandy earned from the store went into this pool, and each person took whatever they needed. This included purchases of houses, cars, clothing–everything. This lasted.
for the next 7 years and worked very well. To this day, they are all still close friends.

Oak Feed Co. became increasingly popular. After about one year they moved to a street-level retail store in the same building. Then in late 1971 or early 1972 they moved around the corner to a bigger store at 3030 Grand Avenue—where they stayed for the next 20 years. By this time they were running a real business—in spite of themselves.

Sandy recalls: “Once I got into macrobiotics I was a zealot about it—preaching, teaching, everything.” In 1972 he began to give the first macrobiotic cooking classes in the area out of a rented home in Coral Gables, where he and Leon lived. A macrobiotic community began to evolve, with Sandy at its center. Sandy got to know Neal Loeb, who had studied macrobiotics in Boston, Massachusetts, and was Michio Kushi’s driver. He was planning to bring Michio to Florida for a seminar, but he “flaked out” and couldn’t get it together, so in about 1973-74 Sandy organized the weekend seminar. Michio’s students in Boston sent Sandy detailed information about how Michio was to be treated, where he was to stay (hotel or motel only), what he was to eat, his detailed schedule, etc. “They were incredibly protective.” The seminar was very successful, with a good turnout at a local church or private school auditorium. Michio stayed at Sandy’s house and did individual consultations. Sandy and Michio got along very well, and Sandy gave Michio all they money they collected—in part because he didn’t care about the money. Soon he and Michio became lifelong very close friends, and Michio started to give seminars in the Miami area on a regular basis.

In about 1973 LJZ bought a very nice house, communally, in Pinecrest a very nice neighborhood of Miami; there the three friends continued living together for a year. Macrobiotic visitors and friends stayed in the guest house on the property. In 1974 Sandy bought his own house (with a lake in his back yard) on 63rd Avenue in Miami, about 4 miles from Oak Feed Store.

In about 1974 Sandy started the Macrobiotic Foundation of Florida. Its purpose was to spread macrobiotics. Edmund Benson was on the board of directors. The cooking classes continued at Sandy’s house in Coral Gables. Anyone passing through Florida who knew macrobiotic cooking was invited to be a guest teacher at the cooking class. Tim Redmond taught the first class on macrobiotic desserts—featuring apple pie. Sandy’s repertoire didn’t include desserts, except perhaps those made from agar or kuzu. Jay Pinsky, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, asked if Sandy had any apple butter, peanut butter, or sesame butter; he didn’t. “We still ate basically rice, vegetables, miso soup, and aduki beans. We were as close to a Number 7 diet as you can imagine.” Continued. Address: Owner, Oak Feed Store and Restaurant, 4500 S.W. 63 Ave., Miami, Florida 33133. Phone: 305-446-9036.


**Summary:** Continued: Over the years Michio Kushi had talked about having a factory that made shoyu (natural Japanese-style soy sauce) in the United States. In about 1975, Sandy decided to do something about Michio’s dream. He was increasingly an entrepreneur, but only in the sense that he liked to help make things happen. He still did not see himself as a businessman, in that he had little interest in money except insofar as it was important for making things happen. Oak Feed Co. was now a thriving enterprise. But why? “Because we didn’t do it to make money, and because nobody took any money out of the company. So all the earnings were put back into the business. My job was to keep the philosophy going.” Sandy’s living expenses came from other investments. In the early 1970s, most young people Sandy knew who were interested in macrobiotics were dropouts with no money. He lived in a very nice house in Pinecrest (near Miami) and had the money he needed. In 1976 he began looking at the idea of a shoyu factory more seriously, but he soon realized that the complex equipment and buildings would make it too expensive.

Then John Belleme started coming to the macrobiotic cooking classes and other events at Sandy’s house on 63rd Avenue. Though he came on his motorcycle, John had a “straight” job in electron microscopy at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Miami. Soon he was deeply interested in macrobiotics and wanted to learn more and more. So Sandy suggested that John go to Boston to study macrobiotics with Michio. John did that, moving into a Ken Burns’ study house. He stayed for about a year, then went to Mexico with Frank Head, and finally returned to Miami.

He asked Sandy for a job at the Oak Feed Store, and Sandy said “Fine.” He was a responsible and knowledgeable person. John soon became the store manager, while also taking macrobiotic cooking classes at Sandy’s house, but he did not see his future in a retail food store, thus he wasn’t very happy with the job—though he was a very good worker. John was more a creator than a manager, and he and Jan had become sweethearts—great people and good workers. Jan used to make delicious seitan there. One day in about late 1977 John went to Sandy and suggested they do some kind of a project together. One of the ideas that came out of their brainstorming session was starting a miso factory in America.

A new idea was born, and Sandy responded by making John a deal. If John would work in the Oak Feed Store, in retail, for a total of three years (1976-79), Sandy would take care of the money necessary for making a miso factory happen and he would pay John’s expenses related to starting the factory, pay for John’s trip to Japan to study traditional...
miso making, and pay for John’s share of ownership in the new miso company—$25,000 in shares. John would be responsible for doing the research, learning how to make miso in Japan, etc. John accepted and began to manage the store.

In the fall of 1978 Sandy and John visited Michio in Boston to discuss the idea; Michio was very supportive, but he wanted the miso company to be in Massachusetts—perhaps on land at Becket or Ashburnham. Sandy didn’t like the idea of Massachusetts—too much macrobiotic politics and the weather was too cold. Sandy put money from the Oak Feed Store into a separate account that John used to pay his miso-related expenses. Soon he began taking Japanese language lessons.

In 1977 Sandy started the Oak Feed Restaurant, and at about the same time Leon got married. These two events led to the three partners dividing up the properties of the communal LJZ Enterprises. Sandy ended up as the sole owner of the Oak Feed Store and his friends ended up with other businesses. Sandy took in partners in the restaurant; Michael Henry (a friend), and Wayne Neal and his wife. They invested and owned shares in the restaurant. Sandy got Yozo Masuda to be the chef at the restaurant. For many years Yozo had been the right-hand man of Hiroshi Hayashi at Sanae, an early macrobiotic restaurant in Boston. Sandy brought him and his whole family from Japan, and got him a green card so he could cook at the Oak Feed Restaurant.

1979 (early)–At some point, Sandy began looking for land for the miso company—using specifications related to the climate and temperature that John Belleme had given him. But he was also looking for land for another reason—the Oak Feed Land Project. This was Sandy’s dream of a macrobiotic educational center where various people would build homes and apprentice with John at the miso plant, and where various macrobiotic retreats and workshops and a summer camp with classes could be held on the land. Sandy spent about two months looking at catalogs, talking to realtors, etc.

1979 Feb.–Oak Feed Miso, Inc. is incorporated. By this time two groups have formed and begun to discuss their potential ownership of shares in the miso company: The Oak Feed group and the Erewhon group. It was agreed that the company would be named the Erewhon Miso Company. In the Erewhon group were Michio and Aveline Kushi, Sendai Miso-Shoyu, and maybe Mr. Kazama of Mitoku. In the Oak feed group were Sandy and John Belleme. It was expected that the Japanese would play a very important role in this company; they would assist the Americans in making miso in the United States. Sandy recalls meeting only once with some representative of Sendai Miso-Shoyu, probably at some natural foods trade show. Michio had most of the contact with them. At about this time the first of many of drafts concerning ownership of shares was placed on the table. None of the drafts was ever signed.

1979 April–Barry Evans becomes a major investor in the miso company.

1979 summer–After extensive research, Sandy flies up to North Carolina (Asheville) alone, looks at several pieces of property that a real estate agent has suggested, finds exactly the piece of land and house he had been looking for, makes a deposit or down payment of $10,000 to $15,000, agrees to assume the mortgage of the previous owners at the Tryon National Bank, North Carolina, and flies home alone the same evening. The roughly 90-95 acres of land in Rutherfordton cost about $100,000 to $120,000. The mortgage payments were $500/month for 30 years. It was a lovely but very rural piece of property with rolling green hills. The Sears-style prefab 5-bedroom house on the property was basically thrown in free of charge. The land had become available because someone had died recently. With the new land and house, Sandy’s Macrobiotic Foundation could do things that were impossible in metropolitan Florida.

1979 Aug. 7–Sandy closes / finalizes the purchase of the land for Oak Feed Miso in Rutherfordton, North Carolina. He and John Belleme both sign the closing documents. Now the new miso company would have to find the money to make the monthly mortgage payments, plus additional monthly payments to two officers of the bank totalling $23,000. Barry Evans’ money was important in making these payments but it was not essential. The miso company definitely would have been able to pay for the land in Rutherfordton and send John and Jan to Japan without the money Barry invested at this time. The investments Barry made after construction of the factory began in mid-1980 and after Erewhon filed for bankruptcy were more important to the company’s survival. Sandy put in the first money; Barry’s came later. Sandy told John that if John took care of all the technical matters, Sandy would take care of all the financial matters to make the new company happen. Continued. Address: Owner, Oak Feed Store and Restaurant, 4500 S.W. 63 Ave., Miami, Florida 33133. Phone: 305-446-9036.


• Summary: Continued: 1979 Aug. 16–A “subscribers consent” agreement is signed at a meeting in Miami. The following people, all or most of whom were present, subscribe to buy shares in Oak Feed Miso, Inc. Sandy Pukel, John Belleme (he invested sweat equity, not money; Sandy put up John’s share of the money), Barry Evans, Yozo Masuda (chef in the Oak Feed Restaurant), Edmund Benson (a friend of Sandy’s involved in macrobiotics), and Jim Kenney (manager of the Oak Feed Store). All these people knew each other, and all but Barry lived near
Coconut Grove. John signed as the secretary. Sandy also has the original by-laws of Oak Feed Miso—more than 10 pages of typewritten boilerplate-type language. They are not dated or signed, but they were almost certainly drafted in 1979. No names or shares are given. Frank Head was never a shareholder as long as Sandy was involved.

1979 Aug. (late)—After the land deal was closed, Joseph and Patricia Carpenter (married, with children, macrobiotic friends of Sandy’s from his neighborhood) moved into the main house on the miso company land at Rutherfordton, North Carolina, and lived there, rent free and getting money, throughout the time the Belleme’s were in Japan. Joseph was a carpenter and fix-it guy, and he was expected to make improvements to the house and land before the Belleme’s returned. Joseph was also hired to be John’s assistant and head worker in running the miso company. Joseph “seemed like a hard-working guy” and Patricia was “a sweetheart lady.” Joseph now lives in California and Patricia (who now uses her maiden name, Roberts) lives in Boca Raton, Florida, where she owns an antique store. Her parents live in Lighthouse Point, Florida, and her brother, Brendon Roberts, lives in Boulder, Colorado. Things did not end up on nice terms between them and John. Because they didn’t do the work that John had expected of them, he either fired them or kicked them off the land. Sandy doesn’t know what they were supposed to do; John would know. The Carpenters then bought land nearby.

1979 Oct.–John Belleme (and his new wife, Jan) leave for Japan. All their expenses are paid from the Oak Feed account Sandy had established—not from the new corporation.

Michio was supposed to arrange for John’s welcome in Japan and find a place for him to learn how to be a miso maker. But the people at Sendai Miso-Shoyu didn’t want to share their secrets with John, so John ended up studying with the Onozaki family—kind of by accident. It turned out to be a blessing, because Sendai was too automated for John to learn traditional miso-making there. Moreover, Sendai Miso-Shoyu wanted to send one of their people to the USA to run the new Erewhon miso factory; John would have been his assistant.

1980 June–John and Jan Belleme return from Japan. Not long afterwards, there was an important meeting at Sandy’s house in Miami. Now that it was becoming clear that a miso company was actually going to happen, people began to get serious about issues of ownership and money. At the meeting were Michio and Aveline Kushi, Sandy, John Belleme, and Joseph and Patricia Carpenter. Joe Carpenter had no money; he was a handyman who was going to be a worker. Sandy recalls it as a “pretty testy” meeting. Michio looked upon the miso company as “his baby.” His contributions would be “in kind” rather than in money. He would supply the company name: Erewhon Miso Company. Moreover, since he owned Erewhon Trading Co., he stated that the Trading Company would buy all the miso, package it, and distribute it under the Erewhon brand. Barry Evans was not there. In short, Erewhon planned to play an essential role in the new miso company.

After John and Jan returned from Japan, they went right to work building the factory and purchasing equipment. John is a very talented photographer. He took many superb photographs of miso making in Japan then documented the rise of the new miso company on the land in North Carolina.

1981 Sept. 27–Sandy has the “Minutes of an Annual Stockholders Meeting of Oak Feed Miso” (3 pages). It is signed by directors John Belleme, Sanford Pukel, and Barry Evans, all of whom, of course, were in attendance. It refers to the Subscribers Consent Agreement of 16 Aug. 1979 and tells exactly who owns how many shares in the company. With the help of an attorney, Barry got his stock converted to Class A, which enabled him to vote for the first time; he also got on the board of directors. Barry and John together now own the majority of shares. Sandy was, alas, no longer in control. The company needed Barry’s money, and his demands were reasonable. The changes seemed inevitable—but it hurt.

In 1981, when it became clear to Michio and Aveline that Erewhon Trading Company was in a financial crisis and needed cash quickly, they appealed to many of their close friends for help. Sandy responded by sending them $100,000. Nevertheless, on 19 Nov. 1981 Erewhon filed for bankruptcy protection under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Act. That left Sandy in need of money. Barry Evans invested a considerable sum in Oak Feed Store as part of a complex agreement. For Sandy, the Erewhon bankruptcy couldn’t have come at a worse time.

1982 Feb. 26–Sanford Pukel and Barry Evans sign an agreement whereby Sandy gets out of Oak Feed Miso and Barry gets out of Oak Feed Store and Oak Feed Restaurant by an exchange of stock. Barry’s financial strength won over, but this left Sandy upset and bitter at Barry. Sandy believes that there was no connection between this event and his lending $100,000 to Michio. John was torn—caught in the middle. On the one hand, he felt great loyalty and affection for Sandy, and hated to see him out of the new company. On the other hand, he had invested years in the miso company and wanted to see it through to the end. So John continued to work with Barry, and Barry made him an offer he couldn’t resist. This conflict strained Sandy and John’s relationship for years afterward. About 8-10 years later, Sandy received a beautiful present in the mail of a wooden keg of special miso. It was from John (who had made the miso), accompanied by a nice note as a peace offering, with the hope that the two could renew their friendship.

The idea of the Oak Feed Land Project disappeared when Barry Evans bought out Sandy’s interest in the miso...
company. Sandy basically held a proxy for most of the other investors; when he left, they also left, selling their shares to Barry Evans.

One sidelight: In about 1993-94 Sandy formed a non-profit organization, an offshoot of the Macrobiotic Foundation of Florida, named The Ignoramus Club. Most of the members are people who have been involved with macrobiotics for many years. It had several hundred members who paid $100 each, including Michio, Herman Aihara, etc. No one had any authority over anyone else. At the meetings, some of which drew 50-100 people to Miami, everyone talked freely about macrobiotics. Resentment and criticisms, as well as gratitude came out. “A lot of people owe a lot to macrobiotics.” The Club is no longer active.

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• Summary: Anpetu (whose name was originally Jeffrey Zellich) was born into a Russian Jewish family and grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but later in life, while living with the Lakota Sioux, he was given the name he now uses. He has been involved with macrobiotics since 1973. Before that, in 1971-72, he lived alone in a cabin in the woods in New Brunswick, Canada, gardening and using wild plants. He also lived in a tepee in northern Maine.

In 1973 he went to Boston to study macrobiotics. He lived for a while with Jack Garvey and Jack’s first wife. He left to go to Mexico, where he lived for a while with indigenous people (Indians), then in 1974 returned to Boston, where he lived in Jamaica Plain. About 40% of the macrobiotic students in the Boston area at the time were Jewish. He met Hannah Bond through a mutual interest (shared also with Ken Burns) in wild plants. Hannah was older, and came from a Quaker background. She made pickles for Erewhon and was considered to be the best pickle-maker in Boston. He found her to be “the most intellectual woman I had ever met—wonderful.” She had formerly been married to a professor of Greek. They went to his cabin in New Brunswick, Canada, she proposed to him, and they were married in 1982—the ceremony took place at the Elwell’s land in Conway, Massachusetts. Christian and Gaella had both previously worked at West West Journal, she as an editor and he as an artist, who also illustrated several of Michio Kushi’s earlier books. They had also both worked with Alan Chadwick, the legendary teacher of French intensive, biodynamic gardening at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Anpetu was at the South River Miso Co. in about Oct. 1982 when Thom Leonard came for a month (on contract) to teach the Elwell’s how to make miso and use the equipment. Christian and Gaella were married, had a daughter, and owned 64 acres of beautiful land on both sides of the South River. Christian was able to fund the company’s start-up with his inheritance; he came from an affluent family and his father had died. He and his brother, Will, initially planned to start the miso company together, but later Will left. At one point the Elwell’s approached Michio Kushi to see if he wanted to buy the company. Anpetu and Hannah lived in nearby Conway for 2 years, then on the Elwell’s land in a trailer across the river. Another couple, Don and Martha Wheeler, lived upstairs in the miso shop after it was completed. Don and Martha loaned $10,000 to Christian for the miso company. Anpetu also loaned $10,000 to the miso company (though no papers were signed), and worked there making miso for 6-9 months; Hannah was not involved with making miso.

During that time they published a flyer on miso (dated spring 1983) which Anpetu still has; he designed the logo showing 3 waves in a circle. The waves symbolized South River and the three stood for the three families who were joining together to create the miso company. He also took quite a few color photos, which he still has. Don and Martha decided to leave first. Then Anpetu’s enthusiasm waned and he and Hannah decided to leave.

Anpetu recalls that many big problems took place after this decision. Christian wanted Anpetu and Hannah to leave promptly, and when they would not set a deadline for leaving, Christian took them to court to try to get them evicted. The case went before a local judge in Greenfield; he suggested they work the matter out among themselves, but said that Christian had the basic rights as a landowner. Anpetu and Hannah left one month later, in the fall of 1983. Christian paid him back the $10,000 without interest over the next ten years. Anpetu and Hannah separated after being married for 7 years.

Today Anpetu lives a very simple life in Hotchkiss/Cedaredge, Colorado, where he runs an heirloom seed company named Sourcepoint Organic Seeds and practices Vipassana meditation. His teacher is Goenka, of Burma.

Note: Anpetu contacted Soyfoods Center today to request a review copy of The Book of Miso as announced in the latest edition of River Currents: News from South River Miso Company (Conway, Massachusetts). Address: Founder and owner, Sourcepoint Organic Seeds, 1349 2900 Road, Hotchkiss, Colorado 81419. Phone: 970-872-4971.


• Summary: Continued: 1980 Jan.–The Elwells receive a letter from Thom Leonard informing them that the Ohio Miso Co. is for sale.
1980 spring–The Elwells get a $3,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, Appropriate Technology small grants program—to build a rammed earth house on their property. Fred Hubbard, originally from Cape Cod, hears about this building project through his sister, who was a relative of Christian’s, and offers to participate. Unmarried, he arrives in the early summer of 1980 and lives in a tent on the Elwell’s land.

1980 May–The Elwells purchase the Ohio Miso Co. for $10,000 cash from Richard Kluding.

1980 summer and fall–Christian tries to “back out of the miso business.” He feels overwhelmed by all the work that would be required. His brother, Will, who had just met his wife to be, is not sure he wants to be involved in the “miso making adventure.” He decided that he would move off the land in the summer of 1981. Christian approaches Michio Kushi, who owned Erewhon, and talks about Erewhon buying the Ohio Miso company. Michio shows a sincere interest in buying the company and in going to Ohio to look at the equipment and miso—but that never happened. A year later, in Nov. 1981, Erewhon filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

1980 Nov.–With the walls of the rammed earth building finished, Christian and Fred Hubbard drive to Monroeville, Ohio, where they “stuffed the entire Ohio Miso company, all the equipment and 13 tons of miso, into the back of a huge semi truck trailer which a trucking company had delivered.” Each vat contains about 2,400 lb of miso. They empty all of the miso into 5-gallon buckets, then put the intact wooden vats into the truck, then put the 5-gallon buckets (still filled with miso) into the vats. It took 10-14 days to fill the truck. Christian and Fred drive back to South River Farm and a week later the trucking company delivers the trailer one day before a light snow storm. Christian and Fred, with help from neighbor Don Herzig and his tractor, unload the entire contents and store it in their barn—which was across the river.

1980 Dec.–Christian sends a form letter to Ohio Miso Company’s former customers that begins: “Dear Friends, old and new: The Ohio Miso Company has changed ownership. As of November, 1980, the Elwell family has purchased and moved the equipment and present stock of miso to South River Farm in Conway, Massachusetts... Eventually we want to follow a full cycle by growing the grains and beans on our own farmland... We plan to have our new shop ready for the fall season of 1981...”

1981 winter (Feb/March)–Christian sells Ohio Miso out of the barn, loading it onto a horse-drawn sled, pulling it over a logging road through the woods (the river was impassable) to the road and then on to a UPS terminal in Springfield. One of their best customers is Western Mass. Co-ops—which later became Northeast Cooperatives.

1981 June–The Elwells and partners lay the foundation of their new miso shop—1,220 square feet—and begin building a timber frame (post-and-beam) miso shop on their land. The frame is made of big, heavy timbers which are joined together with wooden pegs—no nails. This is an old English and New England method of construction. Christian had planned to construct a less expensive cinder-block building until he met master timber framer Jerry Sawma, who lives in Conway. Christian and Fred work with Jerry all that summer and fall, helping him frame the building and put the shingles on the roof. Fred and Christian take over from there, putting on the walls, etc. They had not finish by winter, so they covered it with plastic sheeting to keep out the snow.

1981 Nov. 29–Christian writes an “Historical sketch” of the South River Miso Co. on its handsome new letterhead: “There, a new shop of traditional timber-frame construction, featuring a wood-fired masonry cooking stove was completed in 1981. Production capacity is 40,000 to 120,000 pounds of miso per year. Barley miso is the standard variety offered. Others include Brown Rice, Corn, and Black Soybean miso.”

1982 Jan. 1–South River Miso Co. is incorporated.

1982 Feb. to spring–Christian was now thinking of running the miso company with two other families on a community basis; they would contribute money, labor, and community/social spirit. Christian’s brother, Will, had left in the summer of 1981. Christian invites the other families to come and live on the land and work in the miso company. One couple, from the macrobiotic community in Boston, was Anpetu Oihakeshni and Hannah Bond; they were not married when they arrived but they had a wedding ceremony on the land. The other couple was Don and Marcia Wheeler, who were from families that had lived nearby in the Pioneer Valley for generations. These two couples invest $30,000 to finish the miso shop and get the company running.

1982 spring–Christian and Fred finish building the miso shop, assisted by Don Wheeler and Anpetu. The total cost of the building was about $80,000, including Jerry’s labor expenses but not including Christian’s and Fred’s time. Jim Sadler later drew a nice illustration of the 5-part building from a photograph. The main center part, which has two stories, is where the miso is made; a living space is in the loft upstairs. The koi room protrudes out toward the front. To the right of the main part is the entryway to the shop where the shipping is now done. To the right of the entryway is a 36-foot-long storage building, where the miso vats are stored. Each vat, made of recycled virgin cypress, holds about 7,500 lb of miso. To the left of the main building, under a roof that slopes downward, is more of the miso shop plus storage for smaller miso barrels. To the far left is a firewood storage shed.

1982 Oct. 25–With the miso shop just finished Christian, Gaella, Don Wheeler, and Thom Leonard hold a dedication ceremony then begin to make the first miso
Joseph is a very friendly and personable fellow, and he has yoga; she was very involved with yoga and meditation.

of California) in Oregon on a farm where she went to do macrobiotics. Living on the Oak Feed Miso Co. land in


1972–Patricia meets Joseph Carpenter (a native of California) in Oregon on a farm where she went to do yoga; she was very involved with yoga and meditation. Joseph is a very friendly and personable fellow, and he has an “incredible memory. Most people are in awe of his brain.” They went together to Tucson, Arizona, to pick oranges. She was living on oranges and bananas, had lost much of her memory, and was very spaced out and emotional. They went into a place named The Granary, where they met Jack Garvey, who brought them into the macrobiotic community. She first met Michio Kushi in Tucson, when he came there to lecture.

1973 Sept. 15–Patricia and Joseph Carpenter are married in Arkansas. They were invited to Arkansas to do a little farming by some friends who had some property there. Their friends were deeply involved with Stephen Gaskin and The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee. They arrived with all of their macrobiotic “judgments” and that led to conflicts. They built a little house on the land in Arkansas, and Thom Leonard came to visit them there in 1973. He took care of their house for the winter when the Carpenters went to visit Patricia’s parents in Florida.

1973 Nov. 11–Their first child, Yana, a girl, is born in Arkansas. They leave to go to “Snowflake,” the first macrobiotic conference in Arizona. It was held on property near a Hopi reservation that a group of people in the macrobiotic community, including Michio, purchased.

1974–Patricia goes to a macrobiotic conference in Miami and meets Sandy Pukel for the first time. She becomes friends with Sandy and his wife, and saw Michio for the second time.

1975 fall–Patricia arrives (with her daughter, Yana) in Brookline, Massachusetts, and lives in the macrobiotic study house run by Ken and Ann Burns. After about 3 months she moves to another study house. Joseph arrives later, in about 1976, and lives in the study house run by Jack and Barbara Garvey, on the same street as the Burns’ house. Joseph Carpenter was very close to Jack Garvey. They both have a close relationship with Michio and Aveline Kushi.

For Patricia, who had a Catholic upbringing, Michio was a spiritual teacher. John Belleme arrived in Brookline about mid-1976 and lived in the Burns’ study house; it was at about this time that Patricia first met John—though they never lived in the same study house. Joseph designed and built an addition to the Kushi’s home at 62 Buckingham Road; it was for Aveline—the bathroom of her dreams on the second floor. One day Aveline came to see Patricia in her apartment. She liked a chopping block table that Joseph had built for Patricia. Joseph is an excellent carpenter. He did much of the finish carpentry on the original Erewhon retail store on Newbury St. in Brookline, including the wooden bins for grains and beans.

1977 Christmas–Patricia and Joseph go to Florida for Christmas, one of many trips they took there. Patricia’s parents and many of her friends live in Florida; she loves to visit. In early 1978 Joseph worked as a carpenter for several months in Sandy Pukel’s Oak Feed Restaurant in Coconut Grove, Florida. He had gotten to known Sandy because


• Summary: 1972–Patricia meets Joseph Carpenter (a native of California) in Oregon on a farm where she went to do yoga; she was very involved with yoga and meditation. Joseph is a very friendly and personable fellow, and he has
Patricia and Sandy were close friends. During this time Sandy came to realize that Joseph was a skilled carpenter.

1979 Feb. 12–Patricia’s second child, Benjamin, is born in Brookline. At about this time Patricia’s sister, Christine, moved up to Boston to be near Patricia. In the spring of 1979 Patricia went to Florida to visit her parents and show them her new baby. Sandy flew Joseph down to talk business. Sandy had now decided that he wanted the Carpenters to become part owners of the company—so he offered them a deal, which, as near as Patricia can remember, was as follows. He asked them to live on the land the miso company planned to purchase while the Bellemes were in Japan learning how to make miso. If they would live and work the land, become a presence in the community, and then become owners of and workers for the company, Sandy offered to pay their expenses and give them $25,000 worth of company shares for each year they stayed and worked on the land—including the first year, of course. But this agreement was verbal; nothing was put in writing. Back in those days, Patricia recalls, people were less businesslike than they are today.

Looking back, Patricia believes that she and Joseph failed in their negotiation of this deal. Joseph is an artist, and he is much better at self expression than at negotiating agreements. Sandy is very good at negotiating.

1979 May–On Memorial Day weekend, at the end of May, after four years in Brookline (near Boston), the Carpenters leave and move to Florida for the summer, to be near Sandy, to work out the details of beginning the miso company. In leaving Boston, they were giving up a lot, including many friends (“We were very plugged in. My sister, Christine, was quite upset that we were leaving”) and Joseph’s good carpentry job. But they believed that Sandy’s deal made the move worthwhile.

Patricia flew to Florida with her two young children. At Sandy’s request, Joseph drove their van so that he could go to Hendersonville to meet with several real estate agents. The miso company property had not yet been decided on or purchased. The realtors took Joseph to visit several areas on the isothermal belt, but they didn’t find the property at that time. The isothermal belt means “never too hot, never too cold.” But it freezes and snows a little during the winter.

Patricia recalls that they bought the property from Bob Deakin. Joseph knew Bob Deakin. Bob was driving with his wife and daughter at about that time, on a holiday, to chimney rock. A truck was coming toward Bob’s car and suddenly a bee flew into the cab of the truck. When the truck driver started to swat the bee, his truck swerved across the road and killed Bob Deakin’s daughter. Bob kindly refrained from suing the truck driver or truck company, and somehow, because of the accident (or perhaps because of big hospital bills) he lost his property—which the miso company later purchased.

In Florida, Patricia and Joseph rented a place for the summer on Highland Beach near Boca Raton. They had visits with Sandy and learned more about his plans for the miso company. That summer, Michio came down and did a seminar, which they attended. Michio wanted the land to be used as a summer camp and a place to garden; he also wanted to build a dam and lake. John and Jan Belleme were preparing to go to Japan. Continued. Address: Grass Valley, California.


*Summary:* Joseph was born on 5 Aug. 1948 in Oakland, California, at Providence Hospital. He lived with his family in Berkeley until he was age 10; his father, who was a carpenter by trade, died in 1954, when he was still a boy. He and his mother then moved to nearby El Sobrante (by the back gate of De Anza High School—where he graduated from high school). He attended Contra Costa Junior College for two years, moved up to Sonoma State for a year, then dropped out. At age 19-20 (1967-68), he took off to see the world. As a young man, he became a skilled carpenter, learning by doing. Several of the men he worked with were good teachers.

A hippie during the 1960s, he met Patricia Roberts who was born in March 1947 in Queens, New York, and grew up in Rockaway Beach in Queens. Her father was a New York City police officer and detective for 20-25 years. Her parents retired to Florida in the late 1960s or early 1970s. When the kids were at home, they lived in a nice big home at Whitehouse Point; after the kids were gone, they moved to Deerfield Beach. Soon after meeting Patricia, Joseph stopped using psychedelics drugs and alcohol. They picked apples together in Hood River, Oregon, and lived in an old picker’s camp. Having been overweight, he lost about 80 pounds in less than 6 months—and felt great. He and Patricia and a girl friend of hers migrated to Tucson, Arizona, where they were planning to pick oranges for the winter. While looking for a place to stay, they came across a macrobiotic bakery, The Granary, run by Jack Garvey. That was their first introduction to macrobiotics. Because of their largely raw food diet, they were somewhat resistant at first, but soon became friends and students of Jack’s. In 1973 Joseph and Patricia were married in Arkansas.

1977 Feb.–Joseph arrives in Boston from Northern California; he is very sure of this date. He met Charlie Kendall (a maker of traditional natto, amazake, and mochi), who had just bought a house in Brookline by the railroad tracks; Joseph helped him extensively remodel that building. Charlie’s wife, Yoko, was Aveline’s sister. Joseph soon became friends with Bill Painter, who was a house painter by trade and also had a small shop in the basement.
of the Kushi’s house. Before long Joseph was working as a carpenter with Bill Eggloff, building a handsome grain bin for Erewhon’s retail store on Newbury Street. Using red oak and Plexiglas, they worked on it in the basement, which had a garage door that opened onto the alley behind the store. Bill, who lived on Cape Cod, stopped working for Erewhon when the bin was finished. But the store needed more fixtures, so Joseph made a bid, signed a contract, then installed new check-out stands, new shelves, and units to hold the crocks of bulk tamari, barley malt, etc. Joseph had a family to support, and carpentry was his livelihood, so he was paid for all work he did in the Boston area. Later, over a 4-day weekend, he worked to tear out old bathrooms and office spaces to open up the cramped front of the Erewhon store. He also did some work on a new Erewhon store in Brookline. After Erewhon moved out of their old 4-story brick warehouse, he worked on the huge modern warehouse that Erewhon moved into. The Kushi’s house on 62 Buckminster Road had been the headmaster’s house for a private school. Upstairs there was an institutional bathroom. Aveline asked Joseph to remodel it to make a private bathroom—with lots of tile. After about a year of working for the macrobiotic community (always for pay), Joseph got “burned out” and went to work for a regular contractor unconnected to macrobiotics.

1977 Christmas–Joseph and Patricia go to Florida for Christmas, one of many trips they took there. In early 1978 Joseph worked as a carpenter for several months in Sandy Pukel’s Oak Feed Restaurant in Coconut Grove, Florida. He had gotten to know Sandy because his wife, Patricia, and Sandy were close friends; they had first met when they both went to a seminar Michio Kushi gave in Coconut Grove. After the restaurant opened, in about May 1978, Joseph and Patricia took a vacation to Jamaica. During the summer and fall of 1978 Sandy came to Boston several times. Each time he and Patricia and Joseph went out to dinner together. Sandy mentioned that he was thinking of starting a miso company and asked if they might be interested in getting involved. They expressed interest, but no definite plans or offers were made.

1979 Feb.–Joseph’s second child, Benjamin, is born in Boston to his wife Patricia. The Carpenters took many trips to Florida, especially during the winter, to visit Patricia’s parents. In about March 1979, over a long weekend, when Patricia and their two children were vacationing in Florida (visiting her parents), Sandy Pukel paid for Joseph to fly from Boston to South Florida for a meeting to discuss the part that the Carpenters might have in the development of the new miso company. Sandy knew Joseph’s skills as a carpenter. Joseph recalls that the meeting was at Edmund Benson’s house. Sandy said that he wanted Patricia and Joseph to become part of the miso company. In exchange for their labor, they would be given a share of the business ownership worth $25,000. Joseph does not recall whether they would receive the $25,000 once or each year that they worked—but he definitely recalls the $25,000 offer. Joseph recalls that the talk at this first meeting was very general in terms of what kind of carpentry or construction work he would do for the company.

1979 May (late)–Joseph leaves Boston in his van, headed for North Carolina—after handing over their house to the next renters. On the way, following Sandy’s instructions, he stops in Hendersonville, North Carolina, for about a week to check out some real estate. With real estate agents that Sandy Pukel and/or Edmund Benson had found, Joseph looks at property the agents thought might be appropriate for the miso company in the Asheville area and in Rutherford County. As far as he knows, Joseph was the first person to actively look for land for the miso company. They found several properties that Joseph considered borderline, so Sandy (and probably John Belleme and Edmund) flew up from Florida and they all visited these sites together. Finding nothing that was suitable, they left. Joseph continued on to Florida in his van to be with Patricia and their children. Sandy continued to work with local realtors until he found a suitable piece of property. Joseph is quite sure that just before they finally purchased the land in Rutherfordton, Sandy, Michio and he (and perhaps a few other people) all went to see the property at the same time. They walked over the roughly 100 acres of land and through the beautiful house.

During the summer of 1979 Joseph and Patricia met with Sandy and Edmund several times to discuss their living on the miso company land while John and Jan Belleme were away studying miso-making in Japan. Though nothing was put into writing, Joseph and Patricia both recall clearly that their daily expenses would be taken care of, they would work on the land, and, at the end, they would own a part of this new business. They were not given any specific list of tasks or duties they were expected to accomplish. Continued. Address: 10655 Lakeshore Dr., Clear Lake, California 95422. Phone: 707-994-3218.


• Summary: This story, with its many strange twists and turns, might be called “One disaster or failure after another leads to success” or “The perfection of imperfection.”

1977 Aug. 2–It was a disaster for Bob and Karen Deakin of Rutherfordton, North Carolina, when a bee flew into the cabin of a big truck near their home. As the driver tried to swat it, his truck swerved across the road and smashed into a car driven by Bob Deakin, killing Bob’s daughter (age 12½) and severely injuring Bob and his young son.
1979 Jan. 26–It was a second disaster for Bob and Karen Deakin when they were forced to give up the home they had built and the 92 acres of land they dearly loved in Rutherfordton because they could not make the mortgage payments. With Bob still injured from the car crash, the family had no steady income. The land was sold to Oak Feed Miso Co. on 7 Aug. 1979.

1979 Oct.–It was a disaster for John Belleme when he arrived in Japan to study miso and nobody knew who he was or why he was there. The arrangements that were supposed to have been made were never made.

1979 Oct.–It was a small disaster for Mr. Kazama of Mitoku when John Belleme handcuffed himself to Mr. Kazama’s desk and said he would not leave until Mr. Kazama had located a miso master with whom John could learn the traditional art of making Japanese miso.

1979 Oct.–It was a disaster for mister master Takamichi Onozaki, of Yaita, Japan, when two foreigners arrived, without invitation, saying they wanted him to teach them how to make miso. He told them he was sorry, but they could not stay. They stayed in his house, under the same roof, for 6-8 months as they worked hard and learned how to make miso.

1979 Nov. 18–Barry Evans is in a disastrous bicycle accident, breaking 5 vertebrae and 9 ribs. After a 14-hour operation, he spends 6 months in his back in the hospital and 1 year in a full-body cast.

1980 June–It was a disaster for Joseph and Patricia Carpenter, who had lived on the miso company land for the past ten months and expected to be owners of the miso company, when they were told to leave and, in their opinion, not told why.

1981 Nov. 10–It was a disaster for Michio and Aveline Kushi when their company, Erewhon, is forced to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection because of debts totaling $4.3 million. The Kushis also had to give up their dream of starting a miso company (named Erewhon Miso Co.) in America. It was also a disaster for the miso company which could no longer count on Erewhon to distribute its products.

1982 Jan. 31–It was a disaster for Sandy Pukel when he has to give up his stake in Oak Feed Miso, Inc. It was his “baby” and he, more than anyone else, was responsible for bringing it to this stage. Equally sad was the fact that his good relationship with John Belleme was strained for the rest of the 1980s; they didn’t talk for years after this event.

1982 Jan.–It was a small disaster for Mr. Onozaki when John Belleme begged him to come to America from Japan to check John’s koji-making. He didn’t want to go. He spoke no English, had never been outside of Japan, and had a business to run at home. Yet he went to help a friend in need.

1983 Oct. 1–It was a disaster when John and Jan Belleme feel they must sell all of their ownership in the American Miso Co. (900 shares) to Barry Evans. They had devoted most of the last 4-5 years working to create and build this company.

1992 Jan.–It was a disaster for Barry Evans when he is forced to take a “federal vacation” in Santa Barbara, California, for 2½ years.

2000 July 4–American Miso Co. is the largest and most successful Caucasian-run miso manufacturer in the Western world. Who is and was responsible for this success? Most of the people named above.

Note: Some of the most interesting (juiciest) stories about this company remain untold, for reasons that cannot be disclosed at this time.


• **Summary:** John’s original organization was the Lindenself Foundation, a nonprofit organization involved with Eastern spirituality. The linden tree symbolized the heart. Out of this grew Linden’s Elfworks, then Elf Works, Ltd., whose first product was a candy bar named Wizard Baldour’s Power Pac introduced in 1976, and containing ginseng. Elf Works, Ltd. was created outside of the nonprofit corporation, and it existed only briefly (1981-1984).

In about 1980, John was first introduced to miso by Joel Dee of Edward & Sons who was introducing his Miso Cup, a dehydrated miso soup. Troy’s next product was Wizard Baldour’s Hot Stuff (in regular or blazing intensities); it was the company’s first big success. It contained miso from the day it was launched. Troy first bought this miso from Erewhon (a fairly dark salty rice/red miso), but when Erewhon filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Nov. 1981, Troy started buying his miso from Barry Evans of American Miso Co. It was John Belleme and Barry Evans who really got Troy interested in and involved with mizo—before American Miso Co. had any miso for sale, but after their miso plant had been constructed. Troy can’t remember how, where, or when he met Barry Evans. Belleme told him about going to Japan and apprenticing with Mr. Onozaki. Later Barry Evans introduced Troy to John Fogg in Charlotte. Troy later worked closely with Fogg; “at first I thought he was arrogant and fussy, but he ended up being a tremendous influence in my life, and taught me so much about marketing... To this day I still draw on the wisdom of John Fogg.”

Troy now makes almost 100 different products for the natural food trade. Most of these contain miso and/or soy sauce. All of his business is private labeling, so he develops and manufactures products, which other companies market. Across the street from his office is a modern, high speed blending, bottling, labeling plant, with plenty of cold storage. He manufactures and bottles every product he develops. His company, The Wizard’s Cauldron, Ltd., run small by a small team of leaders, now does about $2 million...
a year in annual sales. His products are now almost totally organic—200 ingredients. John has just a handful of customers. The biggest is Whole Foods Markets; he makes all the salad dressings and sauces sold under the Whole Foods label. Second biggest is Joel Dee of Edward & Sons. Troy makes four brands for Joel Dee: Premier Japan, The Wizard’s, Troy’s, and Rain Forest Organic. Joel’s company owns the “Wizard” brand, which Troy gave him in 1987 as part of his “recovery plan” after American Natural Foods went down the tubes. Joel said, “You make it, I’ll sell it.” At about the same time, they also both developed the Premier Japan brand and line, which is still doing extremely well. In about 1995 John developed “The Wizard’s Worcestershire Sauce,” a vegetarian sauce, for Joel Dee. It is now selling better than Hot Stuff. Ponzu is the Japanese equivalent of Worcestershire sauce; they use bonito instead of anchovies. But ponzu originated first, so “Worcestershire sauce is a Western ‘knock-off’ of ponzu.” The Ginger Tamari is still a wonderful product that is doing very well.

Troy’s third largest customer is Albert’s Organics, America’s largest organic produce distributor, for whom he makes a line of fresh, refrigerated organic dressings. Albert’s Organics recently merged with UNFI (United Natural Foods, Inc., the collection of distributors that was Stow Mills, Cornucopia, Rainbow, Mountain People’s Warehouse, etc.). UNFI is now a big publicly-owned company. Troy’s favorite product developed for Albert’s is Mellie’s Miso Mustard Dressing, launched in 1998 with a mild miso from American Miso Co. Albert’s daughter is named Mellie.

John is now developing a line of dressings under the Moosewood Restaurant brand for the people who own that restaurant. John’s favorite is the Miso Ginger Salad Dressing. A few days ago he closed a deal with Robert Tepper (formerly of The Farm, in Summertown, Tennessee) to market his Simply Delicious brand of dressings. Robert now has his own company named Sunrise Management, which is a brand management company; Simply Delicious will be the first brand he owns. Robert worked for Natural Nectar, then Blue Sky, then Annie’s (which he left in early 2000 to start his own company).

John’s main work is still developing new products and naming his creations—the work he enjoys most of all things. “It’s really fun.” Blessed are those who find a way to do what they love most in life. Address: The Wizard’s Cauldron, 8411 Hwy. NC 86 N, Cedar Grove, North Carolina 27231. Phone: 919-732-5294.


• Summary: Joel, who has been deeply involved with macrobiotics for more than 30 years, observes that in America today, “the macrobiotic movement is much smaller and less vital at its core” than it was, say, 10 years ago. “But its influence has spread enormously.” Joel can see the profound influence of macrobiotics throughout the natural foods and organic foods industries, even in the words and phrases that people use, or in basic concepts about organics—such as the number of years for transitions. Many people in these two industries today are unaware of these deep influences. Erewhon was more successful at forming an industry than at forming a viable company.

Barry Evans, owner of American Miso Co. and Great Eastern Sun, two companies that for years have had macrobiotic customers as their base, adds: “If only there were a macrobiotic community still in existence. It’s pretty well gone, but there are some remnants left.” Address: 76 Florida Ave., Berkeley, California 94707. Phone: 510-524-4420.


• Summary: These three companies are actually the same company whose name changed. This chronology is based largely on dated documents. Undocumented dates are usually followed by question mark. Notice the many unusual twists and turns in the story.

1977 Aug. 2–A bee flies into the cabin of a big truck near Rutherfordton, North Carolina. As the driver tries to swat it, his truck swerves across the road, smashing into a car driven by Bob Deakin, killing Bob’s daughter (age 12½) and severely injuring Bob and his young son.

1978 Dec.–Sandy Pukel, Michio Kushi, and John Belleme get together in Boston to discuss the miso factory. They agree on quite a few points. All three are deeply interested in macrobiotics.

1979 Jan. 26–The bank (Tryon Federal Savings and Loan) forecloses on Bob and Karen Deakin’s mortgage. Still injured from the car accident, he is unable to make his land payments. The land goes on the market.

1979 Feb. 28–Oak Feed Miso, Inc. is incorporated in Florida. The initial directors and officers are Sandy Pukel and John Belleme. 1979 Feb?–A contract is drafted by David Young (though never signed) showing what percentage of the proposed Erewhon Miso Co. will be owned by the Erewhon group (comprised of Sendai Miso-Shoyu Co., Michio and Aveline Kushi, and maybe Mitoku / Mr. Kazama) and by the Oak Feed Group (comprised of Sandy Pukel and John Belleme). The Erewhon group was to have the majority ownership, and Japanese companies and individuals were expected to play a major role in the new company.

1979 spring–Members of the Oak Feed and Erewhon groups meet in North Carolina in the first attempt to locate a site for the miso plant. In attendance are Michio and Aveline Kushi, Sandy Pukel, John Belleme, Frank Head, and Junsei Yamazaki and his wife (both from California).

1979 April–Barry Evans makes his first investment in the miso company, $50,000.

1979 June?–Sandy Pukel travels to North Carolina and makes the down-payment on a piece of land in Rutherfordton. The roughly 92 acres cost about $110,000 to $120,000.

1979 Aug. 7–Oak Feed Miso, Inc. finalizes the purchase on the 92 acres of land by assuming the second mortgage and paying an additional $11,500 each to Lawrence L. Bridges and E. Milton Singletary. Sandy Pukel (president) and John Belleme (secretary) sign the land deed and deed of trust.

1979 Aug. 16–Subscribers Consent Agreement executed.

1979 Aug. (late)–Joseph and Patricia Carpenter arrive in Rutherfordton from Florida to live and work on the miso company land.

1979 Oct.–John and Jan Belleme leave for Japan to begin an apprenticeship with a miso master. They stop by the land in North Carolina to visit briefly with the Carpenters, then also visit Thom Leonard at Ohio Miso Co. Arriving in Japan in late October, they visit Mr. Kazama in Tokyo then travel north with him to Yaita, where they study miso-making with the Onozaki family—which makes only dark rice miso. A good, long letter from Jan describing their experiences is published in 1980 in the book Macrobiotic Cooking for Everyone, by Edward and Wendy Esko.

1979 Nov. 18–Barry Evans is in a very serious bicycle accident.

1980 April–A detailed letter by John, about his miso apprenticeship with the Onozaki family in Yaita, Japan, is published in GOMF News, a small macrobiotic magazine from Oroville, California.

1980 June–John and Jan Belleme return to the USA from Japan. That summer John located the remaining miso equipment in New Jersey and ordered wooden vats from the Arrow Tank Co. in Buffalo, New York.

1980 fall–John and Jan go on the Erewhon payroll.

1980 Sept. 29–Work has just begun at Rutherfordton in leveling the site for miso factory, which is going to be a metal Butler building. By late 1980 John and Jan begin to make their first experimental batches of one-year rice miso, at their home, in the sauna.

1981 early–The project stalls for lack of funds. John starts writing articles about his trip to Japan. One goal is to convince Barry not to abandon the project.

1981 Jan.–“The Master of Hoops,” John’s first article, is published in East West Journal.
light miso. Half the company’s sales come of such short-term types of light misos were sold in the plastic bags. As of July 2000, White Miso, Mellow Barley Miso, and Amakuchi Mugi relatively sweet, light-colored, short-term misos: Mellow Belleme.

American Miso Co., learning the process from John manager at Great Eastern Sun and begins to work at their miso had been sold in bulk.

in the Jan. 1985 issue of valve), refrigerated. A full-page ad showing the bag appears pound plastic coffee bags (each with a pressure release valve), refrigerated. The plastic bags are phased out.

1982 Jan.–Mr. Takamichi Onozaki comes to America from Japan to see how well his students had learned his lessons. He stays and helps make koji and miso for 2-3 weeks, until he is fully satisfied that all is well.

1982 Jan. 31–Barry Evans and Sandy Pukel agree to a swap of stock, such that Barry gets all of Sandy’s stock in the miso company and Sandy gets all of Barry’s stock in Oak Feed Store and Restaurant. After this, Sandy is no longer involved with the miso company. Barry and John Belleme now own all the company’s shares, and Barry owns a large majority.

1982 April–Great Eastern Sun make’s its first sale, of products imported from Mitoku in Japan to a natural foods store in the USA.

1982 April–Mr. Onozaki’s his adopted son, Haruo, and eldest daughter, Kaoru (Haruo’s wife), arrive in Rutherfordton and spend 3 months sharing the Belleme’s home, helping Jan who is pregnant, and helping to make miso. The Bellemes’ son, Justin, is born on May 24.

1982 July–The first detailed article about American Miso Co. and its method of making miso (with many fine photos) is published in Soyfoods magazine: “American Miso makes a Big Move Down South,” by Richard Leviton, who visited the company in April. The company “has struck a careful balance between the traditional approach (as in making koji, which requires skill and personal attention) and labor-saving mechanization (as with bean washing, soaking, cooking, mixing, and moving).”

1982 Sept.–The first miso made by AMC is sold by Great Eastern Sun. It is one-year, Onozaki-style red miso, sold in bulk only in 4 lb, 15 lb, and 40 lb tubs.

1983 Oct. 1–John and Jan Belleme sell all their ownership in the American Miso Co. (900 shares) to Barry Evans for $30,000. However, John continues to work making miso for AMC. Throughout the past year he has been experimenting with making mellow white and mellow barley misos. Great Eastern Sun is now selling about 50,000 lb/year of white miso from other sources.

1984 fall–AMC miso first starts to be sold in one-pound plastic coffee bags (each with a pressure release valve), refrigerated. A full-page ad showing the bag appears in the Jan. 1985 issue of East West Journal. Previously, all their miso had been sold in bulk.

1985 Feb.–Don DeBona leaves his job as general manager at Great Eastern Sun and begins to work at American Miso Co., learning the process from John Belleme.

1985 April–AMC introduces three varieties of relatively sweet, light-colored, short-term misos: Mellow White Miso, Mellow Barley Miso, and Amakuchi Mugi Miso—a shock to traditional macrobiotic followers. These light misos were sold in the plastic bags. As of July 2000, half the company’s sales come of such short-term types of light miso.

1985 Dec.–Don DeBona takes over management of the company. John Belleme leaves. It was a difficult transition.

1985 Dec. 31–AMC has its first profitable year, earning $22,000 in calendar year 1985.

1986 early–AMC miso starts to be sold in one-pound plastic cups/tubs, refrigerated. The plastic bags are phased out.

1987 fall–AMC miso starts to be sold in 8-oz plastic cups.

1988 Feb.?–New koji room designed and built by Don DeBona. Constructed at floor level with a large door and high ceiling, it enables the koji crib and racks of koji trays to be wheeled in and out. Before, all the koji had to be carried in and out by hand.

1992 Jan.–Barry Evans is required to take a “federal vacation” in Santa Barbara, California, for 2½ years. He hands the management of American Miso Co. and Great Eastern Sun over to Don DeBona.

1992–American Miso Co. builds a second factory as large as the first.

1993–American Miso Co, now has 41 huge wooden (mostly cedar) miso vats, each of which holds over 4 tons of miso. Starting with only eight vats, they added six in 1986, seven in 1989, five in 1991, and fifteen more in 1993. Also in 1993 AMC begins to export its miso to Europe, where it is distributed by Lima throughout the continent.

1995 April–Greg Gonzales starts work at American Miso Co. learning the process from Don DeBona.

1995–AMC uses up the last of tax loss carryforwards; total past financial losses go to zero.

1997 March–Greg Gonzales takes over management of the company after Don DeBona leaves.


• **Summary:** This is collection AC 619 consisting of 48 boxes (28 cubic feet). The finding aid to the collection is 12 pages. Kathy Keen did the processing. Most of the materials document the 1970s and 1980s. There are five series in the collection: (1) Publications of the East West Foundation and Kushi Institute (the largest series): In boxes 1-7 are issues of East West Journal (EWJ) from April/May 1977 through Dec. 1989. In box 9 are volumes 1(1971) and 2(1972) of EWJ. In boxes 10-12 are volumes 2(1972) through 6(1976) of EWJ. In boxes 13-26 are various volumes and issues of macrobiotic periodicals including Order of the Universe (from Vol. 1, 1967), Michio Kushi Seminar Reports (from Nov. 1974), Macrobiotic Monthly (from July 1965), Yin Yang (from Sept. 1962), Macrobiotic News (from May 1960), One Peaceful World (from No. 27), The Macrobiotic (from Vol. 9) Macrobiotics Today (from 1984), Musubi newsletter (1971), Macrohouse (from 1982). In box 29 are Erewhon product catalogs (13 catalogs from 8 Dec. 1972 to


There is also a 2-page cataloging record for the collection. Address: Washington, DC. Phone: 202-357-3270.


• Summary: The Expo at Anaheim this year was the biggest ever, attracting more than 30,000 people. She walked past every booth and almost every one was offering some kind of soy product. The interest in soyfoods just keeps growing.

At the show there was talk about illegal genetically-engineered StarLink corn in Kellogg’s Morningstar Farms products such as Corn Dogs, Mini Dogs, and maybe other products. Some company are pulling these products from their shelves.

Before the first Natural Foods Merchandiser (NFM) trade show was held in 1981, at Anaheim, California, the pioneering natural foods companies such as Erewhon, Eden, Westbrae, Sunburst, and Chico-San all (reluctantly) attended the annual NNFA show in Las Vegas, Nevada. There would always be a big party one evening in someone’s hotel suite—with lots of fun. But from 1981 on, these and other natural foods companies found their real home at the NFM trade shows.

Patricia saw Yuko Okada at this year’s show. His Macrobiotic Company of America now sells only Muso Shokuhin products. Norio Kushi is running the company. Yuko kicked out Bruce Macdonald over alleged financial improprieties. A lawsuit that Bruce filed has apparently been settled.

Michael Potter bought the Herb-T Company from Cecile Levin in southern California. Mr. Muramoto started the company many years ago.

Patricia has now worked for Trader Joe’s for 16 years. Address: Radical Food, P.O. Box 952, Mill Valley, California 94942-0952.


• Summary: This obituary also appeared in the Los Angeles Times (July 6) and the Washington Post (July 7, p. B06).


• Summary: “Aveline Tomoko Kushi of Brookline, a world-renowned pioneer of the alternative medical movement and the organic food industry, died Tuesday at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston after a lengthy battle with cervical cancer. She was 78.

“Born in Yokota in the Izumo area of Japan, Mrs. Kushi studied teaching before emigrating to the United States.”

“She taught at an elementary school in Izumo before moving to Tokyo, Japan, where she became involved in world peace activities as a member of the World Government Association. Mrs. Kushi came to the United States in 1951 to attend a World Federalist Convention.”

“Mrs. Kushi, in 1966, opened the first natural food store in the United States, Erewhon, which was located in Boston. The store became the leading natural and organic foods distributor with stores in the Boston area, Hartford, Connecticut, and Los Angeles.”

She is survived by her husband, four sons, five sisters, two brothers, 13 grandchildren and 19 nieces and nephews.

A similar obituary also appeared in the Boston Globe (July 6), Los Angeles Times (July 6) and the Washington Post (July 7, p. B06).


• Summary: A nice eulogy to honor the memory of Aveline Kushi, spoken on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. Address: Representative from Ohio, House of Representatives.


• Summary: Aveline Kushi died on July 3 in Brookline, Massachusetts, at age 78, of cancer. She taught and promoted macrobiotic cooking and helped to found one of the nation’s first natural food stores, Erewhon. A macrobiotic diet, based on whole grains and fresh vegetables, provides physical balance that leads to greater spiritual and psychological balance. Aveline and her husband, Michio, taught that entire societies become aggressive and disharmonious from eating meat, dairy products, and processed foods; this undermines world peace.

Aveline was born Tomoko Yokoyama on 27 Feb. 1923 in the small mountain town of Yokota in the Izumo area of Japan. She taught elementary school during World War II,
then after meeting Georges Ohsawa, came to the United
States in 1951 to attend a meeting of students who
supported world government. She stayed to study at the
University of Illinois and Columbia University. She and Mr.
Kushi were married in 1954.

She is survived by her husband, four sons, four sisters,
three brothers, and 13 grandchildren.

368. Wollner, Joel. 2001. Remembering Aveline Kushi’s
Conducted by William Shurtleff of Soyfoods Center.
• Summary: Aveline Kushi died on July 3 in Brookline,
Massachusetts. Joel, a close friend of Aveline’s for more
than 30 years, flew back to attend her funeral. He describes
here the wake/visitation at a local funeral parlor on July 8,
the very beautiful and moving funeral service at the packed
First Parish Unitarian Church on July 9, and the reception
that followed at Michio and Aveline’s home (62
Buckminster Road) after the funeral–attended by 400-600
people. Address: 76 Florida Ave., Berkeley, California
94707. Phone: 510-524-4420.

February 27, 1923–July 3, 2001: A celebration of her life, at
First Parish in Brookline (Leaflet). Brookline,
Massachusetts. 2 p. Front and back.
• Summary: There are four panels: (1) The cover shows a
portrait photo of Aveline. (2) Inside left: Program of the
church service. (3) Inside right. The words to the Heart
Sutra (Hannya Shingyo), and the Song of Ephemerality,
both romanized. (4) Back: Biographical sketch of Aveline’s
life.

Accompanying this is 1-page sheet titled “Aveline
Kushi Memorial Events” including dates, times, and
addresses of visitation, memorial service, reception, and
donations to Aveline Kushi Memorial Fund. Address:
Brookline, Massachusetts.

Maverick merchants: Entrepreneurs, idealists and
visionaries have built the natural products industry. To mark
our 25th anniversary, Natural Foods Merchandiser will pay
homage throughout the year to some of the people and
innovations in our industry. This month we profile 25
retailers. Natural Foods Merchandiser. Feb. p. 30, 32, 34-
37.
• Summary: The visionaries (with a color portrait photo of
most), listed alphabetically by last name, are: Linda
Amidon, Rob Auerbach, Michael Cianciarulo, Bruce Cohen,
Terry Dalton (founded Unicorn Village natural foods market
in Miami, Florida, in 1979 and sold it for $4.5 million to
Whole Foods in 1995), Dan Foley (Wedge Community Co-
op in Minneapolis, Minnesota), Mike Gilliland (CEO of
Wilds Oats Market, 1984-2001), Sandy Gooch (Started Mrs.
Gooch’s Natural Food Markets in 1977 in southern
California and expanded to 7 stores. Acquired by Whole
Foods in 1993), Eric Hinkefent, Cheryl Hughes, Kemper
Isely, Bea James, Michael Kanter, Matt Martinicich, Debbi
Montgomery, Philip Nabors, Mark Ordan, Barry Perzow,
Mark Retzloff (see below), Scott Roseman, Debra Stark,
Marke Stowe, Cynthia Tice, Robert Tucker.

In 1969 Mark Retzloff and two roommates founded
Eden Foods, when he was a student at the University of
Michigan. In 1971, he became manager of the Erewhon
natural foods store in Seattle, Washington. In 1974 he
moved to Denver, Colorado to manage Rainbow Grocery, a
division of the Divine Light Mission [Guru Maraji], and
bought it in 1976. In 1979 he and Hass Hassan founded
Pearl Street Market in Boulder, Colorado; it was later sold
to Wild Oats Markets. In 1983 he and Hassan founded
Alfalfa’s Market in Boulder; it expanded to 12 stores and
was sold to Wild Oats. In 1989 Retzloff left Alfalfa’s and
worked as chairman of the Organic Alliance in Washington,
DC, lobbying for the Organic Food Production Act. In 1991
he returned to the Boulder area and, with Paul Repetto,
founded Horizon Organic Dairy, leaving in 2001 (after 10
years) to become CEO of Rudi’s Organic Bakery. He left
Rudi’s in late 2003 and launched Aurora Organic Dairy in
Longmont, Colorado. Address: 1. Free-lance writer, Fort

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**Summary:** Several important trends would favor the use of the Chinese term “doufu”: (1) During the period 1920 to 1960, Chinese cooking was much better known in the USA than Japanese cooking. There were many more Chinese restaurants, Chinese cookbooks, and Chinese recipes in American cookbooks (See *Cooking with a Foreign Accent*, 1952; *Helen Brown’s West Coast Cook Book*, 1952, etc.). (2) In 1975, there were also more Chinese-American tofu manufacturers. See list in *The Book of Tofu*, by Shurtleff and Aoyagi—although no list is complete because many were small and sold their products mostly to the local Chinese community. (3) Americans generally prefer Chinese-style firm tofu to Japanese-style soft tofu.

But: (1) The influence of confusing Chinese terminology and spelling due to dialects and lack of standard system of romanization. For example, Cantonese is the main dialect of Chinese spoken in the United States, whereas Mandarin is the standard in China.

(2) Influence of Japanese macrobiotic movement: 1. In the 1950s, George Ohsawa, a Japanese teacher, started the macrobiotic movement in the United States. He and his teachers (Michio and Aveline Kushi; Herman and Cornelia Aihara) developed a great popular interest in Japanese foods. 2. Tofu used as an ingredient in many macrobiotic cookbooks. 3. The macrobiotic movement played a major role in starting the natural foods industry in America, especially with the pioneer company Erewhon—started by Aveline and Michio Kushi, Japanese teachers of macrobiotics. The first Erewhon retail store opened in Boston, Massachusetts, in April 1966. Soon Erewhon became the most important distributor of natural foods in the USA. Tofu was sold at most natural food stores, where it was almost always called “tofu.”

(3) Influence of William Shurtleff: He became interested in both macrobiotics and Japanese culture in the mid-1960s. 1967 spring–He took a course in Japanese Art, taught by Michael Sullivan, at Stanford University; that summer he lived in Kyoto, Japan, studying art and architecture and practicing Zen meditation. 1968 May–the Esalen at Stanford program (of which he was director), hosted Michio Kushi, a Japanese teacher of macrobiotics, in a 1-week workshop. At about this time Shurtleff and the members of the commune in which he lived near Stanford University decided to stop eating meat and become vegetarians. 1968 June 10–Shurtleff entered Tassajara Zen Mountain Center south of Carmel, California, where he practiced meditation as a student of Japanese Zen master Shunryu Suzuki, roshi for 2½ years. The delicious vegetarian diet included tofu, miso, and whole soybeans. 1969 Dec.–A photocopied book titled *The Tassajara Food Trip*, which he wrote, was distributed to friends at Christmas. It contained many Japanese and macrobiotic recipes served at Tassajara—including 4 recipes calling for “tofu”—the word that was used by everybody at Tassajara to refer to this food. 1971 Jan. 16–Shurtleff arrives in Japan to study Japanese language and culture, and Zen meditation. He becomes increasingly interested in Japanese foods and especially tofu. 1971 Dec. 26–He meets Akiko Aoyagi in Tokyo. She is an excellent cook and artist, and begins to serve him many Japanese-style vegetarian recipes—often including tofu. 1972 Dec.–He begins to write a booklet about tofu, for friends. But after meeting Nahum and Beverly Stiskin, founders of Autumn Press, the booklet is transformed into a book project. In Dec. 1975 *The Book of Tofu*, by Shurtleff and Aoyagi, was published in Japan by Autumn Press. It was the first popular book about tofu in the Western world, and it quickly became a best-seller—selling more than 500,000 copies by the year 2002. The Preface to the 2001 editions gives details about how the book was written.

(4) Influence of Library of Congress. In the USA the Library of Congress has long been the organization that decides which terms will be used to describe important subjects. The results are published in the well-known Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), which is updated each year as new terms are added or outdated terms change. On 6 June 1977 the term “Bean Curd” was approved by the Library of Congress Subject Headings committee. On the same day they approved “Bean Curd, Dried” and “Cookery (Bean Curd).” So starting at this time, “bean curd” became the official, authoritative name for tofu. According to Tom Yee of the Library of Congress, these headings were probably established as a result of cataloging *The Book of Tofu*, by Shurtleff & Aoyagi. Any books about tofu published in the USA would thereafter be given the subject heading “bean curd” by the Library of Congress and libraries across America in their cataloging and card catalogs. New editions of *The Book of Tofu* published after June 1977 were given the subject heading “bean curd.” In May 1985 Shurtleff wrote the Library of Congress, Cataloging in Publication Div., recommending that its subject heading be changed from “bean curd” to “tofu.” He gave three carefully researched reasons for recommending the change. The Library of Congress made the change from “bean curd” to “tofu” in their subject headings. Address: Lafayette, California.


**Summary:** To mark its 25th anniversary, *Natural Foods Merchandiser* pays homage to the following visionaries (with a color portrait photo of most), listed alphabetically by
last name. They built the organics industry into the $10.8 billion business that it is today. Roger Blobaum, Bena Burda, Amigo Cantisano and Kalita Todd, Lynn Coody and Yvonne Frost, Michael Crooke, Katherine DiMatteo (director of OTA since 1990), Sam Farr, Jonathan and Katarina Frey, Drew and Myra Goodman, Lewis Grant, Gary Hirshberg, Barclay Hope, Eckhart Kiesel, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), The Lundberg brothers (Lundberg Family Farms, 35 years in the industry), Marty Mesh, Nell Newman, Steve Pavich, Anthony Rodale, Craig Sams (37 years in the industry), Bob Scaman, Bob Scowcroft, George Slemmon, Michael Sligh, Zea Sonnabend.

Note: Unfortunately omitted: Paul Hawken and Michio Kushi (Erewhon), Jerome I. Rodale and Robert Rodale (Rodale Press), Michael Potter (Eden Foods).


• Summary: The five main companies were: Kahan & Lessin Co. (Compton, California, near Los Angeles). Landstrom Co. (San Francisco, California). Balanced Foods (North Bergen, New Jersey; Mid-Atlantic states). Health Foods, Inc. (Des Plaines, Illinois, near Chicago). Sherman Foods, Bronx, New York.

Only Balanced Foods (founded in Nov. 1939 by Dr. Maurice “Doc” Shefferman, and Sam and William Reiser) made the transition smoothly and still exists—although not as an independent company.

Kahan & Lessin (K&L) was purchased in the fall of 1983 by Jameson Pharmaceutical Corp. (San Mateo, California, owned by Jim Jones). Jones was already aware of Walmart and saw K&L as a vehicle for distributing supplements to Walmart. However Jones did not know the business; he survived for only 3-4 years, declaring bankruptcy in about 1980-81.

Landstrom was a family-owned business, but by the time the natural foods industry was becoming significant, Bob and June Merriam, and their younger brother Rick, were running the company. They were hard to deal with and went out of business in the early to mid-1980s.

Balanced Foods, long run by brothers Sam and William Reiser, continued to be a powerful distributor on the East Coast during the 1970s and 1980s and a major competitor of Erewhon. In late 1986 Tree of Life, Inc. (St. Augustine, Florida) purchased Balanced Foods to become the largest natural foods wholesaler in the USA. Tree had been purchased in Dec. 1985 by Netherlands-based Royal Wessanen NV Co. for $15 million.

Note: One other old-line health food distributor doing business in Aug. 1980 was The Pavo Co., Inc. (Minneapolis, Minnesota), a family business since 1931. Address: President, Pure Sales, California.


• Summary: The Erewhon retail store in Boston, Massachusetts, was definitely not the first retail store in the USA to sell organically grown foods. Early sources that Roger knows were: The Food Mill in Oakland, California. Walnut Acres in Pennsylvania. Giusto’s in San Francisco. Oh’s Fine Foods on Mission Street in the Mission district, San Francisco (an ethnic bulk grain store, mid-1960s).

Address: Farley’s Coffee Shop, #1315 18th St., Potrero Hill, San Francisco, California 94107. Phone: 415-648-1545.


• Summary: A comprehensive history of Erewhon, with a Preface by James Silver. Includes 100 original interviews with Erewhon’s founders, early directors, and others close to the company. Also includes 19 copies of key Erewhon documents from Feb. 1967 to May 1981, including all of one early Erewhon catalog. Address: Soyfoods Center, P.O. Box 234, Lafayette, California 94549. Phone: 925-283-2991.


• Summary: Jimmy has known Arran for many years, starting in the 1970s, when what was then his distribution company, Lifestream, was a customer of Erewhon’s. Eventually he began to make his own Lifestream products, then sold the company [in mid-1981] and started his cereal venture, Nature’s Path, which has done very well. A few years ago he bought back the Lifestream brand, but it doesn’t seem to do much compared to NP. “He is a very interesting guy... Susan and I like him and his wife.”

For a number of years when Jimmy was exporting some of their products under private label to Japan, he worked with their daughter, who was then their export manager (and living in London, UK, not in Vancouver, BC, Canada).

Even though Arran has “moved” with the market in terms of ingredients, partly driven by cost and competition and consumer taste, Jimmy knows from talking with him that his preference would be to make things more in line with what Jimmy likes too–sweetened with fruit juice rather than organic sugar or cane juice, for instance. Address: President, Pure Sales, California.

• Summary: George Ohsawa, and the founders of Nippon C.I. and Muso Shokuhin—both Japanese-run companies based in Japan—were the first to seek out these Japanese makers of traditional foods. Soon Mr. Akiyoshi Kazama, founder of Mitoku Trading Co., joined them in the search.

In the mid-1960s, Paul Hawken of Erewhon went to Japan to find and place orders from companies and craftspeople who made foods in the traditional, natural way. Many of these companies were facing financial difficulties as modernization was sweeping Japan, and this new business and new market gave them a new lease on life.

Phase 2 began when companies in the USA and Europe started making Japanese foods (such as miso) and European foods (such as whole wheat bread) in the traditional, natural way.


• Summary: “The Green Mountain Grainery was the very first natural food store in Colorado opened sometime in 1967 by George Slavin and Zev Rosenberg. I purchased it in 1971 by trading my shampoo company (The Natural Living Company–Sesame Shampoo and Sesame Lotion) for the shares of Green Mountain Grainery. Over the years we added a wholesale company (Green Mountain Commodities), a granola manufacturing company (Earlybird Granola), and two additional stores in Denver.

“The original Green Mountain Grainery was always a grocery store dating to the 1870’s. It was located at the foot of the Flatirons and the street address was 225 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO. It was condemned by the city of Boulder in 1979 as an eminent domain ostensibly because we were in a 100 year flood plain. The city later build a new library in 1979 as an eminent domain ostensibly because we were in a 100 year flood plain. The city later build a new library on the site which included the condemnation of 7 businesses and 4 residences adjacent to the Grainery.”

Bruce adds in phone call on July 3. Many people in the natural foods movement today don’t realize that that movement actually started as a macrobiotic foods movement, with Erewhon being the pioneering company and retailer in, starting in April 1966. Also, the word “Grainery” is also often misspelled “Granary.” Address: Founder and president, Natural Import Company, 9 Reed Street, Biltmore Village, NC 28803. Phone: 828-277-8870 or 1-800-324-1878.


• Summary: This is the second edition of a book first published in 1996. The material about Erewhon appears to be identical, but it is now on pages 232-37.

380. Uyttenhove, Chantal. 2009. Re: Lima Seasalt was being sold by 1957. Letter (e-mail) to William Shurtleff at Soyinfo Center, Jan. 27. 1 p.

• Summary: “Indeed, we were the exporters of Lima seasalt to the US. As far as I can remember, Eden Foods did import the salt and before that, it was Pierre Gevaert himself who had contacts with Erewhon. EdenSoy has long been produced with Lima sea salt and yes, we delivered salt to the American Miso company.

“In those days, Lima seasalt came from France, from the Isle of Noirmoutier. The so called ‘grey’ seasalt because it is/was harvested from handmade clay pans—salières. The gray clay interacts with the salt and thus gives it its color. Today, we still have Lima seasalt but years ago, I decided to step away from Noirmoutier salt because of some issues we had. Today, the Lima seasalt comes from South Portugal, from a company who, years ago, decided to repair and restore century-old salinas [salt fields] and started cultivating sea salt the old way. They have hand harvested salt, traditionally sun dried and have been rewarded as a ‘slow food company’ several times. Their ‘Fleur de sel’ is a real ‘delice.’

“The only difference: the salt is white. There is a much longer harvesting season in Portugal so that they don’t have to scrape the salt to the bottom of the salinas. And so, the salt stays pure white because it does not interact with the clay. That company in Portugal is a real beauty.” Note: Chantal encloses two color photos of the white seasalt being harvested in Portugal.

Update: Jan. 29 e-mail. “I started working for Lima in January 1985. Since Lima started in 1957, there is a lot of history before me.

“We are planning on moving to a new building at the end of this year—an ecological friendly building with the least possible footprint—so, I’m in charge to make sure we don’t throw away the old things. I’m sitting on the first ever Lima-Tamari packaging (brown plastic bottle, actually a cosmetic bottle) and all sorts of things. There are a lot of old documents that I still have to go through. There is also a very old movie from before my time which needs to be digitalised. (When finished, I can send you that if you are interested. There is a French and a Flemish version).

“The oldest document I have referring to the sea salt is a handwritten order from 1962. So my guess is that we started with the salt even before that as we have contracts older than that. I did not go through old invoices nor do I have a price list but I’m sure we have that somewhere. Later this year, those things will ‘surface’ again.”

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Follow-up e-mail from Chantal. 2009. Feb. 2. “Dear Bill, We do have a well documented history—there is the start of a book; it begins with the engagement of the father of Pierre, Edgar Gevaert, his work for world peace, first contacts with Ohsawa—and with the start of the Lima production in the kitchen and the opening of the first store to the start the company Lima. One catch: it’s all in Flemish! I’m so sorry.

“Here it says that Pierre Gevaert made a trip to Ile de Ré in France to buy seaweed and that only later, in 1957, he bought machinery. That would mean he started even before 1957 with buying seaweed for the production of tahini and gomashio which was produced in the kitchen.

“The history is so rich Bill, that I could put my job aside and do only this. Unfortunately, that is not possible. I wish more was available in another language but then Flemish and French were the languages at the time so all the documents are in those languages.

“Should something come up during the move, of course we’ll think of you. Thank you and kindest regards, Chantal.” Address: Purchasing Manager, Hain Celestial


• Summary: This is a summary of a talk with Jim Morano, PhD, founder and owner of Innovative Sweeteners, Somerset, New Jersey—on 29 Feb. 2009.

Jim watched as the natural foods industry changed from the first wave (the pioneers who built a new industry, starting in the mid-1960s, because of their deep commitment to and interest in natural foods) to the second wave (the money guys who saw that the industry was taking off and wanted to get in and make money). The pioneers started companies like Erewhon, Westbrae Natural Foods, Chico-San, Tree of Life, and Eden Foods. The pioneers typically had many great ideas and lots of energy; but they often lacked business skills and money. However they learned fast through experience.

The second wave guys typically had both business and marketing skills and experience, plus either money or the ability to attract it. They wore suits, ties, and short hair, and had less interest in the foods themselves than in the profit that could be made from taking them into the mainstream market. They were pretty smart guys and quick learners. Using marketing and money, they could make things happen, big time and fast.

During the 1990s the natural foods market was growing much faster than the mass market, even though it was much smaller. While the mass market for foods was experiencing annual growth rates in the low single digits, the natural foods market was growing in the low double digits—and certain segments of the natural foods market (mainly soyfoods) were growing well in excess of 25% a year.

It was this difference in growth rates that attracted both the “suits” and Big Food to take notice.

The transformation took place during the years 1995 to 1997. There had been three ingredients that it was forbidden to use or sell (by common unwritten consensus) in natural foods prior to about 1995; sugar (especially white sugar), meat, and highly refined products such as white bread, white rice, white flour, white sugar, etc.

The crucial event in the transition came when white sugar was renamed “evaporated cane juice” (by Bruce Kirk, who was working with Florida Crystals) and allowed into a growing number of natural food products. The era of real food had changed into the era of the illusion of real food.

Jim was well positioned to witness this transition. He was selling natural brown rice syrup, which he had developed and which was sticky and tan. Evaporated cane juice (which Jim calls “minimally refined sugar” and which is only 1% less refined than pure white sugar) gradually took away much of his market and hurt his business.

The “standards” set by the natural food stores represent the “last line of defense” for product quality to the consumer. If an ingredient supplier attempted to rename less-refined sugar as ECJ (Evaporated Cane Juice), it would not fly unless the natural food outlets went along with this false and misleading designation.

In many ways, your local natural food store was similar to the local pharmacy. Most people ask their pharmacist for recommendations and transparent information about medicine. In a similar manner, the natural-food consumer depends on the natural food store proprietor for similar information about natural / healthy food alternatives. As these outlets became more consolidated and commercialized, they lost the commitment to “higher standards” as an uncomfortable trade-off to “higher profits”. Today, it is more about the perception and connotation of the label than it is about the quality of the product. What we seem to be doing more and more of today is finding new and better ways of making the consumer feel good about eating lousy foods.

Big Food and the “guys in suits” realized early on that the major deterrent to making acquisitions in this new and exciting growth segment was the fact that the natural foods industry started as a counterculture movement to the mass foods market. What consumer back then would trust the name of a mass-market company on a health food product? This is the very reason why, when companies like Kellogg from the mass-market acquired small natural foods companies like Kashi, the former was very careful not to allow their name to be commercially connected to the latter. Mass-market companies that broke this rule quickly learned a painful lesson. For example, General Mills was one of the first cereal companies to come out with an organic cereal
under their own name. If you look up the history of the General Mills product called Sunrise (organic cereal), you will see that it lasted in the marketplace for less than two years. After they failed with the Sunrise product, General Mills purchased Small Planet Foods as well as Cascadian Farms and were careful not to let their corporate name contaminate the historically pure reputation of their acquisition. Even today, it is hard for the average consumer to connect Kashi to Kellogg’s. Address: PhD, founder and owner of Innovative Sweeteners, 1 Kingsbridge Road, Somerset, New Jersey 08873; Now head of Suzanne’s Specialties, Inc.. Phone: 732-545-5544.

  • **Summary:** “As recently as 1950 or so, the world economy was living more or less within its means, consuming only the sustainable yield, the interest of the natural systems that support it. But then as the economy doubled, and doubled again, and yet again, multiplying eightfold, it began to outrun sustainable yields and to consume the asset base itself.”

  “In a 2002 study published by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, a team of scientists concluded that humanity’s collective demands first surpassed the earth’s regenerative capacity around 1980. As of 2009 global demands on natural systems exceed their sustainable yield capacity by nearly 30 percent. This means we are meeting current demands in part by consuming the earth’s natural assets, setting the stage for an eventual Ponzi-type collapse when these assets are depleted.

  As of mid-2009, nearly all the world’s major aquifers were being overpumped. We have more irrigation water than before the overpumping began, in true Ponzi fashion. We get the feeling that we’re doing very well in agriculture—but the reality is that an estimated 400 million people are today being fed by overpumping, a process that is by definition short-term. With aquifers being depleted, this water-based food bubble is about to burst.”

  “And there are more such schemes. As human and livestock populations grow more or less apace, the rising demand for forage eventually exceeds the sustainable yield of grasslands. As a result, the grass deteriorates, leaving the land bare, allowing it to turn to desert. In this Ponzi scheme, herders are forced to rely on food aid or they migrate to cities.

  “Paul Hawken, author of Blessed Unrest, puts it well: ‘At present we are stealing the future, selling it in the present, and calling it gross domestic product. We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future instead of stealing it. We can either create assets for the future or take the assets of the future. One is called restoration and the other exploitation.’ The larger question is, if we continue with business as usual—with overpumping, overgrazing, overplowing, overfishing, and overloading the atmosphere with carbon dioxide—how long will it be before the Ponzi economy unravels and collapses? No one knows. Our industrial civilization has not been here before.”


  • **Summary:** “San Francisco–Attune Foods, maker of the world’s first Probiotic Chocolate Bar, announced today that it has acquired the Uncle Sam and Erewhon cereal brands from US Mills, LLC, further expanding its portfolio of great tasting food products that deliver digestive health benefits.”

  “Erewhon is a leading all natural gluten free cereal brand that is available in more than a dozen delicious varieties. Many varieties are wheat free, low in sodium, low in fat and have long been a staple in gluten free diets.” “We are thrilled to add Uncle Sam and Erewhon cereals, two brands firmly rooted in the digestive health space, to the Attune Foods line-up of innovative products. With the addition of these great cereals along with our existing probiotic chocolate and granola bars, Attune Foods has cemented its status as a leading natural digestive health company,” said Rob Hurlbut, CEO of Attune Foods.”

  “Attune Chocolate and Granola Probiotic Bars contain probiotics that are clinically proven to support a healthy digestive system and boost immunity. Each bar includes 6.1 billion cfus (colony forming units) of the most clinically tested probiotic strains, is an excellent source of calcium and contains less sugar than most yogurts.”

  Attune Probiotic Bars were introduced in Jan. 2007. For details visit www.attunefoods.com. Address: San Francisco, California. Phone: 415-277-4901 or attune@allisonpr.com.

  • **Summary:** John now lives in Japan, but was a worker at Harmony Foods, the macrobiotic wholesaler, and various other wholefood outlets in London during the early 1980s. He read _You Are All Sanpaku_ in about 1981.

  “If you ever get into documenting the ‘microbiotic history’ of the movement in the UK, I might be able to fill in some details (or offer opinion / reflections on it), such as why the marvelous East-West center collapsed and then
Harmony Foods (after the Sams sold it), who was responsible for the softening of the message from the old days and point a finger to the role of the many Italians strangely enough. There are other people in the UK, like John Law of Community Foods and Infinity Foods Coop of Brighton, that also would deserve a mention. Of course, there were the foundations of the old ‘Nature Cure’ and naturopathy days going back to at least the 1920s and 1930s.

“Peter and Montse Bradford would, obviously, have to have a mention. You know Bill Tara. You probably know most of the other main players.

“One episode I would suggest you were brave enough to investigate is the failure of the Community Health Foundation / East-West Centre on City Road in London. It was one of the greatest, untimely losses to the movement. A fabulous, old Victorian school converted into a nexus of original / alternative health culture. There was a macrobiotic grocer that numerous incarnations later became Clearspring and Fresh and Wild, a bookshop, a macrobiotic restaurant, the Kushi Institute doing macrobiotic cooking and consultations, above them therapy centers and a dojo. Down in the basement a nursery and kitchen. In short an ideal community. A total immersion experience. You learn, you eat, you buy, you read, you trained, your kids were taught, you got a rub down and therapy.

“It was huge and cheap. This is a rough sketch that I would give you to investigate. As I understand it, it all failed and fell apart when the lease came up for renewal. All the others wanted to buy out the lease out, and take over their floor of the building, except for the Kushi Institute as it was and would not pay for itself. It was supporting itself off renting out, managing the space. The lease was not bought out. A new lease or landlord came in. The rent went way up and one by everyone had to move out. Fresh and Wild, the grocer was the last to leave. The final chapter is even sadder. Within a few years, the area in which it was, changed from being a barren, post-industrial, working class area on the City borders where no one went or lived, to being the most trendy up and coming area in London. Like an East Village, New York City. As a location it could not have been better. I think most folks hold the KI [Kushi Institute] responsible. They had too much small and not enough business. Other folks might speak of ‘management problems.’

“The other story would be Erewhon Foods, basically, trying to screw over Harmony Foods and “conquer” (my words) Europe.

“Harmony was sold off to an ex-Metal Box upper-middle class corporate type named John Guyon who went on to bankrupt it and screwed over a lot of small suppliers. If you find an American ex-hippie Gideon who used to work there as director, you might get more of the story. His wife Mary is still involved in the ’scene’ in the UK.

“It would be good if you add a bit of realism to the story, but you might have to brave enough to risk putting a few noses out of joint.” Address: Japan.

• Summary: The first natural foods movement, which started in 1953, had its headquarters in Atlanta, Texas. They published an excellent monthly magazine titled Natural Food and Farming from April 1954 until Aug. 1995 (Vol. 41, No. 2). Each issue was 8½ by 11 inches, and in 1957 a typical issue was 22 pages long.

The movement was based on an organization named “Natural Food Associates” (NFA) (founded in 1953), which had a large membership from the mid-1950s on, and had many nationwide chapters—such as the “Connecticut Natural Food Associates.” Their basic missions were to raise awareness that our food system, soil, water, and bodies were being poisoned by a host of new agricultural chemicals (such as DDT), fluoridation, etc., and to provide an alternative for those who were concerned about their health and/or the environment: “natural foods grown on fertile soil eaten fresh and poison free” (April 1958, p. 6).

They encouraged people nationwide to start a vegetable and grow their own food using compost and without using chemical fertilizers or toxic pesticides. They were independent of but closely allied with and active in promoting the fledgling organic gardening and farming movement and the biodynamic farming movement (especially Ehrenfried Pfeiffer). As they watched with alarm as the fertility of the soil was being destroyed by large-scale chemical farming methods, they were especially active in linking the health of the body to the health of the soil.

They worked very hard, for example, to ban DDT and fluoridation and many of their leading members (PhDs and university professors) testified against it.

The founder, president and sparkplug of NFA was Joe D. Nichols, M.D., from 1954 until his death on 27 May 1992. Most of the officers and leaders of this movement were adults, and a large percentage were physicians (M.D.s), dentists, or in academia. They had annual nationwide conventions, and before long, regional and state chapters and conventions. They were very active and well funded—nationwide.

Note: In 1962 Silent Spring was published. In 1972 DDT was banned in the USA.

The second natural foods movement in the U.S. began as a macrobiotic foods movement. It was started by Erewhon Natural Foods in April 1966 in a small natural foods retail store at 303-B Newbury Street (below street level) in Boston, Massachusetts. Aveline and Michio Kushi (teachers of macrobiotics) were the founders, but Aveline was the sole owner. Evan Root was the first retail store
manager. The origin of the natural foods industry and movement in America can be traced to this date. Erewhon was the first store of its kind in America and it soon served as a model for many other similar natural food stores across the United States. So the 2nd natural foods movement actually began as a macrobiotic foods movement.

The 2nd natural foods movement was largely vegetarian in addition to eschewing refined foods—and specially white sugar. The 1st natural foods movement advocated the eating of meat, poultry, and fish as good sources of protein.

Soyfoods were a major part of the 2nd natural foods movement, but a very minor part of the 1st. Address: Soyinfo Center, P.O. Box 234, Lafayette, California 94549.

386. Boswell, April. 2010. Re: Work at the Erewhon retail store on Newbury Street in Boston. Letter (e-mail) to William Shurtleff at Soyinfo Center, Oct. 13 and 24. 1 p. • Summary: “On a whim yesterday I googled Erewhon, the natural foods store on Ellery St. in Boston for whom I worked a few months in early 1971. As I scanned through what came across, memories began slipping back. So I thought I’d send on to you what I remember although you probably have plenty of information, and my memories are not very clear. Nevertheless...

“As a 20 year-old (my name was April Deborah Van Outrive in those days) I moved from California to Cambridge, Massachusetts in January 1971, and into a third-floor walk-up apartment with my boyfriend at the time Rory Ingalls (he might have been working at Tao Books), and two other roommates, a South American fellow, Manuel Manga (who was obsessed with geodesic domes) and Fern Weiner. They were all eating and living macrobiotically and I was learning from them. Fern did all the cooking for the house. She taught me how to make an authentic Japanese futon and some basics of macrobiotic cooking.

“After only a month or so for reasons I don’t recall, we moved again into a lovely old macrobiotic house on Ellery St., around the corner from the Orson Wells theater and down the street from Harvard Square. There were eighteen to twenty people living in this house which was run by Bruce and Melinda Gardner. Melinda was pregnant and subsequently had her baby, David, that spring or summer. The house was three stories and had been built in the early eighteen hundreds. I remember Melinda making tofu from scratch in the big kitchen there with a number of us women. My memories of Bruce and Melinda are that they were both calm, gentle people. Melinda called their baby ‘Davie-cha.’

“I went to work for Erewhon on Newbury St. and rode the bus from Cambridge, past MIT and over the bridge into Boston. Russell Desmarais (spelling?) was managing the store as I recall. We had large open barrels of grains, seeds and nuts as well as nut butter grinders, and I recall estimating amounts when helping customers with their grains. One time the famous singer Odetta came in and I waited on her. I didn’t know who she was at the time. I also recall a young man who worked at Erewhon, he played the flute and would sit outside the back door on a ledge or a stairway during his breaks; I was charmed by his haunting tunes.

“Some of us Erewhon employees took a bus one weekend up to Vermont, to donate our time to work on a farm there. We worked in the fields digging stones out of the soil. The stones were as numerous as potatoes in the ground but less satisfying to unearth. I recall wondering if they just continued to rise to the surface over time. Another memory of that weekend is that along the way there, we stopped and swam in the bend of a clear cold river. The idyllic nature of that swim and that time remains with me today.

“On another occasion there was a big party at what may have been the Kushi’s house that we all attended. I recall it as being a gracious home. It might have been Aveline or Michio Kushi’s birthday celebration.

“We attended lectures given by Michio Kushi in Boston, I think this was downtown at a church, close to the Boston Commons.

“Bruce and Melinda were offered the opportunity to run a big house and farm in the countryside outside of Boston, where we had also visited as a group. I think they did leave the Ellery St. house to do that.

“In June or July of 1971, I decided to catch a ride back home and put up a sign to that effect on the bulletin board at Erewhon. A girl name Dulcie answered my ad; she was heading to California in her little VW and could use a traveling companion. She arrived bright and early one fine summer day, I packed my things in her car and off we went. Life made its usual twists and turns and I did not return to Boston.

“I was the girl on the cover one month of the little publication put out by Erewhon, might have been the East-West Journal. I think I was holding a big basket of fresh produce.

“So that’s my little story! Thanks for allowing me to reminisce.” Address: Clayton, California.

387. Spencer, Bob. 2010. Re: Work / study with Erewhon and macrobiotics. Letter (e-mail) to Evan Root forwarded to William Shurtleff at Soyinfo Center, Dec. 30. 1 p. • Summary: “Today I googled the history of Erewhon. I knew what would be there: natural foods pioneer, macrobiotic business, etc. However, there are some bits and pieces often left out.

“Like the majority of young people who went to work either in the retail stores or the warehouses at Farnsworth and then East St., I was at least a part time student of Michio while living in Amherst. In 1971, my experience began as a warehouse laborer unloading trucks of whole
grains from the American Mid-west, 100# bags of french
seasalt and 20 ft ocean containers of Japanese imports.

“Paul Hawken hired me, but left soon after. Some said
it was because of a disagreement with the Kushis over the
direction of the business. Doug Bray was my supervisor in
the warehouse at that time (late 1971), but he was fired soon
after for providing the entire crew with LL Bean shirts for
Xmas. There was no heat in the warehouse.”

“Then came my years in the Production Department as
packager, miller (M.I.A.T.) and Assistant Manager under
Steve Zoller. Following that came a stint as Sales
Representative to Northern N.E. When the company moved
to Cambridge, I had the opportunity to try something
completely different: warehouse inventory control in an
IBM based digital environment. Then, during the approach
of bankruptcy, my next job was that of Private Label
Purchaser. After bankruptcy my assignment was to manage
the Brookline Village retail store: final stop on the Erewhon
path. Later I worked for Tony Harnett at Bread and Circus
at their Brighton warehouse and eventually left the food
business as a result of a dead end decision to manage an
independent “Natural” food store in Jamaica Plain in 1984.

“So, why do I tell all this. It is because Erewhon was
for me (and for many others) more of a school of business
than a pioneer in the natural foods industry. Many of the
folks in that picture were not followers of any particular
dietary or philosophical regimen. Instead they were people
looking to work at a place that appreciated their efforts. In
return for good works, they had opportunities to grow with
the business and gain all sorts of experience for future
employment.

“It wouldn’t surprise me if a large number of folks went
on to have their own businesses, like myself. I write this as I
sit here at my desk awaiting an ocean freight container of
imported stone to arrive and be passed thru US Customs. I
have a small warehouse for storage and shipping of the
stone. I know what my inventory is and its value. My
suppliers make products for me at my own specifications.
My accountant relies on the information I provide to make
her reports to my bank. Are these not skills developed while
employed by the Kushis?

“True, I still eat a lot of rice and pasta. My diet is much
wider than before. However, my wife uses the most natural
products available. Most of what we eat she cooks herself to
control fats, additives and preservatives.

“Oh, yes... I forgot to mention that she also worked at
Erewhon in 1974 where we met. That was another benefit.

“Thanks to you both for the chance to remember the 13
years of my life spent working in the food industry. The
point is that Erewhon was really much more about
opportunity, education and work than it was about natural
foods.” Address: Chestnut Street, Charleston, a
neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts.

and involvement with macrobiotics. Letter (e-mail) to
William Shurtleff at Soyinfo Center, 27 Dec. 2010 and 6
March 2011. 5 p. [1 ref]
• Summary: “I moved to San Francisco in January of 1966
at the invitation of my friend Deacon with whom I had
studied acting at the Carnegie Institute of Technology,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (then considered to be the best
theater program in the country; now Carnegie-Mellon
University), and soon became a part of The Firehouse
Reperatory Theatre company, which up to that point had
consisted of Bill Tara, director; Jean Allison, actress,
George Eby and Deacon, actors, and a few others who took
care of technical matters. Paul Hawken did lighting for us
and co-produced (with Bill) some of the rock and roll
dances we put on to make the money we needed to produce
plays–such as “Endgame,” a 1957 theatre-of-the-absurd
play by Samuel Beckett. At this remove, I can see that the
dances we produced were more culturally significant than
the theatre, but we were not far from that view even then.
We saw both endeavors as art making.

“Bill Tara has not been celebrated as Bill Graham and
Chet Helms have, but he was really good at putting on rock
and roll dances. He hired great people to do visuals for us,
like Elias Romero, who invented liquid light projections,
and Roger Hillyard, a talented filmmaker; he put together
great bills with terrific bands–Big Brother and the Holding
Company, the Amazing Charlatans [Sopwith Camel, The
Wildflower, Great Society]; and he encouraged our
company members to dream up performances to incorporate
in the evening. He wanted our dances to be more than
entertaining; he wanted them to be enlightening. We all did.

“We were intent on changing the world, nothing less, so
we saw everything we did–eating, tripping, dancing, loving–
as vitally important. Reading Timothy Leary, Jethro Kloss,
Alan Watts, George Ohsawa and others, we learned that we
had to change ourselves before we could change anyone
else. So we determined to change ourselves, to embody
change. It was critical.

“We tend to remember the sixties as carefree, but in fact
they were fraught with anxiety. The draft had many of us in
a constant state of apprehension. As President [Lyndon]
Johnson heated up the war in Vietnam, we watched
atrocities on TV as if we were seeing them first-hand. Life
seemed nightmarish. A lot of young people, many of them
flooding into San Francisco, got the idea we could turn
things around–to open our hearts, to give peace a chance, to
treat our brothers and sisters and the planet on which we all
live with respect. The belief that we could bring peace to the
world by making ourselves peaceful was, perhaps, an
exuberance of youth. Most adults would say so. (I haven’t
reached a conclusion.) But at the time that sort of cynicism
dismayed us. We believed it could be done. We believed
ourselves to be the avant garde that would lead the way.
Many of us had experiences with cannabis, LSD and mescaline that seemed to validate such a vision. We wanted to share that vision with the world. “During the so-called ‘Summer of Love’ (1967—the war was still raging in Vietnam) my friends Greg and Mary, with whom I was then living, famously took acid so Joan Didion, on assignment for Look magazine, could watch.* (See Didion’s essay ‘Slouching towards Bethlehem’ in the collection of the same name). Meanwhile, Bill, Jean, Deacon, Paul, Roger and I were busy planning an anti-war art piece to be presented at the big dance we had scheduled for Halloween night with The Grateful Dead, Quicksilver, Mimi Farina and other performers. We had bought every second-hand baby doll we could find in San Francisco, had taken a blowtorch to them, and planned to hang them in camouflage netting all over the hall. Roger was putting together a montage of grisly war footage, and Bill, Jean, Deacon and I had rehearsed a piece to perform over the PA system—an excerpt from Kenneth Patchen’s ‘Journal of Albion Moonlight.’ The artistic intent was to portray war as a bad trip.

“Ken Kesey, then on the lam, announced that he would appear with the Dead at Winterland Ballroom on Halloween to tell America’s youth to turn away from drugs. Hold on, we thought, we have The Grateful Dead under contract for our dance at California Hall. This was confusing. Some of the Pranksters were actually staying at Bill’s warehouse home south of Market. (By that time we had been kicked out of the firehouse and were now called the San Francisco Calliope Company.) Could we transfer what we had planned to Winterland, a much larger venue? We decided to sit tight and wait to see what would happen. Then rumors started to circulate that Kesey actually intended to dose the punch at Winterland, thumbing his nose at the law. What would happen if we did our anti-war piece—especially with all those burned baby dolls—to an audience on acid? Not pretty. Could we transfer what we had planned to Winterland Ballroom on Halloween night with The Grateful Dead under contract?—an excerpt from Kenneth Patchen’s ‘Journal of Albion Moonlight.’ The artistic intent was to portray war as a bad trip.

“In retrospect, I can see our bad trip war piece wasn’t just about Vietnam. It was expressive of what was happening that summer in San Francisco. Psychedelic drugs had, for a year or two, fostered genuine camaraderie there, but other drugs that had appeared on the scene—notably crystal methamphetamine and PCP—had seriously undermined it. The vibe had changed. A lot of youths had lost faith. Some of us decided we had indeed seen the light, but needed to do more work to sustain the vision. Bill, Jean, Paul, Roger and I were interested in attaining higher consciousness through clean living. Deacon and quite a lot of others weren’t.

“We had seen some issues of ‘The Order of the Universe’ out of Boston and wanted to know more about the Macrobiotic study center there. I wrote to the editor, assuming that English was not his first language, and offered my help. Embarrassed, Jim Ledbetter accepted my offer. My friends Mike and Jan Costello drove me across country while I read aloud to them You Are All Sanpaku and The Book of Tea. By the time I reached Boston, Paul (in his early twenties) was already there, and Aveline Kushi (then about forty) was having an affair with him.” Continued.


• Summary: Continued: “Here is an extract from my 1967 journal, describing my arrival in Boston. (It was written without capital letters):

“now i am at 29 university road, brookline. i was greeted by beverly (renée’s friend) who said ‘welcome, you can put your things in the basement till we see if you will stay,’ on the way out to the car i met rebecca [Dubowsky], the housekeeper. she asked mike and jan to come only at night [because they looked like hippies—they had even longer hair than I did then]. as i went to bed she was having beverly make her short hair shorter. i wonder about my hair. is my desire to keep it only natural or is it materialistic?

“just being here has made me very high. they are wonderful. i have so much to learn.

“today i have met the kushis. both he and she are amazing. very young-seeming, full of energy. i have spoken to jim ledbetter who is more like i imagined than the kushis. he is thoughtful. they are. their children are happy and active. already i feel love for them all. tomorrow perhaps mom and dad will arrive. ‘they arrived on the 11:00 shuttle from new york. they like the house and the people. at dinner last night they even liked the seaweed. they spoke with mr. kushi who gave them a brief run down of their ills by looking at them and trying a few pressure points. he ordered two bags full of macrobiotic staples which might be difficult to get in pennsylvania. martin brought the foodstuffs back from the store and i packed them in a picnic basket for their return trip. most everyone here at the house has told me how lucky i am to have such friendly, aware, and open-minded parents.

“now they have left. mother sounds as if she may take mr. kushi’s advice and come here to live for a week or so to learn to cook and to have consultation and massage therapy. i have a slight headache and beginning cold. michael has come by to find out what to do about jan who is sick. i unpack.

“Because I wouldn’t cut my hair or beard, I was not included as part of the public face of the macrobiotic community. But I quickly made myself at home on University Road, doing a lot of the cooking for our ‘study house,’ and I co-edited ‘The Order of the Universe’ with Jim. I also intently studied macrobiotic theory, trying to make sense of the yin-yang system. I sat with Michio for a year or two, fostered genuine camaraderie there, but other drugs that had appeared on the scene—notably crystal methamphetamine and PCP—had seriously undermined it. The vibe had changed. A lot of youths had lost faith. Some of us decided we had indeed seen the light, but needed to do more work to sustain the vision. Bill, Jean, Paul, Roger and I were interested in attaining higher consciousness through clean living. Deacon and quite a lot of others weren’t.

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hours working on a relative ranking of foods. [Note: This was no simple matter given the number of factors to consider. Yin food characteristics: large, wet, fragrant, sweet, sour or spicy, oily, seeds on the outside, native to a warm climate, coloration toward the violet end of the spectrum. Yang food characteristics: compact, dry, odor-free, salty or bitter, seeds on the inside, native to a cold climate, coloration toward the red end of the spectrum. Flesh is more yang than vegetables. Roots are more yang than fruits, stems more yang than leaves, etc., etc.]. ‘Which is more yin,’ I would ask, ‘Cucumber or eggplant? Eggplant or banana? Banana or onion?’

“Another journal entry from that time:

“Michio says that ‘macrobiotics’ will no longer be nonsense in ten years. Perhaps that means that in ten years everything will be so nonsensical that no one will notice that macrobiotics still is.

“I returned to San Francisco for the summer of 1968 to share what I had learned—the theory still didn’t make much sense, but the diet did. I served as Bobby Weir’s macrobiotic advisor (Bobby was one of the founding members of the Grateful Dead). I taught a beginning cooking class weekly in the Haight Ashbury, and an advanced class in North Beach. Then after another year in Boston I went off to Japan, in August of 1969, to study acupuncture (which was still thought of as some medieval barbarism in the West, if it was known at all). Michio said he would arrange everything for me, that his parents would meet me at the airport and that I would stay with them while I was studying. Luckily Evan Root, a friend from Boston, met my plane, because I never saw or heard from Michio’s parents during the subsequent year and a half I was in Japan.

“Why Michio told me those things, I have never understood. I tried to construe the whole thing as a trial he had contrived for me, guru-like, but it didn’t make me think better of him. On my own, I never found an acupuncture teacher I wanted to study with, but I did study cooking with Darbin Yamaguchi [the wife of Alcan Yamaguchi] in Kyoto; I did work with the Katsuragis on their farm in southwestern Japan [Okayama] for a year, where I studied traditional methods of food preservation [the family made its own miso and takuan pickles]; and I did study shiatsu massage with the generous Miyamoto family in Hokkaido.

“After returning to the States, I worked for a year at my father’s window business near Pittsburgh before returning to Boston. Here is another journal entry from that time:

“9/71 it seems i just can never write in here when the action’s fast. weeks again have gone by and much has happened. now i’m in the hartford airport on my way to pennsylvania to gather up my things so i can return to boston to work with paul and bill and everyone at the erewhon trading company on filthy farsworth street. who could have guessed it? it wasn’t even on my list of options. i didn’t even try. and already i’ve produced a whole new line of bags for them (us?) and i’m living at garner road. why this year i may even pay taxes.

“now [I’m being paid at erewhon] dollars five hundred sixty [$560] for each calendar month. paul tells me i’ll be getting seven hundred by december (probably november), but he doesn’t seem to want to be precise. stories of michio shafting various people monetarily make me uneasy in arranging money business here.

“what effects did the trip to japan have on your thinking?” michio asks, and my mind whirls. what a question. ‘about macrobiotics,’ he says. well then, and we talk for over an hour. .

“Paul Hawken seeks to form a new corporation in Texas. He says the miller wants to give us (Erewhon) nine million dollars.

“There are many unsavory stories I could tell about Paul. He named his son after Frank Ford of Arrowhead Mills in Texas—the miller mentioned above—in order to clinch an Erewhon-Arrowhead merger, then changed the boy’s name when the merger fell through. He had an avid companion in his bed every night his wife Dora was in the hospital bearing him that son. (To get to his room at the Gardner Road house one had to pass by mine.) He routinely dissed Erewhon’s idealistic workers. His secretiveness and duplicity made it difficult for his co-workers, many of whom had once thought of themselves as his friends, to do their jobs. One day when I couldn’t take it any more, I went into Paul’s office to challenge him on his behavior. Screaming, he told me he had no intention of treating anyone any differently, so I resigned. When I returned to my desk, several people at the desks around me whispered, ‘What was that about?’ ‘I quit,’ I said. Just then he stormed out of his office, loudly accused me of being incompetent and told me he was firing me. ‘I already told them I quit,’ I replied. He flushed crimson, and screamed at me to get out.

“Precisely because their president was only twenty-three—who can be surprised that he lacked maturity?—many of Erewhon’s employees thought they were working in the ranks of a new world order. They gave up better-paying jobs in order to take part in the great healing. We had an M.D. working in our shipping department. But at the management level I was perhaps the only one who didn’t need to curry favor with Paul. The others had no previous corporate experience—no CV that could land them a similar position anywhere else. I could easily return to a job with my father’s business or, as it happened, return to school (to study Japanese).” Continued. Address: Berkeley, California, and Flinders Island, Tasmania.

Letter (e-mail) to William Shurtleff at Soyinfo Center, 27 Dec. 2010 and 6 March 2011. 5 p.

**Summary:** “Michio and Aveline Kushi saw business, saw Erewhon, as a way of advancing the macrobiotic campaign (and/or their own ends). They asked us, the troops in that campaign, to help make Erewhon successful. We tried, telling ourselves we were creating a new business paradigm, although, week after week, the discord Paul created made it harder to swallow that line. Would Erewhon have been peachy without Paul? It seemed so to me at the time, but perhaps that was more youthful naïveté. Bill Tara, Jean Allison, Beverly Sky, Roger Hillyard, Judy Coates, Nancy Lesourd and I—others too, perhaps even Paul—were artists who, trying to change ourselves, trying to change the world, found our way to Boston to study a new technique. We were counter-culturists, mostly strangers to the world of business. The way things were at Erewhon, it was a very uncomfortable world to spend time in. Ill at ease there, disenchanted, some of us migrated away from the scene—although not necessarily away from macrobiotics—trying to find a personal path, to further a personal vision, to walk peacefully forward. Some have been kind of successful, some—not so much. But no doubt all, like me, have found it an interesting passage.”

Note: After reading an earlier draft of this memoir, Shurtleff asked Gorell several specific questions, whose answers are given below. Please excuse any of this information that is now repetitive.

Although the Grateful Dead and The Quicksilver Messenger never played at The Firehouse, Wally assumes they did play at the dance his group organized at California Hall.

Wally says he hardly knew Paul Hawken in San Francisco. When asked: “How did Paul, Jean, Bill Tara, etc. support themselves for 2-3 years in San Francisco? How did they pay for food, rent, psychedelics, etc.” Wally replies: “I have no recollection. I worked at the post office for a while and then after the Firehouse / Calliope Company folded I worked as an actor with the New Shakespeare Company which has become today’s Shakespeare in the Park.”

“I don’t believe I ever knew Erewhon to have a head other than Paul Hawken when I was in Boston. I was there for three different stays. Searching back through my journals I find that... I first arrived in Boston in mid-September of 1967. I remained there for the academic year, studying with Michio and Aveline, co-editing ‘The Order of the Universe’ and cooking for the University Road study house. In June of 1968 I returned to San Francisco to share what I had learned.

“In late summer of 1968, I went back to Boston to continue my studies with Michio and Aveline, to continue to work with Jim Ledbetter on editing ‘The Order of the Universe’ and to try to rationalize the yin-yang classification system for foodstuffs, and again I cooked for our study house on University Road.

“In August of 1969 I traveled to Japan for the first time. I expected I would have enough trouble getting along there without the problems created by having long hair at that time, so I cut it off short before I left.

“I returned to the USA in early 1971, worked for my father in Pennsylvania for about nine months, and then was offered the position of Director of Imports with Erewhon. To be perfectly frank, I can’t recall ever having performed any of the duties that title would suggest, although I suppose I must have. I developed recipes for our packaged line of foods, designed the labels, illustrated (I think) and hand-lettered them. In my free time, I edited some of the recipes for a cookbook Aveline was producing, I painted the signs for Sanae restaurant.”

“I first studied cooking with Aveline and helped her when I could, particularly after returning from Japan when I was living on Gardner Road. In Japan I studied with Lima Ohsawa a few times and took regular weekly classes from Darbin Yamaguchi during the latter part of 1969. I also learned a lot from teaching cooking classes which I began to do in 1968 and continued for some time as a way of repaying the obligation I felt toward my teachers.

“Names [of people studying macrobiotics in Boston during Wally’s first year]: Connie Frank, Beverly Sewerski, Nahum Stiskin, Paul Hawken, Martin Russell (ran the retail store), Rebecca Dubowsky, Anne Harkless, Georgeanne Coffee, Richard Sandler, Bill Tara, Renée Gremore (that’s her name now, can’t recall her name then) Jean Allison, Evan Root, Jim Ledbetter, Joe Leis, Nancy Lesourd, Judy Coates, Dora Coates, Peggy __ (she became a Druid nun)...

“I’m afraid I can’t tell you who came first and who came later. Just don’t remember except for Jimmy and Susan Silver who I believe came in my second year.”

When asked if he remembered an early tofu “cheesecake” developed in the macrobiotic community in Boston: “There was a lot of experimentation attempting to make foods that people missed—torn ‘cheesecake,’ seitan ‘chicken,’ etc. I was never much interested in those efforts. I liked food that could be appreciated for what it was and cuisine that presented that food as simply and honestly as possible. But then I didn’t have wild cravings for ‘forbidden’ foods the way many of my fellow macros did. Brown rice was (and continues to be) one of my favorite foods. There were times in those days when I seemed to be the only person I knew—including Michio—who was actually following a sensible macrobiotic diet. Everyone else seemed to lurch between bingeing and making penance. This tendency was, I felt, instigated by Ohsawa’s extremism. Japanese macrobiotic adherents paid little or no attention to his edicts about drinking as little as possible, avoiding yin foods entirely, never picking up your child except for

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feeding, etc.; while many of his American adherents, to their detriment, strictly followed his advice.”

When asked when and where he learned to write formal Japanese (keigo): “After all three stints in Boston, and not really knowing what I was getting myself into, I decided to go back to school to study Japanese formally. (I had done a seven week crash course at Harvard before going to Japan for the first time, but had not, otherwise, done any formal coursework.) I didn’t want to study in a big city so the Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies (as it was then called) was the only place to go. I spent a year there, then transferred to U.C. Berkeley where I completed my B.A. degree. I then went off to study for a year at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies in Tokyo, where they put us through a lot of keigo paces. And then I did three more years of graduate study in the rhetoric department at UCB, working on rhetorical analyses of Japanese language materials, mostly the poems of a 20th century symbolist poet by the name of Nishiwaki Junzaburo–six years of formal study in all.

Sad to say, my reading skills are now back to the level of decoding and my writing skills are next to non-existent, but I can still carry on everyday conversation fairly well and I understand most of what it is said at my tea ceremony lessons.”

Martin ran the Erewhon retail store most of the time Wally was around. He was a “key figure who, as I recall, ran the retail store pretty much by himself for some years. He had a limp from childhood malady and always seemed to feel a bit one down because of it, but was a really good man and quite capable.” Address: Berkeley, California, and Flinders Island, Tasmania.


• Summary: “Erewhon Los Angeles was initially located at 8001 Beverly Boulevard. It was opened in the fall of 1970. John Deming and John Fountain were major investors in helping to open the LA store and during the 1980s Erewhon troubles in Boston, ownership of the LA Store was transferred to John Fountain before Tom DeSilva finally bought Erewhon Los Angeles. Tom DeSilva later moved Erewhon to its present location at 7660 B Beverly Blvd.”

Address: Traveling by truck in Portland, Oregon.


• Summary: “Prior to the Erewhon store [in April 1966], starting in September 1964, at 101 Walden St, Cambridge, Massachusetts, we started buying items in bulk from Japan as well as grains in bulk from within the US. We would stock them in the basement and I along with others would package them into smaller containers. We would sell these every day since we had dinners and lectures most evenings. It was a busy happening place. We moved to 7 Eastman Circle in Wellesley, Massachusetts in December 1, 1965 and then to 216 Gardner Rd, Brookline, Massachusetts in March 31st 1966. During these moves we continued to buy the food products in bulk, package them and sell them at our dinners. It was while living in Wellesley, Massachusetts that Evan Root came to live with us.

“We had barely moved into 216 Gardner Rd, Brookline, when within a couple of weeks, the town of Brookline, Health Department finding out about the food operation, shut us down. This is what necessitated the opening of the Erewhon Natural Food Store at 303-B Newbury St. [in April 1966]. The name Erewhon, although it is known that it came from Samuel Butler’s book, was actually picked because George Ohhsawa had a special fondness for the book Erewhon. George Ohhsawa created a comic series titled, ‘Jack & Miti in Erewhon.’

“One year later, when my mother opened ‘Sanae’ restaurant one block to the east of Erewhon, the original intention was to call the restaurant ‘Nowhere.’ When Evan Root went to the Boston City Hall to register the name, the people there thought the name was really odd and refused to allow the restaurant to be called Nowhere. Evan called my mother and while on the phone, my mother picked Sanae for the name.” Address: Traveling by truck.


• Summary: Chronology: 1945 June 1–Jean is born in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has two brothers. Her father was killed in a traffic accident when she was 18 months old. Her mother went into the hospital for about 2 years. Her mother later came back into their lives, but her father’s parents were suing for custody of the children. So her mother married her stepfather (who turned out to be a nice guy) and in 1949 the two of them moved with the 3 children to Los Angeles when she was age 4–to get away from the custody lawsuit.

1959 Aug. 22–The family moves to the Hawaiian Islands the day they became a state of the USA. Jean goes to high school in Hilo, on the island of Hawaii, and graduates in 1963 with honors.

1963 early summer–Jean leaves Hawaii to work for the summer at Army/Navy Supply House in San Francisco, California, as a secretary. In the fall she enters San Francisco State College while continuing her job part time during the fall. During college she also worked in several temporary jobs ranging from tax work and insurance to general office work. During 1965-66 she worked part time at Wilson’s Advertising Agency in San Francisco as a secretary. She did not graduate from college (this was a time
of turmoil, strikes, and protests at San Francisco State) but she does have a 4½ year education in Liberal Arts. Like many students, Jean did participate in the protests.

At the college, Jean was involved in acting, and through that she met both Paul Hawken and Bill Tara, who were doing theater in San Francisco and the psychedelic “drug scene” at that time.

1963-1967—Jean, Paul Hawken and Bill Tara grew to know one another well during the six years when they lived (often together) in San Francisco. In the early spring of 1966, shortly after rock concerts began at the Fillmore Auditorium [at the corner of Fillmore St. and Geary Blvd.] in San Francisco, they rented an old abandoned firehouse [fire station] at 3767 Sacramento Street, north of the Haight-Ashbury district in the Sunset District. Jean, Paul and Bill all lived in the firehouse the entire time they were there. Jean was Bill’s girlfriend. They organized and hosted live musical performances and dancing with some of the original street bands in San Francisco—Sopwith Camel, The Charlatans, Big Brother and the Holding Co. (including Janis Joplin), etc. The firehouse held about 100 people, and the door was kept “closed,” admitting people only in small groups. The resulting noise was kept carefully under control so as not to disturb the residential neighborhood. People paid a mandatory “donation” [one ticket shows: “Donation $2.00”] to hear the performance, and the hosts did not make change. No one sat, as there were no chairs, so everyone danced—although it was usually so crowded that no one could dance.

Concerts were held at the firehouse for at least 3 months [Feb. 12 to April 2]. “Since the last concert was the Wreckers Ball, I would assume that we had been told by the landlord that the place was to be raised and he wanted us out.” “It was a wonderful and exciting time—to be there at the beginning of the rock and roll music scene in San Francisco.” Jean thinks they moved from the firehouse directly to the warehouse south of Market Street, but she is not sure.

Note: This Firehouse is now part of early rock and roll legend in San Francisco. See the long blog titled Rockarchaeology101. See also: http://www.chickenonaunicycle.com/Firehouse%20History.htm.

“The rest of the time we were dealing and using drugs.” The only LSD they could get in those days was the real Sandoz LSD. Several days in advance of each trip, they carefully prepared their minds, bodies, and the environment. They had someone who was not taking it who was in the room with them to ground them. They did it the right way because it was “a spiritual experience.”

They soon moved into and rented one floor of a warehouse on an alley [65 Harriet St.] south of Market Street, between 6th and 7th streets. They pooled the money to pay the rent. “The warehouse was actually an old factory for making the pre-packaged small half-pies that you could buy at a convenience store. Initially, we had a wicked problem with rats and mice (a house cat took care of that) but had so many cockroaches that we use to have a monthly ‘cockroach killing party’ with Raid and beer. Great fun.”

“We lived communally in a huge warehouse space, except for a single room in the back. We each set up our own bedroom area— but shared the living room area (defined by a sofa, chairs and a rug) and open kitchen (defined by a
table, stove, refrig and cupboards). Bill lived there, I lived there but moved out before Bill, and Paul lived there for a time also.”

“The word `studio’ fits to a certain degree. Bill Tara and I were a couple for several years although we broke up at about the time we started the macrobiotic diet—which was Renee came along. Michio and Aveline Kushi made several attempts to get us back together as a couple as they wanted to send us off as a ‘teaching team.’”

Jean thinks that Paul Hawken was the first of the group to learn about macrobiotics in about 1967, perhaps from little yellow book that he was given by Roger Hillyard, who was doing light shows in San Francisco at the time. “My memory says that we were pretty much off of drugs by then. As a group we were pretty disgusted with the whole ‘flower child’ movement of the late 1960’s—the indiscriminate use of drugs just to get as high as you could. We were also more cautious about the drugs that were available at that time, they were cut [diluted] with just about anything that came to hand. You couldn’t be sure about the quality. So I would expect that we started with the exact diet as proposed by Ohsawa—brown rice for X number of weeks, gradually adding miso, shoyu, veges [veggies], etc. Alcohol was never a big deal with any of us, so I expect we just stopped. As to sugar, you know how hard that one is!! But, I expect we all tried hard. Very idealistic. I also think we were several months in to the diet—close to a year, before we left for Boston.” Continued. Address: Chatham, Massachusetts.


• Summary: Continued: 1967 early summer–Jean arrives in Boston, Massachusetts. In the summer and fall of 1967 she works at Harvard University, Carpenter Center for Visual Arts as an assistant to the head of purchasing and accounts receivable.

1968 fall–She joins the macrobiotic community in Boston. From the fall of 1968 until the spring of 1970 she was one of the early employees at Erewhon Trading Co., Inc. Her work with Erewhon is described later.

She lived both at Gardner Road and on University Road, and elsewhere. She never lived “off campus.” “Being part of the ‘elite’ of the store, most of the time was spent at Gardner Rd. I moved to University Rd. to be closer to an impermanent lover of the time. At University Rd. I cooked the dinners for a while until I was asked to step down. I was trying to experiment with foods—trying to use standard macrobiotic ingredients to replicate items in the normal American diet, e.g. can you make strawberry ‘shortcake’ with ‘whip cream’ out of flours, rice and berries, etc. This didn’t sit well with people who wanted only miso soup, rice and vegetables.

1970 spring–Jean leaves Erewhon and sets out on a trip around the world. Her biological father had left her $3,000 as insurance. She did not know what to do with it but she wanted to go to Japan so she bought a ticket on a airplane. She left Boston, “I believe with Jim Gronemeyer (an off-site macrobiotic lover of the time), traveling through most of Europe, then Greece, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, India, Thailand, Vietnam (where I tried to get to visit some macrobiotics living in the demilitarized zone was turned back by the military), Hong Kong and then Japan. I taught a few cooking classes in Germany although since I was paying my own way, my time was my own. In addition, my two-months stay in India [which she found the most fascinating so far] included cooking and teaching at a hospital outside of Calcutta, with macrobiotic Joe Levine, for Indian patients that had been ‘given up’ by their local doctors as incurable. Cooking and prep was done on the floor on top of pottery jars filled with cow dung. The cockroaches were as big as bats and they would hover just out of reach of the knife, sneaking in when you weren’t looking! Good fun!”

By the time she reached Japan, she had run out of money. But she intended to land in Japan because she and Beverly Stiskin were best friends (and Nahum was a close friend)–and had been for at least several years in Boston. They had met in Boston through macrobiotics.

1970 Nov. to 1972 spring–Jean arrives in Tokyo, Japan with $5 in her pocket. She knew the Stiskins were there. She called Nahum (in Kyoto) and asks him what she should do. He said, “I’m sending you a ticket.” She stays in Japan at the home of Nahum and Beverly Stiskin in Uzumasa (near Kitano-jinja–Kitano Shrine), west of Kyoto. Reubin Stiskin was a baby at the time. She pays her way by teaching English in Kyoto to Japanese, and she studies tea ceremony (with Bev) with a Japanese teacher. Michio Kushi wanted all his macrobiotic students to study Japanese culture and language. Jean learned a little Japanese—”enough to get around.” The Stiskins help support her financially, in part with a room in their home. When the Stiskins move to Tokyo, Jean moves with them. Nahum was writing a book on Shinto.

1972 spring–Jean leaves Tokyo, returns to California, stays with relatives, buys a car (1957 Ford Fairlane station wagon with a mattress in the back), and during that summer and fall (10 months) takes a slow, interesting trip across the United States by herself—seeing places such as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Wounded Knee she had long wanted to see—and seeing how people lived. “It was important to me to know America.”

In Boston she moved in with two semi-macrobiotics in an alley off Beacon Street in a basement (not in a macrobiotic house; Woodie and his wife and their two children). When Woodie and his family move out, Jean keeps the place.

1973 fall–Jean works for 2–3 years at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University as a staff assistant; this center was the predecessor of the Kennedy School of Government.

1974 early–Jean meets her husband to be, Andrew P. (“Andy”) Young, who was not a macrobiotic and had no interest in it. He was deeply interested in Japanese food and loved sushi with raw fish. At that point Jean let go of her interest in macrobiotics.

1979 June 30–Jean Allison and Andrew P. Young are married. He goes to Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. In 1981 she completes her B.A. degree there–unfinished since San Francisco State days. She becomes a mother of two.

1981–They move (full time) to Chatham, Massachusetts (at the “elbow” of Cape Cod) where Andy starts his own management consulting business. After several years he goes to work for the local bank. He is now a commercial loan officer. Address: Chatham, Massachusetts.

395. Young, Jean Allison. 2011. Recollection of work with Massachusetts. Several years he goes to work for the local bank. He is now a commercial loan officer. Address: Chatham, Massachusetts.

Summary: Jean was in Boston for about 10–12 months before she began to work for Erewhon.” “I do remember that shortly after I arrived and moved in to Gardner Road, I experienced my first snowstorm, standing out in the street at night watching the flakes fall through the street light in my raincoat (the only coat I had).”

In the fall of 1968, Jean was asked to become the executive secretary for a small company named Erewhon Trading Company, Inc. In the more than 2½ years that she worked for Erewhon, all her energy and ability was called upon to help the company grow. And it did grow—at an amazing rate. He main responsibility as to see that the president, the partners and the employees worked together efficiently and smoothly. Later, another part of her work was the lengthy negotiations required for the import and export of food products from Japan. This part of the work really sparked her imagination, as through these negotiations she began to notice a distinct difference between the “way of thinking” of the westerner and his oriental counterpart. This difference would later be one of the main reasons for her trip to and eventual settlement in Japan.

At Erewhon she was also responsible for the ordering of goods, billing, correspondence, and all of the general secretarial work that is necessary for the running of an efficient business. She also designed and implemented a workable bookkeeping system, and accounts receivable and payable system, and a filing system suited to the needs of the company.

In early 1968 she was elected assistant treasurer with check signing authority. As a member of the board, she was intimately involved with all decisions.

But Jean emphasizes: “Whatever you do, don’t make my part large. It wasn’t.”

In Nov. 1968, when Erewhon moved up and across the street to its larger store at 342 Newbury St., Jean was one of six Erewhon employees Paul Hawken, Bruce Macdonald, Roger Hillyard, Jim Docker, Bill Tara, and Jean Allison. They all worked at the Erewhon retail store. Jean never worked at the previous store at 303-B Newbury St. (below street store). After the move, Bill soon left to start a macrobiotic center in Chicago. Other people in the macrobiotic community in Boston at the time that Jean arrived were Susan and Roger Hillyard, Nahum and Beverly Stiskin, Jim Ledbetter and Jim Gronemeyer. She has no recollection of Martin Russell.

They knew they were going to do their first real mailing of products available and prices to the people who had ordered from Erewhon in the smaller store. Evan Root and others had kept a list of names and addresses. Paul Hawken was an extremely dynamic, very charismatic, very intelligent natural leader. He probably has much the same qualities today as he did then. But charismatic leaders believe that they are absolutely right. After the new store closed each day (and sometimes when the store was not busy), all or most of the 5 original employees would meet in the office (off the back storeroom) where they talked about the issues of the day. As Paul said in an interview, it was a group of very energetic, very motivated people who were working for no money (only for their room and board).

Jean sees the same spirit in her own children today—the wish to do something that they really love. Jean, who is now retired, has again found something she loves to do, volunteering at a small local historical society, typing into a computer the text of old archival documents from the 1700s and 1800s. She finds it fascinating to just hold and read old documents. “It totally turns me on.”

Paul Hawken is pretty tall. Bruce Macdonald was even taller. Bruce also had the beginnings of the charisma and leadership qualities that Paul had. If there was going to be a debate or argument, it was going to be between Bruce and Paul. Should we carry such and such a product? How do we know it really is organic? How do we know if the foods from Japan are produced either organically or without chemicals? When somebody asks you if a product is organic, do you say yes, or no, or I don’t know for sure? Shall we price our products low to get them out to the people, or should we price them higher to reflect their higher quality and to enable us to expand this rapidly growing business so we can reach more people? These were all young people with no business experience. There were
only two chairs and two desks in that office and it was quite small, so some people sat on desks or on the floor. In the summer, after a while, the group would move out of doors, where there was more room and warmth and fresh air.

The fourth person Jean recalls was Roger Hillyard. He was very quiet. He wasn’t confrontational at all. He would wait for a place to break into the discussion and would state what he thought. He was sort of the settling influence between Bruce and Paul. Jean had an equal say. Jim Docker was expected to cover the front of the store; Jean does not recall his being in the backroom sessions. When Paul Hawken left for Japan (about March 1969), Bruce Macdonald took over as head of Erewhon. When Bruce was going to leave, Roger Hillyard was scheduled to take his place.

In early 1970, major changes in policy and management were made which Jean felt were incompatible with the original intentions of the still-small company. Address: Chatham, Massachusetts.


• Summary: A news release stated that Attune Foods had acquired the Erewhon cereal brands. So we searched Google for: Attune Foods Erewhon

We find this website to be confusing. The large, bold color banner atop the home page says “Attune.” Yet the URL, which is completely different, begins www.usmillsinc.com/ as shown above. Moreover the browser tab reads: “Erewhon History.”

The page titled “Company History” states correctly that Erewhon was established in 1966 by two macrobiotic educators and was operated out of its initial storefront location on Boston’s Newbury Street.

The next paragraph states: “1966–Erewhon founders establish the first Charter of Quality Standards for Natural Products.” Note 1. We cannot imagine what this refers to.

Four paragraphs down we read: “1986–Erewhon acquires U.S. Mills. U.S. Mills is the new company name, and Erewhon is retained as a brand name.”

“2009 Attune Foods acquires Erewhon, Uncle Sam, New Morning and Skinner’s.”

For more see Feb. 2011 interview with Rob Hurlbut, CEO of Attune Foods.

Note: Talk with Bruce Macdonald, one of the early and most important principals at Erewhon. 2011. March 2. Bruce is not aware that Erewhon ever established a “Charter of Quality Standards for Natural Products.” If they ever did, it certainly was not in 1966, and certainly not before 1971. However Bruce is quite sure that Paul Hawken did something like that, but for Erewhon only, not long after he returned to the USA from Japan in Dec. 1969. Address: 535 Pacific Ave., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, California 94133. Phone: 1-800-641-4508.


• Summary: Shurtleff e-mailed Paul Hawken: “Could I ask you a few questions that I missed last time we talked about the early history of Erewhon?”

Hawken replied: “By email, yes!”

Shurtleff replied: “I have never done interviews by email and I think I’d rather not. I wanted to ask you about your time in San Francisco as an entrepreneur before you went to Boston and began work with Erewhon. “Also, how you got interested in macrobiotics in San Francisco and why you decided to leave that exciting city for Boston.

“So instead I will enclose part of an interview I did this week with Jean Allison, who was one of the early employees at Erewhon and who knew and worked with you in San Francisco–only the part that relates to San Francisco. “If you would like to comment on it in any way, I would be very grateful. Especially if you find any inaccuracies or disagree with any of it, or would like to add anything to it—which I will attribute to you.”

Paul Hawken replied: “A few comments. when bill and jean were living at the firehouse, i was living in north beach and attending sf state [san francisco state college].

“i was not there dealing drugs.

“i/we were not doing a drug scene. that is a stereotype. we were interested in culture, theater, music, performance arts, religion.

“it sounds like people were hanging around for drugs. nonsense. drugs were there of course. just as they are everywhere in current society all the way to the white house, except they call it alcohol. but you wouldn’t call the white house a drug scene, so please don’t fall for that stereotype of what was happening, at least as far as i was concerned.

“the firehouse could seat maybe a 100+ but in the other part of the firehouse it could hold another 150 people on the dance floor.

“we were hiring big brother and the warlocks for $50 a night. they weren’t the grateful dead quite yet.

“the alley was 69 harriet street. it was memorialized by tom wolfe in electric koolaid acid test. it was where ken kesey held the acid graduation.

“i learned about macrobiotics from a film maker, ben van meter, in 1966.

“jean should speak for herself. she says “we” this and that, and she should say i.

“everyone had a different experience with cleaning up their diet. she describes it in a rather cartoon way. bill lost
by Ohsawa given to him by Roger Hillyard who was also Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, couldn’t break. The best version of this story is in Test Graduation and the Dead had signed a contract they the same night that Ken Kesey was trying to do the Acid McKendrick—he was the money man. It was scheduled on

One of these was October 31, 1966 and called the “Dance

of Death” generally credited as being produced by Bob Fullerton and Ale Extrom.

“Ray Anderson and Elias Romero did light shows and film, we had actors, dancers and generally a crazy time. We had some of the first light shows in the city. We had to move out since the building was sold and was to be turned into a parking lot. The last event was called the Wreckers Ball. After moving out Paul Hawkins, Jean and I formed the Calliope Company. Our group also included Wally Gorell [see handbill for concert on 26 July 1966]. We had a warehouse South of Market [on Harriett St.] and Paul and I fitted it out and lived there as well as using it as a rehearsal space and a studio for the light shows. We produced several Rock Concert / Dances in the California Hall featuring the Dead and the Airplane [Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane]. One of these was October 31, 1966 and called the “Dance of Death” generally credited as being produced by Bob McKendrick—he was the money man. It was scheduled on the same night that Ken Kesey was trying to do the Acid Test Graduation and the Dead had signed a contract they couldn’t break. The best version of this story is in The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, by Tom Wolfe.

“Paul was introduced to macrobiotics through a book by Ohsawa given to him by Roger Hillyard who was also doing light shows. Paul and I were both interested in Eastern philosophy and environmental issues. We started to experiment with diet and had fun doing it. Paul and I sought out sources in SF for miso etc. and started to meet some people who had studied with Michio Kushi in Boston. Renee Greimore (later Tara), Paul Petrofsky (founder [with Hy Lerner] of Baldwin Hills Bakery) and Evan Root (the first Erewhon worker). We invited Herman Aihara down to give a talk to a group of outrageous hippies in the warehouse backed by a huge American flag. Years later Herman would comment how he was first to teach the ‘hippies.’ Paul went to the East Coast to install a light show in Washington, DC, visited Boston, met Michio and Aveline, and told me that Michio was the real deal.

“I was just finishing a show I directed but within a few months, Jean, Wally and I had moved to Boston. Roger came later. Paul, Jean, Wally, Roger and I all ended up in the Erewhon crew.”

Note: Bill now lives in Scotland and have spent about 15 years in the UK since 1970. He lived for a while in Portugal. He was born and raised in Santa Cruz, California.
Color photos show the front panel of (1) The original Attune Foods Erewhon Crispy Brown Rice Cereal. (2) The new front box design, which will be on store shelves by March 2011.

Attune Foods makes products for people who have digestive problems. Professionals in the field (gastro-intestinal doctors, registered dietitians, naturopaths, etc.) generally agree that the best way to address digestive issues is through dietary change. Even people at the American Gastro-Enterological Association, who deal with many severe digestive diseases (such as constipation, irregularity, IBS {Irritable Bowel Syndrome} and IBD {Inflammatory Bowel Disease}) have no standard prescription, but they generally prescribe dietary changes or the addition of probiotics to the diet. Erewhon Crispy Brown Rice Cereal approaches the problem in three ways: It (1) Adds fiber to the diet by adding brown rice. (2) Adds probiotics to make sure that the gut flora are in balance. (3) Avoids allergens by eliminating gluten and other allergens that may exist in conventional food channels. Uncle Sam cereal is really about high fiber; it is rolled wheat flake and flaxseed, which delivers over 10 grams of fiber per serving without any artificial ingredients. All the Erewhon cereals are organically grown.

Attune Foods prefers to do ethnographic research instead of focus groups. So company representatives meet with Erewhon consumers, spend time with them in their kitchens, look in their cupboards, find out who these people are—so that when they talk about the product and think about new Erewhon products, that they are completely consistent with the values of those consumers. Erewhon consumers are the “cultural creatives”—and have been for the past 50 years. Many people have said that once they started to use Erewhon cereal their digestive problems decreased. They have many testimonials saying that eating one of these products has had a major life-changing effect.

Americans get, on average, 17 grams of fiber per day in their diet and they should get closer to 30 grams. Fiber is the nutrient that is in shortest supply in the American diet relative to the Recommended Daily Allowance. Address: CEO and founder, Attune Foods, 535 Pacific Ave., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, California 94133. Phone: 415-486-2102.


Summary: This handbill (4¼ by 11 inches) is for a concert to be held on Thursday, July 28, 1966 at California Hall in San Francisco. Billed by the website as “Big Brother and the Holding Company,” it is being sold for $814. The handbill has green print on a yellow background. The
largest word is “Thursday and the next largest, just below it is “California Hall” (at Polk and Turk).

From left to right: (1) A circular logo (in engraving style) with a mythical animal (resembling an antelope) inside, biting its right rear ankle. The text around the perimeter: “The San Francisco Calliope Company’s Greatest Caper. Bilbo’s BirthDay Party.”


(3) San Francisco Calliope Company Logo. Their address is: 248 Sixth St.


A description of the handbill by the website states: “Concert promoters created handbill versions of many of their posters and used them as sidewalk handouts and dashboard fliers to promote upcoming shows. Many of the handbills are double-sided, with poster art on one side and a calendar of upcoming shows on the other. These handbills represent an important element of rock concert history because they were hands-on marketing tools that united promoter and patron.”

Note 1. California Hall (on Polk Street) was being used as a venue for rock music by 9 April 1966, when The Jefferson Airplane opened there (Source: Chronology of San Francisco Rock–1965-1969; http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/rock.html).

Note 2. E-mail from Wally Gorell. 2011. March 14–in response to the question: “Did you design this handbill?” “I’m embarrassed to say I did–terrible lettering.” Address: San Francisco, California.


• Summary: “I was a minor player in the Erewhon story, but I lived in Los Angeles (L.A.) and Boston and experienced a little of its life, especially towards the end.

““In September of 1967 I arrived in Boston, age 19, at 29 University Road, the Kushis’ first study house (aside from their own home). My then boyfriend was ill and wanted to try macrobiotics. We had been living in Fairfax, California, when a friend passing through during the summer left behind a copy of Zen Macrobiotics. When the doctors could find nothing wrong with him, but he was still sick, we went first to the Zen Macrobiotic Restaurant in L.A. on Hollywood Blvd. near Western, which was run by a very nice Japanese man and his family. I don’t remember their family name. It was there for many years and was visited by John Lennon, among others. When we went to Boston I thought we were going to some kind of clinic. I had no interest in macrobiotics myself, and continued to eat my usual diet, which was pretty bad at the time.

“At 29 University Road, we had a room on the third floor next to Matt and Richard Sandler, and in another room, Wally Gorrell. Also in the house were Nahum Stiskin, Bill and Rene Tara, Rebecca Dubawsky, John Palumbo, Bob White and his wife (a black and white couple, unusual for that time), John Claude Ducet, a French Canadian who made the benches and tables for the first Sanae restaurant at 272B Newbury St., Steve Helfner, and Mrs. Ninomiya and her son, who had a separate little apartment or room and did not eat with the rest of us. She made ‘happy coats’ a kind of short kimono to sell to whoever would buy them. There were several others there whose names I do not remember.

““Michio would often come over during the day to check on things, and on people (a few had health issues) and sometimes would give a lecture in the evening in the living room. The Kushis’ home at 216 Gardner Road was less than a mile away.

“At the beginning I didn’t know I was expected to eat the same food as the rest of the household until Steve Helfner asked me one day not to heat up the canned soup, containing meat, that I was going to eat, in the pots used for the rest of the cooking. I think I had a frosted cake in the fridge, too. I don’t know if everyone was being polite or just didn’t take the time to explain to me how things worked there. I was kind of clueless. Anyway, I wouldn’t eat most of the food served at dinner, for a good while, except the rice and beans, as everything looked so unfamiliar. Michio made numerous dietary recommendations for my friend, that I had to cook specially for about three months. After that period he was well again. We split up and I went to work at Sanae restaurant with Evan Root and Peggy Taylor early in 1968.

“My first impression of Michio, besides that he seemed very cordial, kind, humorous and good-natured, was that this man knows something about life. I didn’t know what though. A few lectures began to enlighten me. It was obvious that he had a different level of understanding I went to the Arlington St. church lectures also.

“At Sanae, I helped with prepping the vegetables and fruits during the day, along with Peggy, and waitedress in the evenings. Later Rosemary Traill, future sister-in-law of Richard Young, waitressed there also, as did others from time to time. Richard Young worked at a small flower shop just a few blocks away, and would drop by the restaurant during the day sometimes. He was a friend of Peggy and sisters Rosemary and Maureen Traill. He would later marry Maureen Traill after she and Bruce McDonald married and divorced. During the year I worked at Sanae, Marty Russell and then Billy Anton also worked there.

““Evan was a very good restaurant cook, a good boss, and was also very good with the customers. Responsible,
behind the blackboard, stretching its neck around to look at Franklin also. I remember a cat, perched on the mantelpiece Erewhon. He gave a lecture in the living room at 7511 during the summer I was there, perhaps for meetings about • 15. 11 p. Part II). Letter to William Shurtleff at Soyinfo Center, Feb. 402. Sharp, Carolyn Heidenry. 2011. Re: Erewhon, Michio Hinsdale, Massachusetts 01235. mark. She paid.” Continued Address: P.O. Box 125, amount of money ($75 I think) he would give her a passing try the examiner told her that if she paid him a certain test or exam (I’m not sure which) three times. After the third slow years. I arrived in May l970 at the 7511 Franklin St. Aveline was now living temporarily, to study cooking with his family. Eventually Richard Sandler took over Evan’s job. “I moved to the Kushis’ home at 216 Gardner Road, doing the housekeeping and handling minor bookkeeping. Among those who lived there during the year or so I was there were Judy Flohr, who later married Denny Waxman, Susan ___, who later married Duncan Sims and moved to Canada, Jim Ledbetter, who made some very strange food in the downstairs kitchen of the 3-story home which Aveline referred to as ‘dogfood,’ Anne Riegel, now the wife of Ron Kotzsch, Eric Utne, Peggy Winter and, of course, Michio and Aveline and their children. Shizuko Yamamoto visited once or twice. “After about a year I went out to Los Angeles, where Aveline was was now living temporarily, to study cooking with her. I intended to stay about six weeks, but ended up staying seven years. I arrived in May 1970 at the 7511 Franklin St. home that Aveline had rented. During this summer Jimmy and Susan Silver and their toddler Rachel lived there, as well as Bruce and Maureen McDonald and their baby daughter, I Diane Brewer and a few others. “Aveline would prepare lunches for the Erewhon crew every morning and deliver them to the retail store on Beverly Blvd. Diane Brewer and I would have to prepare and deliver special meals to a rather tyrannical old woman in a wheelchair who seemed permanently dissatisfied with everything. “Sometimes Aveline would ask one or more of us to accompany her to Little Tokyo, where she would take her youngest child to get treated by a Japanese doctor for a leg injury, the result of a fall on the stairs in Boston. Her other children remained in Boston with Michio. Once the police stopped us on the freeway because Aveline was driving too slowly. Years later, she said that she had failed her driving test or exam (I’m not sure which) three times. After the third try the examiner told her that if she paid him a certain amount of money ($75 I think) he would give her a passing mark. She paid.” Continued Address: P.O. Box 125, Hinsdale, Massachusetts 01235. 402. Sharp, Carolyn Heidenry. 2011. Re: Erewhon, Michio and Aveline, and the Boston macrobiotic scene (Continued, Part II). Letter to William Shurtleff at Soyinfo Center, Feb. 15. 11 p. • Summary: Continued: “Michio came out to visit once, during the summer I was there, perhaps for meetings about Erewhon. He gave a lecture in the living room at 7511 Franklin also. I remember a cat, perched on the mantelpiece behind the blackboard, stretching its neck around to look at Michio writing something on the board, and everyone laughed. Michio’s immediate response–‘Even cat wants to study, why not man?’ “Another memory from that summer–Aveline and I sitting in the back yard and she telling me ‘Michio always thinks (of) my happiness.’ “Another–scrubbing the new warehouse floor, catty corner from the retail store, on my hands and knees. My first experience working for Erewhon. “Around September I think, Aveline rented a huge mansion up the street at 7357 Franklin Ave. and we all moved in. Jimmy and Susan Silver, Bruce and Maureen McDonald, Tom DeSilva and his two little boys Joe and Patrick, and many others. The house had once been owned by film star Ruby Keeler, and her name was still there, engraved on the metal mailbox. Ozzie and Harriet lived across the street. Gloria Swanson called once to speak to Aveline and was furious with me because I didn’t know where Aveline was. She’d gone out. “Hollywood was always more or less present in this Hollywood house. The landlady had been in show business in earlier days in some way and was always willing to let the various film companies shoot films in the front yard or in the house (they paid well I believe). Several were shot during the couple of years I was there. This was always happening in L.A. and you would often see a film shoot taking place on this or that street as you drove by. “Aveline returned to Boston late that autumn, I think, and left me in charge of the house. I wasn’t a particularly good cook, by any means, but tried my best, and others cooked also. “Many people stayed at that house for long or short periods of time. At one time there were nearly 60 people, staying in every nook and cranny, the attic, the basement, over the garage, in the cleaned-out tool shed, everywhere. I occupied a large closet for a while. It was all rather hippieish, without the drugs, though there might have been one now and then who took drugs, but certainly not openly that I ever knew about. Many had taken drugs in the past. “Ron and Iona Teeguarden were there, during which time I think Iona wrote a lovely cookbook. John Fountain was a frequent dinner guest. John Deming was there briefly, and there was much interest in macrobiotics and always many people. Jacques and Yvette de Langre [DeLangre] lived a few blocks away, and held ‘Soba Night’ on Tuesdays. Yvette was a very good cook, and Jacques was a happy, upbeat and friendly personality in the community. He had a photography studio close by on Sunset Blvd., a few blocks away from his home, and once took a number of photos of the Franklin St. house and people there. Mrs. Durkin, the landlady, dropped by from time to time to check on things, a little nervous I think about so many people living there—young, hippie types. She was a kind woman, but made me ask a 16 year old girl to leave the house,
worried about having an underage person living there. And also a nice black fellow because she thought he would draw too much attention from the wealthy neighbors. Michio came out from time to time and gave lectures in the very large library, and consultations and sometimes a cooking class. The lectures were very well attended. During one lecture, he levitated (I wouldn’t believe this until I saw it with my own eyes). This was the only time I ever heard him ask the audience to be very quiet as he had to ‘concentrate.’ Usually there were babies making noises in the back of the room or children playing in the hall outside the sliding doors. Michio told the audience that he had been levitating recently to cure the arrogance of some of the teachers, presumably in Boston as L.A. didn’t really have any. Later on, he said he stopped levitating because people were giving it too much attention, over his dietary teachings.

“After a couple of years I left the house in the hands of Roy and Mariko Stevens, and went to work as a secretary for Erewhon in the warehouse in Culver City.

“I think Jim Gronemeyer was vice president when I got there around late 1972 or early 1973, not sure when. I remember him coming in wearing his tennis clothes and carrying his tennis racket, quite late in the morning. Not sure if he took his responsibilities seriously. Byron Jennings took over his job at some point. I don’t know if Gronemeyer left of his own accord, or was fired. Byron was very intense, very yang, but a good fellow, strong, hard-working and with a good sense of humor. He cared about the job and the company. Very brusque and took no b.s. from anybody. But I liked and respected him. He wasn’t a slacker.

“Loren Spector was there also, in upper management. He had previously run one of the Kushis’ study houses in Boston. He was also intense, also hard-working, and also seemed to care very much about the job and the company. He and Byron seemed to work well together and both seemed together, intelligent and focused.

“I typed letters and answered the phone, and later took orders, so I have no idea what the financial condition of the company was, or the state of operations. But all seemed well. Jeff Flasher ran the warehouse in the back. He was very popular, smart and worked well with people.

“It was kind of a hippie operation, except for Eddie ____, the accountant, another good guy, who was also very focused and worked hard.

“I remember Paul Hawken came out from Boston, for meetings I suppose, and to have a look at things, and arrived at the warehouse at 6 a.m. before anyone was there, and found the front door unlocked. Someone had forgotten to lock it. I’m not sure, but I had the feeling that relations between Erewhon Boston and Erewhon L.A. were not as cordial as they might have been. At that time anyway. But as I said, I don’t really know much about what went on.

“Once, as I left the building at the end of the day, I walked into the middle of a film shoot taking place on the street. I had no idea that anyone was filming the front of the warehouse, and inadvertently disrupted the filming.”

Continued. Address: P.O. Box 125, Hinsdale, Massachusetts 01235.


• Summary: Continued: “After a year I left Erewhon L.A., and one day Tom De Silva suggested that I open a macro restaurant. So I did. I found some backers and bought a little hole in the wall restaurant at 525½ Fairfax Avenue, a few blocks from Erewhon. It was only about 25 seats. The menu was very basic, as was the decor (rice, beans, veggies, soups, salad, desserts, tempura, stirfries) but there was no lack of customers. People were hungry for natural foods. Being L.A. we were also visited by a number of celebrities and actors, including John Lennon and Governor Jerry Brown who visited a half dozen times at least, and once conducted an interview there during dinner.

“Three years later I sold the restaurant to a mother and daughter team and moved back to Boston. There I lived and worked at 62 Buckminster Road, which was now the location of the Kushis’ home. I arrived there in September 1977. Laura Knudson, who later married New Hampshire teacher Blake Gould, and I shared the office work and the cooking. Olivia Oredson was also there.

“Aveline had been searching and searching for a location in which to open the Kushi Institute. Finally she found a third floor space (three rooms) in a warehouse at 17 Station St., less than a mile from their home. Michio and Aveline asked Olivia and me to manage it, using a $20,000 loan from Sandy Pukel. The opening ceremonies took place on September 25th (I think) 1978. As there was no cooking class room yet, Aveline cooked all the delicacies for the opening at Buckminster Road (which was quite a job) and then had them all transported down to Station St. and carried up the stairs (there was no elevator) to the third floor. It was a very happy day for Michio and Aveline.

“A year later, around August or September of 1979, Michio asked me to come to a meeting at Buckminster Road. Michio had decided to start a ‘Human Relations Board’ (HRB) at the Erewhon warehouse in Cambridge to help the situation there. I believe there were union rumblings [at Erewhon] at the time, though I don’t remember how far along things were.

“The HRB was to be composed of Marty Roth, Lewis Legon, and me. We three and Michio were seated on the floor, in front of the couch in the living room, around a coffee table (Michio always preferred sitting Japanese style) and Michio went over the two or three pages outlining the HRB’s responsibilities. So, in the course of one weekend, I went from working at the Kushi Institute in which I’d been
totally absorbed, to walking into a situation I knew nothing about. I’d never worked at Erewhon in Boston, and my job at the L.A. warehouse had been secretarial.

“I don’t really know why he wanted me included in this Human Relations Board. I think he was pleased with the way the Kushi Institute was going at the time. (I was the administrative director and Olivia Oredson was the educational director, but those were big titles for what was still a two-bit operation). For the first couple of weeks at Erewhon I had to go to the Kushi Institute each evening after working all day at Erewhon, to explain my job to my replacement, Steve Gagne.

“In this new job, I was unsure at first, uncertain where to begin, because I had no knowledge of the situation. But it didn’t take too long to get the general picture. My memories of the time I spent in the HRB are as follows:

“There was heavy tension between Jeff Flasher, who was now president of Erewhon, and Marty Roth. I do not know the reason for it, but it was palpable on Jeff’s side. I don’t think Jeff supported the HRB. He wasn’t at the meeting at Buckminster Road, or chose not to attend, though presumably Michio had informed him beforehand.

“Lewis, Marty and I worked well together, and might have been able to make a significant improvement in the company had we had Jeff’s support. But I think he felt very threatened by the HRB, particularly by Marty.

“Instead of handling what we were supposed to handle, Jeff had Marty and I handle union negotiations, along with Evan Root, who was then vice president.

“Before the union negotiations began, Evan seemed a little unsure of his position, and didn’t seem to have a niche, or much to do. At some point he said he was staying for the money. He added a solid feeling to the company, but his talents were not utilized, I think, until union negotiations began.

“The company wasn’t unified. There was an ‘us and them’ feeling between the truckers and the production floor employees, on the one hand, and the managers and ‘suits’ on the second floor. At least there was this feeling on the part of the former. So it was a perfect environment for the union organizers to take hold, and as I found out, these were not the noble union organizers one thinks of as saving the day for the down-trodden employees. They were out for blood.

“I remember being astonished by the woman from the local union who was coaching and advising the employees during our evening meetings. She seemed to be extremely hostile to put it mildly. Excitable, ready for a fight. The employees totally distrusted us, and were very into accusing. I think much of this was fostered by the union organizers. Many of the employees were victims in a way, somewhat brain-washed by the union organizers.

“Walking past the Arlington St. Church one weekend, someone outside handed me a flyer and encouraged me to come in and listen to Caesar Chavez speak. I thought well of him at the time from the little I knew about him. However, the incredibly vile things he said during that speech shocked me. I never respected him after that. Had there been a tv crew or microphone there, I think the speech would have been completely different. He may not have realized that he wasn’t speaking only to hard core union sympathizers, but also to members of the general public.

“That experience and the experience of being in on the union negotiations at Erewhon, completely changed my formerly rather benign and supportive views about unions and union organizers. Not very honorable people from the little I saw.” (Continued). Address: P.O. Box 125, Hinsdale, Massachusetts 01235.


• Summary: Continued: “I still have my notes, from the three or four months I worked at the Erewhon warehouse in Cambridge in 1979, for a meeting with Michio. Excerpts: ‘Both Lewis and Marty are paranoid about Jeff Flasher, in part justifiable, due to the emotional state and suppressed tension of Jeff, and a few incidents that happened.’ (Can no longer recall what those were). ‘Jeff put up a brick wall against the HRB, though he likes me personally I think, and I think he also likes Lewis, so the administration and the HRB are divided. Can’t work under this. Must be unified, or at least not hostile. But Jeff feels threatened. Hands of HRB are tied. Jeff gave Marty and me union negotiations to deal with, along with Evan.’”

“‘The HRB has had two different proposals for its purpose, one from you (meaning MK) and one from Jeff. The result is confusion, an uncomfortable situation and stagnation.’”

“‘Erewhon needs yang–clear, just policies, good systems and accountability to a yang source. Erewhon’s systems and structures not orderly. The warehouse is not clean. The company needs to follow American-style business logic to succeed. Some of the employees need someone firm to tell them when they’re really out of line.’”

“‘Besides firm authority, they also need some understanding. The employees are hungry for support (many of them) and encouragement. Problems: no one seemed to listen to them, or cared when they listened, prior to union negotiations. No one communicated the company’s side when suggestions were turned down. There seems to be no one (in authority) who cares about them, everyone is busy with other things. Need a channel for their ideas and some practical utilization of their ideas, and communication about why, when not used.’ (I remember thinking that upper management, in general, was not heartless, just so very
focused on the future that they didn’t give enough attention to the present, to the employees).

“Jeff now tightening very much on the HRB and a few of the managers, but mostly the HRB. No one knows or understands what we are doing. We don’t know our limits and freedoms.’ Also, ‘Not enough fellowship. Time is crowded. Most of my time is spent keeping the peace between HRB and Jeff, union correspondence and communication.’

‘The warehouse also needs yin, improvements to the dining room, better cafeteria food, little parties, socializing, etc.’ I suggested that Michio think about all of this, and then discuss it with us before he left for Europe, for a seminar tour.

‘Key points
1. Straighten out Jeff and Marty’s relationship.
2. Straighten out Jeff and HRB’s relationship.
3. Clarify in Jeff’s presence our purpose and function.
4. Straighten out where there is overlap, and how to handle.’

“The only way the situation would have been fixable, in my opinion, would have been if Jeff had used the talent that was already on board in the following way. Of course, hindsight is 20/20 they say.

“If Marty Roth had been made operations manager, the company would have undergone a number of much-needed improvements. Marty was very smart, capable, somewhat experience (I believe he learned a lot about business management from his father), had good sense and good suggestions, and management ability. He was capable of making tough decisions, if necessary. But he was relatively powerless in the position he was in, given Jeff’s attitude and the change in the purpose of the HRB.

“If Lewis Legon had been empowered to deal with all employee issues, he would have gone to bat for them, but in a way fair to the company, as he could see both sides. This would have helped morale, and taken some of the wind out of the sails of the union organizers. Lewis was capable, smart, and very good natured. He was a great asset to the company in my opinion, and Marty could have been as well.

“While Evan was less willing to consider the employees side as much, he was a good company man. ‘Into protecting the interests of the company. Sees certain sides no one else thinks of. Good at certain administrative duties, like security, benefits, complicated work dealing with outsiders. Very good at representing the company in matters other than financial, though (at that time) lacking in expressing interest or concern for people’s needs.’ He could have continued to take some of the load off Jeff’s shoulders.

“In addition to those three, who were already working at Erewhon, I believe the company need a different person in the position of comptroller, for a number of reasons.

“With those four players, the major problems could have been turned into manageable challenges. “Michio and Aveline were not at Erewhon much, at least not during those few months I worked at the warehouse, except for a couple of times. I remember both of them attending a meeting we had with one of the lawyers who was advising us on some aspect of the union negotiations. The lawyer had been speaking at length when suddenly Michio began to snore softly. He had fallen asleep, sitting up perfectly straight (eyes closed) on a couch between Aveline and me. Aveline bent forward, looked over at me with a comical expression, repressing a laugh. Evan looked over at Michio and said ‘let him sleep’ and turned his attention back to the lawyer. Aveline dug her elbow into Michio’s side. I wondered what the lawyer thought.

“The lawyers were expensive, one older male, and one younger female. Evan said Erewhon was probably paying for her training (through this experience of helping to handle Erewhon’s union negotiations). But then that was true of many of Erewhon’s employees and managers. Eventually the negotiations went to federal mediation. The mediator was a little surprised, I think, at the company’s greenness and lack of sophistication. Anyway, I left after three or four months feeling that the situation wasn’t fixable, or at least that there was no way I could help to make it better under the current circumstances.” Continued. Address: P.O. Box 125, Hinsdale, Massachusetts 01235.


• Summary: Continued: “I think Erewhon failed for a variety of reasons, not just one thing, but the two most important reasons were that: (1) There was too much youth in management. There were no older, riper, mature heads to steady things. (2) There was almost no one in management who had business skills and training, certainly not at the level and of the type that Erewhon needed at that stage of its growth.

“There was an absence of older, experienced and qualified people managing all of Michio and Aveline’s enterprises and organizations. They were mostly always young and unqualified for the positions they held (including me and including, sometimes, Michio and Aveline’s children). It was the ‘Peter Principle’ [‘In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence.’ “Members are promoted so long as they work competently. Sooner or later they are promoted to a position at which they are no longer competent’]. If you did well in one thing (and sometimes a person was selected even without that slim qualification) you were given more to handle, often much more, often beyond your capabilities.

“So almost everyone was out of their depth, in all of their enterprises. Most everyone was learning on the job, finding their way, with only a very few exceptions, whether
in L.A. or Boston. This was also true of Michio and Aveline, but they were not usually involved in the day-to-day management of their businesses. (And they had the additional difficulty of dealing with a different culture, ways of doing things, different language, etc.) They also had so many enterprises going at the same time, which resulted in them giving only a little attention to each, in between travelling and teaching, both abroad and at home.

“Michio and Aveline were inexperienced and unfamiliar with what they were dealing with at Erewhon, and weren’t there often anyway, and wouldn’t have always known what to do if they were. Michio’s success at Takashimaya in NYC in earlier days didn’t translate into success at Erewhon.

“The seventies and eighties were a time when things were developing fast. There was so much interest in macrobiotics or, at least, in natural foods. I don’t think Michio and Aveline, or anyone else, thought it would diminish. Many problems were seen just as difficulties on the way up the mountain to further development and success. Michio and Aveline both had an enormous capacity to remain unperturbed by calamity, a least until it was too late.

“Michio’s lawyer, Morris Kirsner, had a strong influence on Michio and Aveline. He was a very good and trustworthy man, and very protective of the Kushis, but I think his outlook and advice was often too protective, too strict and unyielding, and thus at odds with the more laid back and informal approach of many of the Kushi managers and employees, and even of Michio and Aveline themselves, who were almost always casual and informal. So the two sides didn’t jive, they were both rather extreme, and there wasn’t a lot of middle ground.

“Other reasons include:

“The fact that so much money was lost to the law firm to handle the union negotiations. In effect, the union organizers helped to lose all of the jobs of the people they were supposedly trying to help, because the company went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy and was sold. But the union may not have gained a foothold, had management listened and cared more.

“The fact that so much money was lost to upper level management and other employees who, in my opinion, were taking too high salaries. I doubt if most of them were able to command such salaries at wherever they worked after they left Erewhon. Though some were talented, not all were quite the hotshots some thought they were. Somebody should have put a cap on the salaries. I do not believe Michio and Aveline knew, and from whom they would have selected a president, had the experience or training to handle the job. And most anyone would have had some
successes, and also made some mistakes. However, if Tom DeSilva or Evan Root had been president of Erewhon, I don’t think either of them would have tolerated too-high salaries, too-low profit margins, or hired Tom Williams as comptroller. Or taken out $10,000 loans from the company.

“After the collapse of Erewhon, Michio once said that if ever he began a food company again, he would make it a very simple operation, selling grains, beans, sea vegetables, Condiments, miso, soy sauce, noodles, etc. of very good quality, rather than the hundreds of items (thousands I think) that Erewhon carried before it died.

“So, about 12 years later (in about 1994), I was very disappointed and puzzled when he began KFC–Kushi Food Corp. And not sorry when it folded. Michio often had a short memory.

Note: The company was originally named “Kushi Macrobio Corporation” (KMC). It was listed on Nasdaq as KMAC as early as 7 Nov. 1995 and as late as 23 Aug. 1996. But by Feb. 1996 it had been renamed (probably for wider appeal) to “Kushi Natural Foods Corporation.” On 26 Sept. 1996 its merger with American Phoenix Group, Inc. was completed.

“When I met the CEO that Michio and Fred Sternau selected to run the company, I was stunned. I mentioned my misgivings firmly to Michio and Fred, separately, when I next saw them. They both seemed strangely casual and not too concerned about it, and didn’t seem to realize the huge impact this person would have on the company.

“One final note: In all the years I worked for Michio and Aveline and in all the time I lived at their home, I never heard either of them say one word that could be construed as anti-semitic. In fact, there were so many Jewish people working for them in their various enterprises and organizations, that I remember the Kushis being criticized for having too many Jewish people running things. Michio’s secretary for several years, Donna Cowan, was also Jewish. Michio’s lawyer for several decades, Morris Kirsner, was Jewish. And many students and employees were Jewish or half Jewish. Michio seemed too evolved to carry around prejudice of any kind. He was, and is, a great friend of humanity. All humanity.” Address: P.O. Box 125, Hinsdale, Massachusetts 01235.


• Summary: “This is my recollection, not perfect, I’m sure.

“In August of 1967, there was an understanding between Paul Hawken, the Kushis, and Evan Root that Paul would take over the management of Erewhon from Evan Root. However, Paul needed to return to San Francisco to wind up his affairs there, pack and return. This would take about a month or perhaps a bit more.

“Paul and Evan took this trip to SF together via ‘drive-away’ car, stopping at various macrobiotic friendly stops along the way. Evan gave ‘lectures’ and cooking classes, and Paul helped out as well as continued to soak up everything he could as preparation for his next step.

“Paul, Bill Tara, Rene, and, I think Jean, lived in a warehouse in San Francisco which they had converted to living quarters. It was quite unique. I gave a MB [macrobiotic] class there which about 30 people attended, Jean and Ty Smith among them.

“The whole trip back and forth took a month or more, so we returned to Boston in late September, 1967. During our absence, Martin Russell, I think, was the main store keeper holding the place for Paul’s return.

“During the next several years, several people from that SF warehouse scene started arriving in Boston, Bill Tara and his then girlfriend (soon to be wife) Rene, Jean, Ty, in particular.

“In my opinion, and I could be wrong, Jean probably signed on to Erewhon one year later than she recalls. The reason I think this is that the first time I met her was in SF in Sept. of 1967. If she arrived in Boston, as stated in #3, in the early summer of 1967, she would have had to return to SF for me to initially meet her there. I suppose that is possible, though she would have had to leave her employment at Harvard to do so. If, however. she arrived in the early summer of 1968 and started at Erewhon in September of that year, then it all makes sense.” Address: Ashland, Massachusetts.


• Summary: Jimmy and his wife, Susan, arrive in Boston in December 1970. “The Erewhon store was first in a little basement space further down Newbury Street [at 303-B Newbury] from Massachusetts Ave. and on the opposite side of the street from the bigger store [at 342 Newbury St.] that succeeded it (the original space became Tao Books and then Redwing Books).

Once the new store was built, as I recall Jim Gronemeyer was one of the first managers and was succeeded by Eric Utne. I was sent over from the warehouse to keep an eye on Eric for a while, as he was sort of an unknown quantity who was probably chosen by Michio Kushi for the job, for some unknown reason. At least that is my hazy recollection.

“Roger Hillyard and Ben Van Meter’s company [in San Francisco] was called the North American Ibis Alchemical Company [NAIAC] and they appear on many dance posters from that era. Roger then became president of a synthesizer company for a while.

“The North American Ibis Alchemical Company put on light shows and provided the ‘atmosphere’ at many, many of
the rock concerts of that era. If you check out the posters for the Fillmore, Avalon and other venues, down at the bottom or somewhere in the body, you will find NAIAC on many of them. I would venture to say that they were THE light show provider of that time.”


• Summary: “KMC are the initials of the company that was formed in 1994. The full name was Kushi Macrobiotic Corporation, headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut.

“An associate of my father’s, Fred Sternau, approached my father about starting a publicly traded ‘Macrobiotic’ food manufacturing company. Fred Sternau, through his connections, raised over $2 million to start this venture, which was named, Kushi Macrobiotic Corporation.”

“Basically my father wanted to re-create Erewhon, under the family name ‘Kushi.’ My feeling is that the company was ill conceived and the corporate players had no vision other than to make money. The company basically folded within two years after spending all the venture capital.

“Once it was seen that the company was not going to make any money since the product line was ill conceived and there was no demand for these ‘value added’ products, the CEO resigned with a hefty severance pay of roughly $200,000 to $300,000.00–I don’t recall exactly.

“Apparently there is still ‘value’ in having a NASDAQ listed ‘shell.’ Therefore the KMAC shell was split and a company, called American Phoenix, bought 1/2 of the ‘shell’ thereby potentially retaining value for the share holders. American Phoenix was actually based in Australia and they were involved in some products relating to yachts or sailboats.

“The other half of the KMAC shell was renamed Kushi Food Corporation with the intention that the Macrobiotic Food venture would be resurrected, or, it could be used to lure a private ‘Macro’ biased food company into a public ‘shell.’ As far as I know, nothing ever came of the Kushi Food Corporation shell.

“The CEO of Kushi Macrobiotic Corporation, Robert Morrow, came with an impressive resume, and, as it turned out was either fiction or elaboration of the positions he had held in prior companies. He had no knowledge of the natural food industry, and, the first time he stepped foot in my parents home, stated, ‘Don’t you dare ever offer me any of this Macrobiotic Food, I refuse to ever touch any of it!” This was prior to him even being hired. In spite of this remark, my father, who was chairman of the board, promptly hired him without checking any of his background.” Address: Traveling by truck.


• Summary: The six Coates children were, in order of birth: (1) Sarah. (2) Judith (“Judy”). (3) Daniel. (4) Marion (“Ronnie”). (5) Dora. (6) Nancy.

Only three studied macrobiotics in Boston: Judy arrived first, in about 1968, then Dora, and finally Ronnie, who went there to be with Judy when Ronnie had her baby in July 1969. However Sarah and Daniel worked at the family business, Laurelbrook Foods, in Bel Air, Maryland.

How did Judy get involved with macrobiotics? She graduated from college in 1966 and went to Baltimore. Carl Sauter and Paul Petrofsky came to visit Baltimore, bringing a 50-lb bag of brown rice. Paul had sent Judy the book You Are All Sanpaku, which was her first introduction to macrobiotics. They began eating this brown rice; Carl was eating it raw, right out of the bag–he never did anything halfway. Then Judy moved to New York City, where she lived for 12-18 months. Then she moved to Boston in late 1968 or early 1969. Judy first worked for Erewhon at the
303-B Newbury St.—“that little bitty place downstairs.” Evan Root was also working there, and probably Paul Hawken. Judy lived in the Kushi’s house on Boylston Street; Jean Allison was also there. Also in Boston at the time were Rosemary Traill and her sister, Maureen Traill who married Bruce Macdonald, Bill Garrison, and Jim Docker.


• Summary: “I remember Tom Williams. He was with Erewhon after the move from Farnsworth to 3 East Street. He was the Comptroller. The Comptroller position at Erewhon was the first of the ‘hired gun’ positions. That is to say a professional business person was hired to fill that role. Fairly quickly after the move more positions were filled by professionals with experience, such as trucking manager, operations manager, purchasing manager. Even though many personnel were not ‘macrobiotic’ almost all were into whole foods or were in some way ‘counter-cultural’ so to speak. There was a friendly relationship with the professional hires while, at the same time, a difference, sort of like a non-native aura about them.

“At some point Tom was given a vice-president title, and after Jeff Flasher left, he was made president to oversee the chapter 11 proceedings. I did a stint at the 3 East Street warehouse & production facility (with the honorary title of VP) from around the start of the new facility until the summer of ’81 before the chapter 11 filing. What the ins and outs were after I left, I am fairly ignorant.” Perhaps Patricia Smith or Jeff Flasher might know. Address: Ashland, Massachusetts.


• Summary: “My sister and brothers are:
  “Haruo or Larry, Lawrence Haruo Kushi, December 10, 1956.
  “Phiya, Phillip Yoshio Kushi, October 29, 1959.

  “Phiya is a nickname that I came up with when we were children and the name stuck. My father picked the western names, which were used as the first name and my mother picked the middle Japanese names, with the exception of our youngest brother Hisao. When Hisao was born, my grandparents on my father’s side were living with us. My mother picked the name Hisao, which was decided to be the first name and my grandmother picked the name Tenshin to be used as the middle name.

  “The four older children were born in New York City and Hisao, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. All of us kids were born in a hospital. “My sister spelled her name ‘Lilly’ for most of her life. However, in her later years, perhaps the last five years of her life, definitely after the book titled Aveline was printed, she began spelling her name ‘Lily.’ She never made a big deal about it and never corrected anyone if someone were to spell her name ‘Lilly.’ However, she herself would always spell her name ‘Lily.”

Norio (who has long loved cars) writes (3 March 2011, in reply to a question): “I initially started driving a truck in 1981. I also drove for Greyhound and helped to start a bus company, Premier Coach of Vermont for the owner, Ron Charlebois. I went back to driving a truck back in 2002 and have been doing so since then, other than a short period when my father got sick and went into the hospital. I pretty much live in the truck full time, getting home to Asheville, North Carolina, about once a month. I left Asheville on Monday and am currently in Oxnard, California, having made a delivery here this afternoon.”

A photo shows Norio, holding a guitar, with truck in background. Address: Traveling by truck.


• Summary: The split between the Kushis and the Aiharas began in 1961 when Herman and Cornellia, following Ohsawa’s advice, moved to Chico, California, with the group (including Bob Kennedy) that started Chico-San, Inc. in early 1972; Michio and Aveline decided to stay on the East Coast. All four (Michio and Herman, Aveline and Cornellia) were best buddies up until 1961. After than, there was a certain coolness. Bruce remembers, for examples, that when he and others were out in California, they never
invited Herman (a sensei) down to lectures or other events. That was unusual.

But Bruce knows much more about the business side of things. “Essentially Bob Kennedy was irate with us because we were underpricing Bob Kennedy, in part because we did not have to go through a distributor and in part because we were willing to sell larger quantities at a time–such as 50- or 100-lb bags. Koda brown rice came in 100 lb bags; Lundberg brown rice came in 50 lb bags. The bags were a generic brown multi-wall paper bag. “I think it said ‘Premium Short-Grain Brown Rice’ on each bag.

In Los Angeles, Bruce first saw short-grain brown rice grown by Lundberg [Note: It was probably harvested in the fall of 1970]. It was described in the Erewhon catalog as “unsprayed.” It was not listed in catalogs as “organic” because Erewhon was afraid of a lawsuit from Chico-San. “Essentially everybody knew that it was the same rice that Chico-San was selling [i.e., organically grown]. How did they know? They just kind of knew. The word got out. At Erewhon, Los Angeles, we had to move a lot. The rice, in bags was piled 4-5 bags high on the floor of their little warehouse across the street from the retail store. Erewhon West hadn’t yet started their warehouse in Culver City, which they moved into in the summer of 1970. So Bruce probably saw this rice in L.A. in early 1970. Bruce has always understood that the Lundbergs had done OK with their organic brown rice in the first year they grew it, but they had gotten trouble in the 2nd year. Bruce suggests that Shurtleff contact Homer or Harlan Lundberg to try to resolve this conflict of dates–and to try to see the actual contract.

In Japan, as Bruce understands it, the traditional practice was to sell rice at little or no markup so that everyone could afford to eat. “I always loved that idea. That’s one reason why Erewhon’s unsprayed rice wholesaled for $11.00 per 100 lb. bag. We did not take a full markup on that.” Address: Natural Import Co., Asheville, North Carolina. Phone: 802-869-2010.

414. Shurtleff, William. 2011. The contribution of Erewhon to the natural foods industry in America (Overview). SoyaScan Notes. Compiled by William Shurtleff of Soyinfo Center. • Summary: Erewhon Trading Company was the key pioneering company in the U.S. natural foods industry. It played a major role in creating this new industry and for many years was the leader in new ideas, product development, and distribution. Even though Michio Kushi started Erewhon, Paul Hawken was the company’s heart and soul, and the main visionary; If Michio had built Erewhon according to his vision, it would have ended up much more Japanese. Paul was the pioneer in conceiving the early structure of the natural foods industry. Most of the natural food stores were based on the country store motif of 342 Newbury St., and many of the early natural foods distributors were built on the same model as Erewhon with much the same product line.

Paul focused on developing organically grown foods, finding and training farmers to grow such foods, and making each a commercial reality for Erewhon. Address: Director, Soyfoods Center, Lafayette, California 94549. Phone: 510-283-2991.


Erewhon–Los Angeles: 1969 Sept.–Bill Tara (with support from Aveline Kushi) opens a macrobiotic natural food store named Erewhon–Los Angeles at 8001 Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles. 1969 Sept.–The company starts importing natural foods from Japan, with shipments arranged by Paul Hawken. That same month, with Bill Tara driving a pickup truck up and down the Pacific Coast, the company starts distributing natural foods to about 10 retail stores.

Westbrae: 1970 May–Ten partners (including Bob Gerner, none of whom had any money) open the Natural Food Works on Olive Drive in Sacramento, California. In July 1970 Bob Gerner starts distributing natural foods to various natural food retail stores in Berkeley, California. Originally his distribution company had no name. In Aug. 1970 Gerner, with his sister, Margaret, and his brother-in-law, Bob Ortiz, founded a new natural foods company named Westbrae Natural Foods at 1336 Gilman St. in Berkeley. The store opened on 2 Feb. 1971 and the distribution company, which was also named Westbrae Natural Foods, continued its operation out of the store.


Eden Organic Foods: 1969 Nov. 4–Starts a natural foods store in Ann Arbor, Michigan, managed by Bill
Bolduc. 1971 June–Starts to wholesale natural foods out of the back of its retail store at 211 South State Street. 1971 Aug.–Eden Foods starts to distribute its wholesale bulk products, especially in the Detroit area. The company starts to bring in small trailer loads of staples from Arrowhead Mills in Texas. Bill Bolduc and Tim Redmond now run the company.

Laurelbrook: 1971 Aug.–23–Laurelbrook Foods begins as a macrobiotic natural foods wholesale distributor in Forest Hill, Maryland (about 25 miles northeast of Baltimore). The company never moved from its original location, but they kept a post office box (P.O. Box 47) in nearby Bel Air. The company was founded by Rod and Margy Coates.


*Summary:* 1st century B.C.–Soybean chiang is first mentioned in China in the *Shih chi* [Historical records] by Ssu-ma Ch’ien, and in the *Chi chiu p’ien* [Primer on addressing matters], by Shih Yu.

535 A.D.–The *Ch’i min yao shu* in China gives the first detailed descriptions of making soybean chiang–and other soyfoods.

701–Soybean hishio, miso, and soy nuggets start to be made in Japan by the *Hishio Tsukasa*, a government bureau. References to these seasonings are found in documents published between 730 and 748.

901-08–The modern word for *miso* first appears in Japan in the *Sandaif Jitsuroku*.

927–The *Engi Shiki* gives the first details about the production of soybean hishio-miso in Japan.

1597–Miso is first mentioned by a Westerner, the Florentine Francesco Carletti; he calls it *miso*.

1712–Englebert Kaempfer, a German who lived in Japan, is the first European to give detailed descriptions of how miso and shoyu are made in Japan. Also mentions koji.

1727–Miso is first mentioned in an English-language publications, *The History of Japan*, by E. Kaempfer. He spells it “Midsu, a mealy Pap, which they dress their Victuals withal, as we do butter.”

1779–The word “miso” (“that is used as butter”) first appears in an English-language publication, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 1847–The word “miso” first appears in print in the United States, in a letter from T.W.H. of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to the *Farmers’ Cabinet and Herd Book*.

1908–Miso is first made commercially in the continental United States by the Fujimoto Co. of San Francisco, California. Brand name: Kanemasa Miso.

1921–The term “bean paste” is first used to refer to miso by J.L. North of England in the *Illustrated London News*.

1929–Amano Brothers, Canada’s first commercial miso maker, starts in Vancouver, British Columbia. Founder: Mr. Teiichi Amano. 1960–Dr. C.W. Hesselstine and K. Shibasaki, of the Northern Regional Research Laboratory in Peoria, Illinois, publish the first of many important scientific articles on miso.

1963–Michio and Aveline Kushi, teachers of macrobiotics in Boston, start to teach Americans about miso.

1966 April–Aveline Kushi (with Evan Root) starts Erewhon, a pioneering retailer in Boston, that soon starts selling miso.

1968–Erewhon expands to become an importer and distributor of natural and macrobiotic food. Their first two misos, Mugi Miso and Hacho Miso, are imported from Japan.


1976 Sept.–*The Book of Miso*, by Shurtleff and Aoyagi, is published by Autumn Press of Hayama, Japan. This is the first book about miso in the Western world.

1978 Oct.–The Ohio Miso Co., the first Caucasian-run miso company in the Western world, is founded by Thom Leonard and Richard Kluding. They begin miso production on 13 March 1979.

1978 Nov.–Joel Dee of Edward & Sons (New Jersey) launches Natural Instant Miso Cup, an instant miso soup made with freeze-dried miso from Japan.

1978 Dec.–Miyako Oriental Foods of Los Angeles introduces Cold Mountain Firm Granular Rice Koji, the first koji sold commercially in the USA. In 1979 they start selling Cold Mountain Miso, the first miso with an American-style brand.
1979 Oct.–John and Jan Belleme arrive in Japan to study traditional miso–and koji-making with the Onozaki family in Yaita, Japan. They are the first Caucasians to do this, and then to return to the West to start making miso commercially. From 1981 on they write many superb articles about miso, published in America.

1979 April–Shin-Mei-Do Miso is founded by Lulu and Yasuo Yoshihara in British Columbia, Canada.

1981 April–John Troy of Elf Works, Ltd. in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, launches Hot Stuff, an early and very successful American miso product. He first learned about miso from Joel Dee.

1981 Aug.–John and Jan Belleme begin full-time, large-scale production of miso and koji at Erewhon Miso Co. in Rutherfordton, North Carolina. By early 1982 their company is renamed American Miso Co. with Barry Evans as the new owner.


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