

Chinese go vegetarian on their new year's day

BY CAROL COOPER
Special

On Tuesday, the first day of the Chinese new year, many York Region residents plan to follow the Buddha's teachings.

After the meat-filled feast of New Year's Eve, tradition dictates vegetarian meals on New Year's Day, said Miranda Mak, manager of the Markham Chinese Cultural Centre.

"It comes from the Buddhist tradi-

tion of no killing," she said. "It came to China about 2000 years ago and now it's spread throughout the country."

It's also spread to places like Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill, which have significant oriental populations.

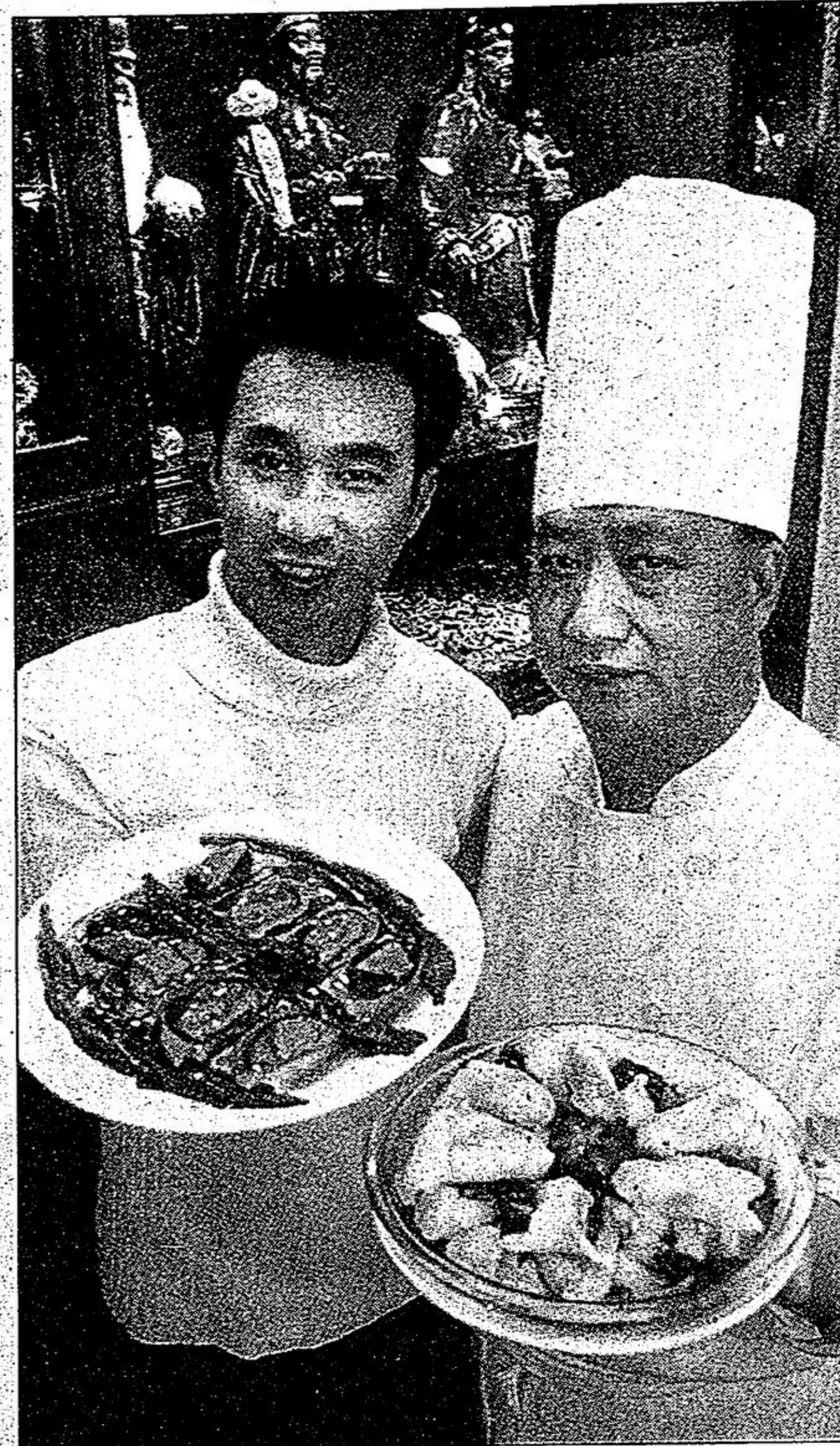
Despite the vegetarian mandate, many meats appear in mock form, full of symbolism and hope for good fortune in the coming year.

Golden fish dumplings — fish-like in

appearance including eyes and scales — filled with shredded vegetables and served on baby bok choy are a New Year's Day staple.

The dish is important because the Cantonese word for fish sounds like the word for "never lacking for anything", explained Kam Ma, manager of the Graceful Vegetarian Restaurant in the Market Village Shopping Centre at

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STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Kam Ma, manager of the Graceful Vegetarian Restaurant in Markham, and chef Sam Ma hold a mock chicken and vegetable dish and a mock golden fish dish, filled with vegetables, in preparation for Chinese new year celebrations.

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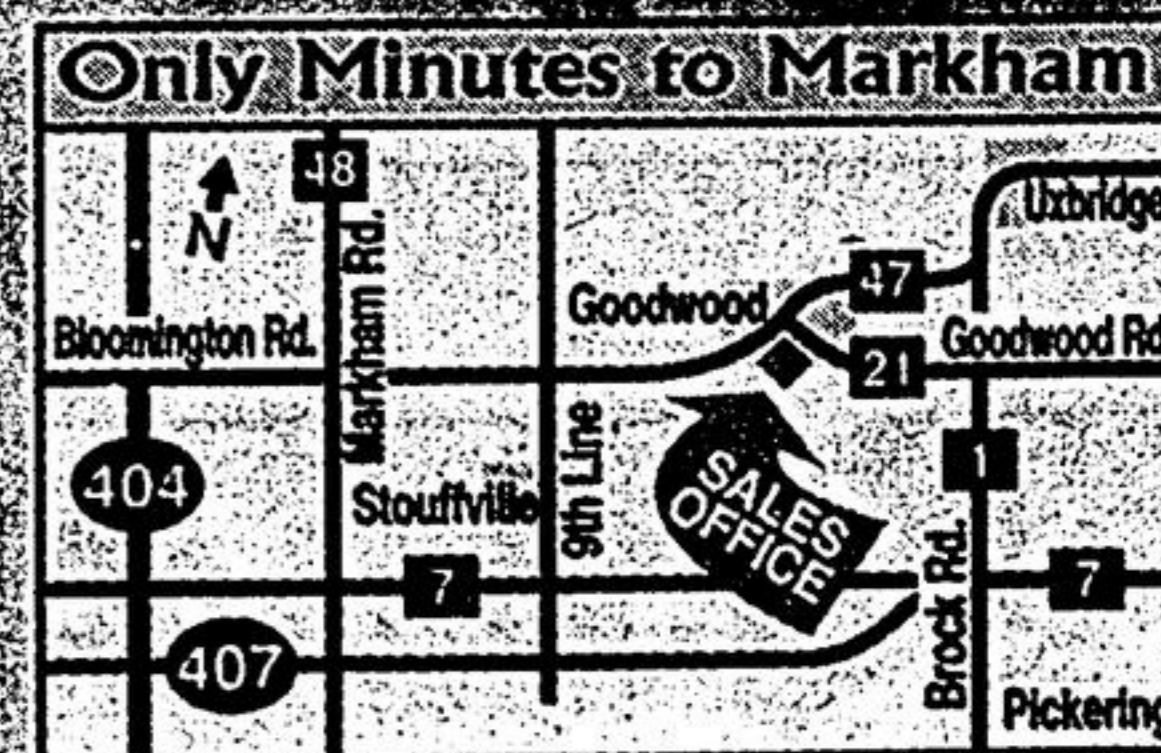
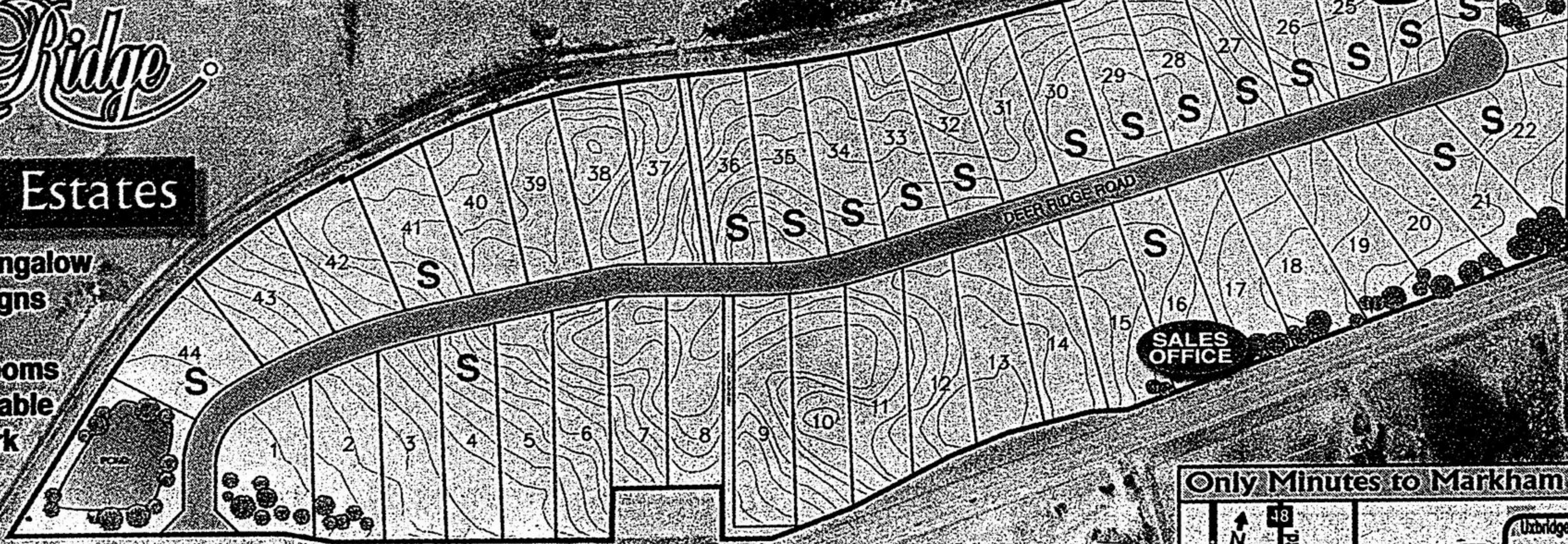
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