

Háskóli Íslands
Hugvísindasvið
Japanskt Mál og Menning

The Beauty in the Simplicity
The Ritual Importance of the Japanese Tea Ceremony in Modern
Japanese Society

Ritgerð til BA í Japönsku Máli og Menningu

Ívar Ðat Trong Le Ingvason

Kt.: 1103903439

Leiðbeinandi: Gunnella Þorgeirsdóttir

Maí 2015

Abstract

Tea is a very common beverage drunk all around the world; but its cultural history and the spiritual aspect behind it are often overlooked. The Japanese tea ceremony of today is deeply integrated in the Japanese society, its a cultural activity practiced by people of all social classes. It's an event where the Japanese people dress up in their traditional clothing, *kimono*, and meet up for a cup of tea in a calm and serene environment. The tea ceremony is a form of art that even the most dedicated and experienced practitioners of the ceremony have a hard time understanding since some of its principles and concepts may at time be puzzling and ambiguous. The purpose of this essay is to shed some light on the world of tea and its value in the modern Japanese society. To fully understand its value in modern Japanese society, it is important to examine its history, where it came from, and what its function were in the past, as well as how it managed to survive through history. This essay will then go on to examine its spiritual aspect, the principles behind it, and the importance of the physical objects related to the tea ceremony. In the final chapter, the significance of the Japanese tea ritual will be examined through the seasonal changes, its symbolic aspect and the various Japanese traditional art forms that can all be found inside the tea room.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
A Brief History of Chado.....	5
2.1. The Origin of Tea.....	5
2.2. The Arrival of Tea in Japan	6
2.3. Tea Ceremony as an Art	8
2.4. Tea Ceremony as a Political Means.....	10
The spiritual Aspect of Chado	12
3.1. The Way of the Tea.....	12
3.2. Transition to the World of Tea.....	14
3.3. Experiencing the World of Tea.....	15
Tea Ceremony in Modern Japanese Society	17
4.1. Under the Same Roof.....	17
4.2. Symbolic Aspect of Chado	19
Conclusion	21
Bibliography	22
Glossary	25

Introduction

"The simple act of serving tea and receiving it with gratitude is the basis for a way of life called *Chado*, the Way of Tea" (Sen, 1979, p.9).

Tea is a particularly common beverage that is commonly drunk all around the world for its health benefits and as a mean to keep awake during long working days. While tea is common all around the world, its cultural history and the spiritual aspect behind it is not well known amongst people that have not participated in the Japanese tea ceremony. The tea ceremony or *Chado*, the way of the tea in Japanese, is a cultural activity involving preparation of *matcha* for guests in accordance with the tea customs. Tea, in itself, is merely a beverage; yet, tea ceremony is not the same thing as merely drinking tea. The difference between plain tea drinking and *Chado* lies in the aesthetics of *Chado*, something it shares with the other Japanese traditional arts.

Chado is not only an art form; but it is also a spiritual journey, a way to socialize, and a window to the Japanese culture. As an art, the tea ceremony is an occasion to appreciate the simplicity of the tea room's design, the feel of the tea cup in the hand, the company of friends, and the moment of purity. Even today, people that are not involved in tea ceremony often wonder why it should matter how a tea is consumed and why they should go through the ritual procedures of the tea ceremony in order to drink a simple beverage. According to tea etiquette, when a cup of tea is served, a culture synthesis of wide scope and high ideals is brought into play with aspects of religion, aesthetics, philosophy, morality, and social relations (Sen, 1979, p. 9).

The Japanese tea ceremony of today is deeply ingrained in Japanese culture and every aspect of it is filled with meaning and significance. While tea is consumed by millions of people around the world, its value in Japanese society are often overlooked. This thesis hopes to provide some insight to the world of tea ceremony by examining its value in Japan's modern society.

To fully understand the value of the Japanese tea ceremony of today, it is important to explore its history, and the spiritual aspect behind it, as well as the significance of the tea ritual within the Japanese culture. The beauty in the simplicity, the harmony between the participant, the delight in seasonal change, the various objects related to the Japanese society, and the regard for silence are all aspects of Japanese culture that *Chado* embraces. Understanding *Chado* is, therefore, a step closer in understanding Japanese society and culture.

A Brief History of Chado

Today, the tea ceremony is a big part of the Japanese culture and is practiced not only in Japan, but all around the world. Its role in the Japanese history was immense, especially in politics. To fully understand how tea ceremony came to be what it is today, it is necessary to explore its roots, where it came from, and how it evolved into the tea ceremony of today. What were its functions in the past and how did it survive through history? This chapter will provide a brief insight to the history of tea in Japan: its function, political aspect, and the tea masters that helped in developing it into an art form.

2.1. The Origin of Tea

"Tea tempers the spirits and harmonizes the mind, dispels lassitude and relieves fatigue, awakens thought and prevents drowsiness, lightens or refreshes the body, and clears the perceptive faculties" (Gray, 2007).

Japan is often associated with green tea. However, tea plants did not originate from the nation itself. Legend has it that tea was discovered almost 5000 years ago in China by accident (Wang, 2005). According to this legend, Emperor Shennong discovered tea in 2737 B.C. when a light wind blew several tea leaves into the boiling hot water he was preparing. Upon sampling the pot's contents, the emperor felt refreshed and energized. He liked it so much that he had that very tea bush planted in his royal garden. Tea drinking soon became popular for its medicinal qualities and quickly spread throughout China.

Tea didn't have any significant impact in Chinese tradition until the Tang dynasty (618-907); it was then that tea acquired a special place in the world of medicine and Chinese cuisine, and its importance in the religious system was tremendous. By the middle of the Tang period, tea had been integrated into Buddhist ritual and the philosophy of the Taoist (Chow, 1990). The Taoist believed that humans have the ability to alter the cosmic principles and change their fate. In an attempt to create "the elixir of immortality", the Taoist used tea in hope to change their relationship in the cosmos. The Taoist discovered later on that it was the act of preparing the tea, not inhibiting it that would bring about changes (Kakuzo, 2013, p.12). As time passed, tea consumption and the process of preparing it became stricter as Confucian ideology was beginning to influence it. The followers of Confucius follow a principle called *li*. The term refers

to all range of human activity and the attitude of properly reinforcing them. With the cultivation of these activities, comes peace and harmony (Anderson, 1991, p.17).

Among the work related to tea, The Classic of Tea or *Cha Jing* written by Lu Yu between 760 AD and 762 AD is considered the most significant and oldest of them all (Carpenter, 1974). It is regarded as the very first manual on tea in the world. Lu Yu's work consist of poetry, tea manufacture, its history, as well as how tea should be prepared and consumed (Iguchi, 1991). At the time, the production methods for tea were lacking and with his research, tea brewing flourished in China. Lu Yu's work had an immerse impact on the tea culture in China and his work would later elevate tea ceremony as an art form. According to Anderson (1991, p.18), Lu Yu's work is significant because it represents the importance of "digression from the developing complexity of religious and secular tea ceremony." His use of Taoist symbolism in his work highlight the individual connection to the cosmos while, his stressed importance on the steps necessary to serve tea indicate a Confucian view of social order. Anderson (1991) argues that the modern Japanese tea ceremony evolved largely thanks to his work.

2.2. The Arrival of Tea in Japan

Tea first arrived in Japan in the early Heian period (794-1185), brought by Japanese Buddhist monks that were dispatched to China on a special delegations. Among them was Eichu (743-816), a Japanese monk, who spent nearly 30 years in China studying Buddhism (Chow, 1990). At that time, tea became widespread in China mostly thanks to Lu Yu's the Classic of Tea. Lu Yu's work is considered to have inspired Eichu's most famous work the *Nihon Koki* (Brinkley and Kikuchi, 1915). The first written record of custom of tea drinking in Japan. It is also recorded that Eichu invited Emperor Saga (809-823) to his temple and personally prepared and served him a cup of tea. The Emperor is said to have liked the tea so much that he began encouraging the drinking and cultivation of tea in Japan (Tokunagan, 2004). This fateful event was widely considered by historians as the birth of Japanese tea tradition. Tea was extremely valuable during this period and Emperor Saga new found liking to tea increased its popularity among the aristocratic class. After Emperor Saga's death, the convention soon waned for unknown reasons and it was mainly kept alive by monks in temples as part of their tea ritual. It was drunk by monks for its medical value and in order to keep them awake during long sessions of meditation (Reider, 2012).

A new chapter in the history of tea drinking in Japan began with the introduction of powdered tea in the early Kamakura period (1185–1333). Eisai (1141–1215), a prominent Japanese Zen priest, is considered to be the founder of Zen Buddhism in Japan (Dumoulin, 2005). In his quest to better understand Buddhism, he traveled to China to study it, and when he finally returned from his journey, he brought back powdered tea seeds (Dumoulin, 2005). With the introduction of powdered tea, matcha was born and widely used in present tea ceremony. In addition to bringing the seeds, he also brought back some revolutionary ideas about religion borrowed from Buddhist ideology that would lay the foundation for Zen Buddhism in Japan. The introduction of Zen Buddhism also influenced the tea culture in Japan immensely and the tea ceremony of today is the result of that influence.

Eisai is also known for writing the first book specifically about tea in Japan, *Kissa Yojoki* (Sen, 1998, p. 85), a book about the benefits of drinking tea for both physical and mental health. In the book, he declared that "Tea is the most wonderful medicine for nourishing one's health; it is the secret of long life," (quoted by Reider, 2012, p.2). By declaring this, he highlighted both the Buddhist and Taoist philosophy in his work. He also mentioned in his book that the secret of health lies in the well-being of the five main organs with the heart at the center "Among these five the heart is sovereign, and to build up the heart the drinking of tea is the finest method" (quoted by Reider, 2012, p.2). Eisai's approach on Buddhism propagated that anyone had the possibility of salvation, whether they were followers of zen or not. Everyone could attain enlightenment through dedication and cultivation of mind. However, Eisai's approach to Buddhism was not fully accepted by many. The new approach on how to attain enlightenment contradicted with the approach of the already established sects in Japan. They believed that salvation could only be obtained through their way of meditation. In contrast, the samurai class welcomed the Zen Buddhism with open arms. The other sects were convinced that the samurais could not be saved from the Buddhist hell. Zen Buddhism, however, offered the samurai a satisfying alternative to salvation (Anderson, 1991).

Before Eisai reintroduced tea, it was a luxury item only drunk by the aristocratic, samurai, monks, and the imperial court. The monks drank tea for ritual purposes; but on the other hand, the nobles and the samurai class used tea as a form of entertainment (Varley and Kumakura, 1989). As tea grew in popularity, its cultivation began to expand throughout Japan. Tea competition, *Tocha*, emerged as a result of the great expansion in tea cultivation. At that time, tea

was something new and exotic. Just like rice and other products, it became an object of luxury for the nobles and the samurai class. In Tocha, the participants were served many cups of tea and the goal was to distinguish the origin or the quality of the tea. Many valuable prizes were awarded for winning the tea competition such as tea utensils and paintings. The tea competition served as a social event to eat food, drink and gamble. It also served as an occasion in which the nobles would show off the wealth and riches by displaying expensive art and artifacts (Varley and Kumakura, 1989). The tea competitions were really popular and as it grew in popularity, so did the cultivation of tea in Japan. As the cultivation of tea increased, it became cheaper. The pastime hobby of the nobles and samurai would eventually lose its status as a luxury item as it became available to the common people.

2.3. Tea Ceremony as an Art

"The flavor of tea is the flavor of Zen" (Fisher, 2011, p. 83).

Murata Shuko (1423-1502), a Buddhist monk, is known as the founder of *wabi-cha* style tea ceremony. Shuko chose to enter Buddhist priesthood at a young age and was taught by Ikkyu Sojun, a Zen Buddhist monk. His master, well versed in the ways of serving tea, shared his knowledge to his pupil. Shuko was greatly influenced by his master and his training in Zen Buddhism made him realize that tea and Zen shared the same essence. He believed that it was possible to reach enlightenment by simply preparing a tea (Martin, 2007).

In the world of tea the word "*wabi*" is known as the concept for simplicity, and direct communication of the hearth through a bowl of tea (Martin, 2007). Thus the tea ceremony that Shuko promoted placed more importance on the simplicity, the heart and mind behind it when serving a bowl of tea, rather than form and formalities. The act of being humble and caring for the other person was, in his opinion, the most important part of the tea ceremony. There are four values that Shuko considered central to tea practice. They are kin (reverence), kei (respect), sei (purity), and jaku (tranquility). Kin has aspects of sincerity and modesty to it; kei incorporates the feeling of gratitude and genuine appreciation; sei can be described as a physical and spiritual purity; jaku is a Buddhist term, simply meaning tranquility (Sen, 1998, p.123).

The changes that Shuko made were given concrete expression in the tea room. He believed that the room would bring greater enlightenment if it contributed towards the participant

experience of tea ceremony. The changes made included practicing tea ceremony in a four and a half mat room and hanging Zen calligraphy in the tea room (Anderson, 1987). Also, all unnecessary things were removed from the tea room. The goal was to remove all possible distraction and guide the participant towards the spiritual aspects of the tea ceremony. Following Shuko's new approach to tea ceremony was the use of native utensils. In a letter he sent to one of his disciples, Shuko mentioned it was important to find as many admirable traits in Japanese objects as in Chinese (Martin, 2007, p.76). Shuko's aim was not to rid the tea ritual of Chinese materials; on the contrary, he sought harmony between them.

With the addition of the Japanese utensils, hanging scroll, and the changes Shuko made to the tea room, it can be said that he added some Japanese culture to the tea ceremony. The influence and the changes he made to the tea ceremony led to the development of a new aesthetic (Martin, 2007). An aesthetic, which sought beauty in the imperfect, and the appreciation of simple objects of everyday life. The changes he brought for the tea ceremony transformed it into an art form rather than just a form of entertainment it had become. The modifications that he made to the tea ceremony laid the foundation for the *wabi-style* of tea ceremony. In order for Shuko to conceptualize tea ceremony as an art, further changes and refinement to the concept of *wabi* were still needed.

Takeno Joo (1502– 1555), a merchant from Sakai and a tea master, would later further develop Shuko's concept of tea ceremony (Sen, 1998). Although Shuko is regarded as the founder of the *wabi-cha* style, he never really used the word "*wabi*"; though, he did imply its meaning in his work. However, it was Takeno Joo that formulated and brought the word into the world of tea. Joo was also responsible for introducing the value of simplicity into the Japanese tea ceremony. Some of the changes Joo made were in the form of simplifying Shuko's tea hut by replacing the paper walls with earthen ones. He also incorporated more local Japanese pottery and natural things in the tea room (Martin, 2007). The changes he made further advocated tea ceremony as an art among the merchant class that he was part of and distanced it even more from being just a form of entertainment. Although Joo developed Shuko's concept of *wabi-cha* style even further, it was still not complete. The *wabi-cha* style would later be brought to perfection by Joo's disciple, Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591) who would later become the most famous tea master in Japanese history.

2.4. Tea Ceremony as a Political Means

During the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1600), the art of drinking tea flourished in the port city of Sakai. The merchant class was one of the lowest classes of Japanese society, ranked below nobles, samurai, and even farmers. However, urban growth and the expanding economy, at the time, strengthened their position in the Japanese society (Anderson, 1991). Yet they were not allowed to hold political positions and thus had to seek enlightenment, and challenges elsewhere. Another factor that strengthened their situation was that, during this period, Japan was in a state of turmoil and war. The feudal lords were dependant on financial and military supplies from the merchant (Sen, 1998). As the lowest class of Japanese society, the merchant class desired access to the elite society of Japan. Having amassed great wealth from the wars, they began to create they own culture. The independent port city Sakai became the center in which the merchant class began establishing their own culture (Anderson, 1991). Tea gatherings played an important role in the newly found culture. It became popular as a pastime hobby for the merchant class that used it as a form of entertainment as well as an indication of wealth and power.

During the warring states period (1467-1603), Japan was in a state of turmoil. It was at that time that Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) appeared with the goal of unifying Japan. As the leading trade city of Japan, it was of utmost importance for Nobunaga to conquer Sakai in order to unify Japan (Bodart, 1977). Aware of the political advantages of tea ceremony, Nobunaga himself became a tea practitioner. His tea master was Joo disciple, Sen Rikyu, a son of a wealthy merchant in Sakai as well as a tea master. The presence of a tea master allowed Nobunaga to forbid the practice of tea among samurais that were not under him (Anderson, 1987). As mentioned before, tea ceremony served as a pastime hobby for samurais and as a mean for them to obtain salvation. With the tea prohibition the samurais felt that they were obligated to follow Nobunaga. He also began collecting utensils used in *Chado* for the purpose of appearing more cultural than other people, and as a mean to show off his wealth and power.

Nobunaga held many big tea ceremonies; mostly to bring citizens of all social classes across Japan together. These big tea ceremonies served as a tool to improve his reputation amongst the public. He also gave tea utensils to his allies, as a sign of goodwill and to keep them loyal to him (Bodart, 1977). Through tea ceremony, Nobunaga became friends with Imai Sokyū, a member of Sakais ruling council as well as a merchant. Sokyū had great influence in the city of

Sakai and with his help and tea ceremony as a form of negotiation, Nobunaga managed to lay claim to Sakai with minimal bloodshed (Watsky, 1995).

After Nobunagas death, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) succeeded him in the war of unifying Japan. Hideyoshi was born into a peasant family, but eventually he would rise up the social ladder and unify Japan (Schirokauer, 2005). Like Nobunaga, Hideyoshi was heavily interested in the political aspect of *Chado* and used it to bring people together as a way of unifying Japan. Following in the footsteps of Nobunaga, Hideyoshi also chose Rikyu to serve as his tea master. Rikyu as an assistant was invaluable as he had many connections in the imperial court (Bodart, 1977). It was clear that by this time that the tea ceremony had become more than just admiring fine utensils or the spirituality aspect and health benefits of tea. Tea ceremony had always belonged to the elites of Japanese society; but through Hideyoshi, it became a powerful instrument of social control (Elison and Smith, 1981). A good example of this was when Hideyoshi invited the emperor over for a tea in 1584. For the event he designed a "golden tea room," and even covered utensils in gold (Sadler, 2011). In Japan, the emperor is considered to be the direct descendant of the Sun goddess so preparing tea for the emperor was a sign of great honor, and a statement of rank and respect in the society (Anderson, 1991).

On the battlefield, Hideyoshi had a portable tea house so that he could view his men in combat. The portable tea house also functioned as a place for strategy meetings with his men. The sight alone of a general calmly drinking tea during combat had the purpose of instilling fear into his enemy, and at the same time motivating his men (Weinberg, 2001). Hideyoshi and Rikyu's relationship came, however, to an abrupt end when Hideyoshi ordered Rikyu to commit *seppuku* due to a disagreement between them (Anderson, 1991). The reason why Hideyoshi ordered Rikyu to commit *seppuku*, a ritual suicide, is not known. There are, however, speculations that it could have been differences in political views, or how the two of them had different opinions on how to practice tea. For Hideyoshi, tea ceremony became a powerful instrument of social control and an indication of wealth and status. For Rikyu, it was an occasion to enjoy tea in a good company and embrace the simplicity of life. Another popular speculation is that Rikyu overstepped his boundary by building a statue of himself wearing a snow sandal on top of the gate of Daitokuji Temple that Hideyoshi financed. It seems that the snow sandal was the offending factor. Hideyoshi interpreted it as an insult to himself and anyone that had to pass through the gates below the statue (Anderson, 1991, p.45-46).

The spiritual Aspect of Chado

To fully understand the value of tea ceremony in modern Japanese society, it is important to look into its spiritual and aesthetic aspect. Through history, the tea ceremony has been established around a belief and ways of thinking that have been integrated into the act of everyday life. For those that do not practice the tea ceremony, the world of tea may at first be confusing and puzzling. The reasoning and concept behind some of the actions performed during the tea ceremony can be ambiguous, even the most experienced practitioner of the ceremony has a difficult time understanding them. During the tea ceremony, every action and minor detail has a purpose: everything from walking to the tea hut; cleaning the hands and mouth; preparing the tea utensils. To understand the spiritual and aesthetic aspect of *Chado*, it is important look into the basic principles and the attitude required for the tea ceremony as well as the physical objects related to the tea ceremony. This chapter will provide a brief insight into the world of the tea by examining those aspects of *Chado*.

3.1. The Way of the Tea

"Tea is nought but this: First you heat the water. Then you make the tea. Then you drink it properly. That is all you need to know" (Sen, 1979, p. 44).

Of all the tea masters in Japan Sen no Rikyu, the son of a rich merchant from Sakai, is considered to be the greatest of them all (Anderson, 1987). He is known as the person that refined and perfected the *wabi-cha* style of tea ceremony that Shuko and Joo created. Like his predecessor, his tea ceremony emphasized the simplicity and honesty of oneself. Rikyu shaped and redefined every aspect of the tea ceremony and elevated it to an art form. The changes he made ranged from the tea hut design, the utensils, the principles, and even the tea garden (Weinberg, 2001). Under Rikyu, the tea ceremony became known as *Chado*, the way of the tea. Rikyu influenced the tea ceremony in such a lasting way that it has changed little since then and is still practiced in today's Japan society.

The foundation of the philosophy of Rikyus tea ceremony are the four concept in Wa (harmony), Kei (respect), Sei (purity), and Jaku (tranquility). As mentioned before, it was first Shuko that incorporated these four principles into the tea ceremony, but it was further developed by Rikyu. Some of the major changes he made were replacing the character "Kin" (reverence)

with "wa" (harmony) (Weinberg, 2001, p.136). Those changes were made because Rikyu felt that the emphasis should be on the mutual understanding between the host and the guest, rather than a service to someone superior. According to Sen (1979, 13), the four concepts serve as the core of *Chado* and highlight its greatest ideal at the same time. "Harmony" is the result of the interaction between the host, guest and nature. Instead of attempting to dominate nature, the man should seek harmony with it because with harmony, comes peace. "Respect" gives structure to the tea gathering and seeks to break down all the social hierarchy and barriers. It is extended not only to people, but also to daily life and inanimate objects such as utensils. "Purity" is accomplished with the simple act of cleaning. Action such as sweeping the floor, represent clearing the "dust of the world" or the worldly attachment away, from heart and mind. "Tranquility" is realized with the constant practice of the first three principles of harmony, respect, and purity. When all the principles are mastered, enlightenment can be achieved (Sen, 1979, 13-14). The four principles are necessary on creating the perfect atmosphere for the tea gathering.

One of the most popular concepts in the tea practice is the concept *Ichigo-ichi-e*, "one time, one meeting" or "once in a lifetime encounter." The meaning behind this concept is that each tea gathering is unique and fresh, the moment can never be experienced again (Sato, 2014, p.84). In *Chado*, it is important to respect the person next to you, the nature, and the objects used in the tea ceremony as well as it is crucial not to forget to respect and enjoy the moment. That is one of the reasons why the atmosphere and every detail is important in the creating a serene and tranquil atmosphere to make the tea gathering a memorable event.

When entering the tea room, it is necessary to bring in the right attitude, Rikyu's seven rules act as a guideline towards the right attitude during tea gathering (Sen, 1979). These seven rules are considered vital in teaching the way of the tea, and in understanding its philosophy. Rikyu's seven rules are;

Make a delicious bowl of tea. Lay out the wood charcoal to heat the water. Arrange the flowers as they are in the fields. In summer, evoke coolness; in winter, warmth. Anticipate the time for everything. Be prepared for rain. Show the greatest attention to each of your guests (Sen, 1979, p. 31)

The way of the tea is not merely an art or pastime hobby, but a way of life learned through serving and receiving a bowl of tea. Rikyu's seven rules serve as an instruction towards a successful tea gathering, and to help the participant in better understanding the principles and ideals of *Chado*. The principles and ideals of *Chado* are expressed through the material objects of the tea ceremony. Before the tea ceremony starts, it is important to purify the mind of worldly thoughts. This is done through certain stages such as walking through the garden, preparing the utensils, or simply enjoying the tranquil moment inside the tea room.

3.2. Transition to the World of Tea

One of the important aspects of *Chado* is the transition from the outside world to the world of tea. Before entering the tea room, the guests have to pass through a tea garden called *roji*, literally translated to "dewy ground." Unlike normal garden, the *roji* serves only as a passage and is designed to give of the feeling of peacefulness, and to appear as natural and simple as possible (Young and Young, 2005). The *roji* is a work of art designed to increase the visitor's awareness of the beauty of the present moment. It is a place where the mind can be at peace. Its purpose is to break the connection to the outside world, preparing the participant both spiritually and mentally for the events that will take place inside the tea room (Sen, 1979).

The *roji* is usually divided into an outer and inner garden path, separated by the middle gate called *chumon*. The separation of the garden path reflects the boundary between the outside world and the world of tea. The design of the inner garden path is different from the outer garden path; while the outer path is commonly sanded, the inner path is usually mossy. The inner garden path should also give of the feeling of a simple mountain path, made of trees and stepping stone. Anything that gives of the feeling of prettiness or expense are removed (Sadler, 2011). Another notable difference lies in line of paths, which are never in straight line, with the outer path generally straighter than the inner path. This is purposely done to promote aesthetic interest in the path, and the surrounding.

The stones are not made of any valuable materials as it would distract the guest from the simplicity and austerity of the garden. Although the stones appear plain, they should at the same time not be unattractive. This illustrates one of the basic principles of *Chado*, the importance of finding balance between art and nature. Occasionally, there is a large stone that forces the guest to stop, take a look around and enjoy the scenery. The stepping stone is not only for the purpose

of walking on; but it serves as an important object in guiding the guest to an appropriate state of mind (Young and Young, 2005, p. 112).

Before the guests arrive, the garden is always cleaned in a way that it appears as natural as possible. The importance of cleanliness is well illustrated in one of the stories about Rikyu. Sen no Rikyu was watching his son sweeping and watering the garden path one day. "Not clean enough," said Rikyu, when his son finished the task. The son continued to sweep and water the garden path for hours until everything was clean. Rikyu, still not happy, said, "that is not the way a garden path should be swept." Rikyu stepped into the garden, shook a tree and scattered the leaves around the path (Kakuzo, 2013, p. 30-31). What Rikyu wanted was not the cleanliness alone, but the harmony between the beautiful and the nature. The goal is to capture the image of the garden in its natural state; therefore, its natural setting is enhanced by a few fallen tree leaves on the ground and the garden is showered in water to give off an impression of freshness.

3.3. Experiencing the World of Tea

Four hundred years ago, when rank and social status were of greater importance, no one could enter the tea room armed or bring in any belongings for that matter except those that were vital for the tea gathering (Sen, 1979). The tea room is a place where everyone is equal, it is a place where rank and social status are discarded.

The tea room, or *Chashitsu* in Japanese, is a vacant space, empty of everything except its own structural elements. Therefore, it can be said that when the host invites guests over, he has to, in a sense, "set the stage" for the tea gathering. There are certain requirements for this, but the host can modify the tea room in many ways according to his feeling, experience and talents. When a tea ceremony is held, the objects used during the tea ceremony are highlighted. The art of combining different elements together with meticulous attention is crucial in assembling different utensils, metal, wood, and other material, in an elegant but reserved manner (Sen, 1979, p. 48). These combinations of physical elements are an important part of the tea gathering. In the tea room, there is a constant fear of repetition. The various objects used to decorate the room should be combined so that the color and design differ from one another. Therefore, when the host has living flowers, a painting of flowers is forbidden; when a round kettle is used, the pitcher should be angular (Kakuzo, 2013).

The tea room's appearance is rustic and simple. It is designed to appear as natural as possible and give of the feeling of refined poverty. Everything is handmade with careful attention to details. A well constructed tea room is very costly to make, as it requires immense care and precision. The tea rooms vary in size, but the most common one is the four and a half mat room (Kakuzo, 2013). Every detail, from the utensils, the layout of the room, to the wall design is planned so that the guest can enjoy the moment of tranquility. The tea room is designed to enhance the spiritual experience; it is a place where the participants can clear their mind.

The tea room was made to resemble the ideal world of Zen Buddhist meditation, meaning that all luxury elements inside the tea room must be avoided (Sadler 2008). In Zen Buddhism, it is believed that all activity can lead towards enlightenment. Activities, such as sweeping the leaves from the path leading to the tea house or preparing the objects necessary for a tea gathering, can all potentially lead to enlightenment (Kakuzo, 2013). All the great tea masters, Sen Rikyu, Murata Shuko and Takeno Joo were all practitioners of Zen Buddhism. Therefore, the tea room and other material objects of the tea ceremony reflects many of the Zen ideals.

The tea ceremony draws as many elements from Taoism as it draws from Buddhism. In the tea room, the opposite energy of yin and yang can be found in its surrounding and in the physical elements of the tea ceremony (Plutschow, 1999). The opposite energy of yin and yang represent the harmony between the utensils, people in it and certain part of the room. Another aspect of Taoism that can be found in the tea room is the five elements of Taoist: wood, fire, water, metal and earth. The elements can be found in the "wood" represented by the charcoal that fuels the "fire" that is used to boil the "water" inside an iron kettle "metal," which is then poured into a tea bowl "earth" (Plutschow, 1999, p. 5). According to Chiho (2011, p. 5), the tea room is not only a setting for the ceremony, but also an instrument which takes the participant on a journey to another world, the world of tea. When visiting a tea room, the outside world is left behind and the guest is taken to a functional and aesthetic space designed to make sure that each cup of tea is not only drank, but experienced.

Tea Ceremony in Modern Japanese Society

Everything inside the tea hut is, in some way, related to Japanese society. For Japanese, it is a very special event that has been deeply integrated in the Japanese culture. It is a cultural activity where the Japanese dress up in *kimono*, which is their traditional clothing and admire the beautiful setting of the ceremony, while also enjoying a cup of tea. The significance of the Japanese tea ritual can be found in the various traditional Japanese arts inside the tea hut such as flower arrangement and calligraphy. *Chado* was created to resemble the ideal world of Zen Buddhism; therefore, many of the physical objects related to the ceremony have a symbolic meaning behind them. Another thing that greatly affects the tea ritual are the seasonal changes, as the theme for each tea gathering is heavily influenced by it. This chapter will examine the importance of the tea ritual in Modern Japanese society through the seasonal changes, and the various Japanese traditional arts found inside the tea room, as well as its symbolic aspects.

4.1. Under the Same Roof

"Think of the tea bowl as the earth, and of matcha as its nature. When you receive a bowl of tea, you confront the preciousness of life - you receive life itself" (Tomoe, 2011, p. 13).

The Japanese have a long lasting and strong affinity with nature, influenced heavily by the agricultural heritage centered around rice farming. The climate and the geography of Japan also played an important part in creating a profound appreciation for the four seasons in Japanese society (Shirane, 2012).

In Japanese society, there are varieties of symbols connected to each seasons (Anderson 1987). Cherry blossom, for example, represents the spring of Japan, while the maple leaves represent autumn. From the end of March to early May the tea ceremony can also take place outside for *hanami*, also known as flower viewing (Tanaka and Tanaka, 2000). Many of the tea procedures and symbols are connected with particular events in Japanese history and on Buddhist ritual calendars. Everything, from the choice of utensils, foods, flowers, the message on the scroll, and even the procedures itself, revolves around the season. Thus, a semi formal procedure using beautiful utensils reflects the elegance of the lunar New Year, while the end of the tea year in October is generally expressed by informal procedures (Anderson 1987, p. 483). Every tea ceremony symbolizes a unique event of all seasons and how it relates to the Japanese

society in daily lives. The fact that the theme for each tea gathering changes in tune with the seasons signify how important the seasons are in the Japanese society.

The seasons are not only expressed through poetry and paintings, but through the Japanese traditional arts as well in many aspects of life such as the decoration of *kimono* and even the rooms in hotels and inns (Shirane, 2012). The theme of each tea gathering serves the purpose of setting the right mood for each gathering, making each encounter a special event for both the host and the guest. The participant is in a sense not only experiencing the tea cup, but also the seasonal settings inside the tea room represented by the various Japanese traditional arts such as flower arrangement and calligraphy, all of which can be found inside the tea room. Shirane (2012) mentions that *Chado* was originally intended for entertainment purposes, as well as a mean to foster a cultural sensitivity, and an opportunity to meet up for a cup of tea in a good company. Instead, *Chado* elevated many of the object related to the tea ceremony to the level of art "fusing textual, and material culture to create a tactile symphony of the seasonal moment" (Shirane, 2012, p. 107).

The way of the tea can be divided into two seasons, *ro* and *furo*. The *furo* season starts from May and lasts until the end of October, while the *ro* season takes place from November through April. During the winter, an iron kettle is placed on a sunken hearth called *ro*, a small fire pit used to heat the water for tea while also providing heat for the tea room during winter. The *furo* refers to the portable brazier used in the summer, which the iron kettle is place on. Unlike *ro*, the *furo* is placed on a different location on top of the tatami. The moving of the hearth symbolizes the transition of seasons (Shirane, 2012).

While *ro* and *furo* symbolize all the seasons, each season should be expressed through the scroll hung up in an everpresent alcove inside the tea room. The scroll hung on the alcove is the most important object of the tea room, as it helps in creating a certain mood according to season. The scrolls have multiple meanings besides representing the seasons; they symbolize the presence of the host, his teachings, and values, as well as his contribution to the way of the tea (Anderson, 1991). The scrolls hung on the alcove are usually calligraphy's, a poem, painting or any appropriated words written for the given season by Zen monks. When the guests enter the tea hut, their first course of action is to appreciate the scroll on the wall, then they will kneel and bow in front of it as a sign of respect to the author who wrote it (Sen, 1979). The appreciation of the seasons is best described by Sen (1979, p. 49) in his book of tea where he mentions "spring

has flowers, summer has cool breezes, fall has the full moon, winter has snow." In saying so he is stressing out the importance of choosing the appropriate scroll for the given season as it sets the atmosphere for the event.

Similar to the scrolls, the flowers inside the tea room also represent the current season and are vital in setting the right mood for the event. The traditional Japanese art of flower arrangement is called *ikebana*, but the special way in which the flowers are displayed in the tea ceremony is known as *chabana* (Tanaka and Tanaka, 2000). Like the scrolls, the flowers are also placed in the alcove. When the flower is combined with the hanging scroll in the alcove, the two should harmonize, and create an appropriate atmosphere for the current season. The flowers must be simple and chosen in accordance to the given season. In *ikebana*, the flowers are arranged, but in *chabana*, the flowers are placed in a very simple vase and arranged in a way they appear in the nature. Arranging the flowers in such a manner require a certain amount of skill and can only be done with a mind in tune with the nature (Sen, 1979). The fact that the flowers are used only during the tea ceremony symbolizes the purity and the passing moment of life (Anderson, 1991).

4.2. Symbolic Aspect of Chado

When the Japanese participate in the tea ceremony, they are in a sense looking for a way out of everyday life. The world of tea provides the participant with a way out from the mundane of daily life in a "symbolic way." The interaction between the guest and the various objects related to the ceremony, create a unique form of experience different from the one of the outside world resulting in harmony between the guest and the nature (Kondo, 1985). According to Royce (1982), in order to maintain an identity, a group must have its own symbols or sign that represent the value that outsiders or its own member can consider as unique to that group. Chado serves this purpose for the Japanese. It is a symbol of Japanese pride and identity.

When experiencing *Chado*, the participant is also experiencing Zen Buddhism, which can be found in the various objects and actions related to the tea ceremony. Zen symbolism is experienced the moment the participant enters the world of tea. The captivating natural setting of the tea garden symbolize that every step taken into the garden is a step away from the outside world and its problems. The tea garden and the road leading to the tea hut have the purpose of preparing the guest spiritually for the journey ahead (Young and Young, 2005).

One of the main features of the *roji* is the water basin called *tsukubai*, located in the inner garden. In Japanese culture, the water is considered to have a purification effect and the water in the basin represent that purity both spiritually and physically. Purification is symbolized by the cleansing of the mouth and hands; therefore, washing the "dust of the world" away before entering the tea room (Kondo, 1985, p. 294). The water basin is also purposely designed so that the guest has to lower themselves in order to wash their hand and mouth; therefore, showing humility. Another element that is designed for the purpose of showing humility is the small sliding door called *nijiriguchi*. The entrance can be found in the *roji* before entering the tea room. The way that the guest enters through the *nijiriguchi*, literally crawling, symbolize that ranks and social status are left outside when entering the world of tea (Knight, 1981). Entering in such a humbling way will bring about a necessary change in attitude for the tea ceremony.

The drinking of *koicha*, thick tea, is the most formal and the ultimate symbol of the entire tea gathering, as well as being the most intimate part of the gathering. The climax of the entire tea ritual takes place when the guest takes the first sip of *koicha* tea. The same bowl of tea is then shared among the guests, reflecting intimacy and unity since it touches the lips (Anderson, 1987, p. 488). *Koicha* not only reflects the intimacy between the host and guests, but also the harmony between them, respect, and appreciation. Sociability and self-improvement are a very important part in the Japanese society. According to Lebra (1976), the Japanese are very concerned about belongingness to such an extent that they only feel alive when they are in a group. Within a group of friends, there is a feeling of unity and belongingness. Those who share the same hobby and interest often get together in a mutual solidarity. In Japanese society, the physical togetherness does not necessarily require verbal communication and it is normal to communicate through a non-verbal expression.

There is an expression in Japan called *Ishin-denshin*, literally translated as "what the mind thinks, the heart transmits" (Cheung, 1993, p. 146). The expression basically means to communicate without speaking any words. Therefore, it's not surprising that majority of the tea ceremony is conducted in silence. The preparation of the tea and the climax of *koicha* is always performed in utter silence (Kondo, 1985). The need for belongingness may, therefore, be satisfied through activity such as tea ceremony. The Japanese tea ceremony also offers a welcome change from the hectic life of today's Japanese society.

Conclusion

The history of the tea ceremony is long and interesting. It began as a simple beverage drunk for its medical value and as a means for Japanese Buddhist monks to keep awake during meditation. As time passed, it was transformed into a form of entertainment by the elites of the Japanese society and later it became a powerful political instrument used to unify Japan. Through the three great tea masters of Japan, Murata Shuko, Takeno Joo, and Sen no Rikyu, the tea ceremony became more than just a form of entertainment, it became an art form. As it has been demonstrated, the tea ceremony is an art form that goes beyond the beauty that the eye can see, a culturally ingrained art form that asks the participant to develop an understanding of that which cannot be seen, the beauty that is created when everything interacts harmoniously under a single roof (Chiho, 2011).

Although the tea ceremony's cultural history and the spiritual aspect behind it are often overlooked, its value in Japanese society is immense. The Japanese tea ceremony of today is deeply rooted in the Japanese society and practiced by people of all social classes. For Japanese, it is a very special event that captures the importance of the seasonal change inside the tea room very well. Its rituals represent various Japanese traditional arts forms, such as flower arrangements, and calligraphy. It is a symbol of Japanese pride and identity. Anderson (1991) points out that the way of the tea is a pathway that the participant takes in search for peace, tranquility, and harmony with others, oneself, and with the nature. In the fast-paced and hectic life of today's Japanese society, the world of tea offers calmness and serenity, an escape from the outside world. Through its principles and rituals, *Chado* can provide a sense of stability, belonging, and harmony for those who participate in it. As for the future, *Chado* has demonstrated through history that it will adapt to the changing environment and the circumstances in which it has found itself. Therefore, it is safe to assume that *Chado* will continue to flourish as an art form and a cultural activity in Japanese society for an unseen future.

Bibliography

- Anderson, J. L. (1987). *Japanese tea ritual: religion in practice*. *Man*, 22 (3), 475-498.
(1991). *An introduction to Japanese tea ritual*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bodart, B. M. (1977). Tea and Counsel. The Political Role of Sen Rikyu. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 32, 49-74.
- Brinkley, F., and Kikuchi, D. (1915). *A History of the Japanese People from the Earliest Times to the End of the Meiji Era*. New York: Encyclopedia Britannica Company.
- Carpenter, F.R. (Translator). (1974). *The Classic of Tea*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Cheung, K. K. (1993). *Articulate Silences: Hisaye Yamamoto, Maxine Hong Kingston, Joy Kogawa*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Chiho, N. (2011, December). The essence of Tea. *Nipponika*, 5, 5-9. Minister of Foreign affairs of Japan.
- Chow, K. B. (1990). *All the tea in China*. San Francisco: China Books.
- Dumoulin, H. (1988). *Zen Buddhism: Japan Vol. 2*. New York: Macmillan.
- Elison, G., and Smith, B. L. (Eds.). (1981). *Warlords Artists and Commoners: Japan in the Sixteenth Century*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii press
- Fisher, A. (2010). *The way of tea: reflections of life with tea*. Rutland, VT: Tuttle publishing
- Iguchi, K. (1991). *Tea ceremony*. Tokyo: Hokusha publishing Co.
- Kakuzo, O. (2013). *The Book of Tea: Classic Edition*. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Publishing.
- Knight, T. W. (1981). The forty-one steps. *Environment and Planning B*, 8, 97-114.
- Kondo, D. (1985). *The way of tea: a symbolic analysis*. *Man*, 20(2), 287-306.
- Lebra, T. S. (1976). *Japanese patterns of behaviour*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

- Martin, L. C. (2007). *Tea: the drink that changed the world*. Rutland: Tuttle Publishing.
- Plutschow, H. (1999). An anthropological perspective on the Japanese tea ceremony. *Anthropoetics*, 5(1). Retrieved from <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0501/tea.htm>
- Royce, A. P. (1982). *Ethnic identity: Strategies of diversity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Reider, N. T. (2012). Chanoyu: Following Ceremony to a Tea. *Phi Kappa Phi Forum*, 92 (3), 8-11. Retrieved from <https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-304467368/chanoyu-following-ceremony-to-a-tea>
- Sadler, A. L. (2011). *Cha-no-yu: the Japanese tea ceremony*. Rutland, VT: Tuttle
- Sato, S. (2014). *Shodo: The Quiet Art of Japanese ZEN Calligraphy*. Kanagawa: Tuttle Shokai Inc.
- Schirokauer, C., Lurie, D., and Gay, S. (2005). *A brief history of Japanese civilization (2rd ed)*. Belmont: Wadsworth, engage learning.
- Sen, S. (1979). *Tea life, tea mind*. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, Incorporated. (1998). *The Japanese Way of Tea: From Its Origins in China to Sen Rikyu*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Shirane, H. (2012). *Japan and the culture of the four seasons: nature, literature, and the arts*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tanaka, S., and Tanaka, S. (2000). *The Tea ceremony*. Tokyo: Kodansha international.
- Tokunagan, M. (2004). *New tastes in green tea: A novel flavor for familiar drinks, dishes, and desserts*. USA: Kodansha.
- Tomoe, Y. (2011, December). The essence of Tea. *Niponika*, 5, 12-13. Minister of Foreign affairs of Japan.
- Varley, H. P., and Kumakura, I. (1989). *Tea in Japan: Essays on the History of Chanoyu*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii.
- Wang, L. (2005). *Tea and Chinese culture*. San Francisco: Long River Press.
- Watsky, A. M. (1995). Commerce, Politics, and Tea. The Career of Imai Sōkyū. *Monumenta nipponica*, 50, 47-65.

Weinberg, B. A., and Bealer, B. K. (2001). *The World of Caffeine: The Science and Culture of the World's Most Popular Drug*. New York: Routledge.

Young, D., and Young, M. (2005). *The art of the Japanese garden*. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing.

Glossary

Cha Jing – The very first manual on tea in the world.

Chabana – Tea flower arrangement.

Chado – The way of the tea.

Chashitsu – Tearoom.

Chumon – Gate between the inner and outer roji.

Furo – Brazier used in the summer time.

Hanami – Flower viewing.

Ichigo ichie – “Once in a lifetime.”

Ikebana – Japanese flower arrangement.

Koicha – Thick tea.

Li – "Ritual, " "proper conduct," or "propriety. " With the cultivation of activities, comes peace and harmony.

Matcha – Powdered green tea.

Nijiriguchi – Entrance to the tearoom.

Ro – Fire pit cut in the floor inside a tearoom.

Roji – Path to the tearoom.

Seppuku – Suicide by disembowelment.

Tocha – Tea competition.

Tsukubai – Stone water basin in the roji.

Wabi – Aesthetical sense of rustic and simple beauty.

Kimono – Traditional Japanese clothing.