



Making Tea,
Making Japan

CULTURAL NATIONALISM IN PRACTICE

Kristin Surak

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Preface

The origins of this investigation of the relationship between the tea ceremony and Japaneseness are personal as well as scholarly. In 1999, a friend, like many eager to share “Japanese culture” with foreigners, asked if I would like to visit her tea ceremony class, and I, like many foreigners eager for a taste of “Japanese culture,” accepted her invitation. After watching the students make tea, I was given the opportunity to try my own hand at the intricate procedures. Though my memories of that day have worn thin, I still recall my utter confusion at how to do something as simple as pick up a tea bowl while trying to follow the teacher’s directions, “Left hand, right hand. No, right hand . . .” But I went back the next week, and the week after.

More than fulfilling an exoticized image of “real” Japanese culture, the tea class offered me an entrée into wider Japanese society. At the time, I had been teaching English on a rural island for about one year, but my language skills were poor and I spent my free time with other foreigners in neighboring areas. Joining the weekly tea class allowed me to enter a local home, make local acquaintances, and, above all, learn the local language. I acquired the phrases to humbly deflect rather than complacently accept compliments, the elaborate vocabulary for marking degrees of formality and position in hierarchies, and the nuanced ways of recognizing efforts by and impositions on others. As my command of the language grew stronger, acquaintances became friends, and I felt more secure in participating in the social worlds around me.

As it has done to many other practitioners, the tea practice—the preparation procedures and modes of interaction at lessons—began to mold my foreign body into forms regarded as distinctively Japanese. Expected to be different and not to understand, newcomers to Japan are assumed to bring unfamiliar customs to local interactions that may jar locals into awareness

of what is generally taken for granted. This sense of the out of place or the odd, this feeling of strangeness or discomfort, is handily encapsulated in the term *iwakan*. As my years studying tea progressed, however, I was increasingly told by people, “You don’t create a feeling of *iwakan*. Your movements are so natural.” In some cases, the compliments referred to the strict movements, determined by a kimono, used in tea practice. “You don’t give off a sense of *iwakan*. If I look at you from the back, you look like a Japanese. The way you stand and sit is completely natural—just straight up and down.” Or “You look just like a Japanese. From the back, you can’t even tell you’re a foreigner at all.” The extended time spent interacting with practitioners and conversing at tea lessons provided opportunities to absorb the torso movements, the head nods, the two-handed gestures made with reserved expression that constitute the taken-for-granted ways the body is inhabited in Japan. Occasionally some felt so comfortable that they momentarily “forgot” I was a foreigner, complaining about the West or immigrants and then catching themselves with an embarrassed laugh, “Oh, I forgot you’re American.” My retooled body quietly helped to put people at ease, mediating the shock of foreignness.¹

Yet I was not Japanese. Foreigners—particularly white Westerners—are often accorded a special status in Japan, and my research benefited from a widespread interest among the locals in sharing their culture with those from elsewhere. I received many invitations to dinner, and even to stay the night, from tea teachers eager to offer hospitality to a visitor from abroad. These opportunities to extend our encounters beyond tea spaces enabled me to better situate the role of the tea ceremony in their personal lives.² As a foreigner and a researcher, I was granted more mobility than most in the tea world, where a teacher’s permission is often necessary to attend a tea gathering elsewhere, and where a student is expected to remain with the same instructor over the course of her or his life, unless moves or other extenuating circumstances cut short the relationship. Moreover, the people I met were often keen to introduce me to tea exhibitions at local museums, accompany me to public tea events and formal gatherings, or even invite me to often exclusive formal tea gatherings.

But over months or years, even special status fades, and at the sites where I invested the most time making tea, I was saddled with the same expectations and obligations as everyone else in the end. These are most stringent for younger women, who often lament the difficulties of negotiating the hierarchical relationships in tea classes, where “you are ordered around, you

are treated as though you know nothing, and you can’t talk back,” as one informant described it. Eventually, however, my sympathy upon hearing such stories shifted to empathy. At one site I attended as a student I, too, began to be scolded for “mistakes” while making an honest effort. After a lesson during which we practiced the roles for a formal tea gathering, the teacher asked us what problems we noticed. I had been playing the part of the main guest—the person responsible for asking about the utensils the host making the tea had chosen for the day—and volunteered that I had forgotten to compliment the host on the silk pouch used, which had been made by a famous artisan. I had taken notice of the slip because during the preparation, the host had skipped past the opportunity to talk about the pouch in the rigid order of the discussion of utensils. But that didn’t matter. As I knelt silently before her, the teacher berated me for several minutes for my rudeness and insensitivity, asking if I had learned anything at all in my years of tea training—harsh but not uncommon treatment coming from traditional teachers. Even the special pardon recognizing language difficulties was rescinded over time. When the teacher held formal gatherings, I, like every other student, was expected to read, memorize, and discuss at length the obscure names of utensils and craftsmen handwritten in ornate script on records of the gathering—and was sternly scolded if I failed. Sometimes, to my regret, I was treated like everyone else.

The Japanese are well known for hyperbolic compliments: an obvious foreigner who utters a simple *arigatō gozaimasu* as “thank you” may be applauded for speaking perfectly fluent Japanese. Certainly I have received my fair share of this sincerely offered flattery not to be taken literally. But experience also cultivates the sensitivity for knowing when their phrasing reflects the platitudes of social graces and when it expresses a more genuine surprise or deeper impression. Sometimes the practitioners I talked to would never get past offering pat explanations of the tea ceremony crafted for foreign ears, but with experience these are easy to spot and, reflexively analyzed, offer useful clues to wider social processes. Occasionally, with time, such formalities would segue into more sincere discussions. In such cases, I was treated as a fellow tea practitioner, who understood the gritty reality that lay under the sheen of spiritual ideals, recognized in the aside, “You know how it is.”

Not only was I a foreigner, I was also a tea practitioner, and the balance and overall relevance of these two ways of identifying me shifted both between and within interactions. As a foreigner, my tea network was more diverse than

that of most, with even recent acquaintances eager to take on the mantle of cultural ambassadorship by sharing their interest in the practice. Because I was almost always asked about what I was doing in Japan, sometimes a conversation with a stranger on a bus could lead to an invitation to a tea gathering. The uncle of an acquaintance might have attended high school with the head (an *iemoto*) of a particular school or style of tea preparation. The friend of a friend might take me along to a local tea festival. As I got to know people involved in a number of tea organizations, I asked them to introduce me to other practitioners—both typical and notable—in order to explore the tea world's variety. The personal introductions were essential for chipping away at the barrier often erected between “Japanese” and “foreigners,” with its idealized explanations, and making possible more matter-of-fact conversations.

The accumulation of time and information led to a change, as I was treated less as only a foreigner and more as a foreign researcher, a foreign tea practitioner, or even simply a researcher or a tea practitioner. My own tea training—ten years of lessons leading to a teaching certification—also aided this process. When visiting a class, I would often help out with preparations behind the scenes, where the formality of the tea room (and the formality of a visit by a foreign researcher) is broken and everyday conversations and complaints are heard. Washing tea bowls was often as informative as watching the tea being made. Extra hands are appreciated at larger tea gatherings, and I volunteered to help at as many as I could. When longer conversations emerged during slower moments, I told people I was conducting research on the tea ceremony and asked about their experience. In such cases, I was treated as a (foreign) tea practitioner, who could be relied upon for competent help in the back or front room.

A decade of tea training also helped me understand the often specialized talk that occurs in tea settings as practitioners converse about utensils, artists, and tea masters. But, more importantly, it enabled me to see how people act within, or manipulate, the strictures and structures of the tea world. The years spent kneeling in front of the boiling kettle were essential for differentiating between a genuine compliment and a back-handed compliment, or recognizing when a mistake has been made but purposefully ignored. The time also cultivated a deep awareness of the embodied practice of making tea, on which I draw heavily in this book.

But no matter how “natural” my bodily comportment became, and no matter how much tea expertise I accrued, I was still a foreigner in Japan carrying out fieldwork. To the extent that I have examined how these iden-

tifications affect the data produced and collected, they have been not hindrances but resources. Because my very presence primed the relevance of Japaneseness in interactions, I draw heavily on occasions when my involvement was peripheral or nonexistent: tea demonstrations by Japanese for Japanese, tea books written in Japanese for Japanese, tea television programs produced in Japanese for Japanese. Explicit references to Japaneseness are common in all of these sites, providing rich material for studying the relationship between this practice and national identity.

Data Collection

The book that has resulted draws on several years of historical and ethnographic research in Japan, subsequent to my initiation into the tea ceremony. The bulk of the fieldwork was carried out between August 2006 and February 2008, supplemented by evidence gathered on earlier and shorter trips during the summers of 2002, 2003, and 2005. To ensure some exposure to regional differences, I chose three locations for the ethnographic and interview research: Tokyo, Kyoto, and Awaji Island, representing the country's metropolitan center, traditional capital, and rural hinterlands. I also carried out brief fieldwork trips to Niigata on the western coast and Aomori in the north.

The ethnographic work set out to map the tea world from multiple points. Four classes, which I attended for one year or more, became bases for my exploration, and these were supplemented by an additional four sites, where I visited lessons less regularly but multiple times. In some cases I recorded informal group discussions with the participants, and at two places I videotaped classes. One-shot visits were carried out at an additional ten sites, including community centers, hotels, private homes, and the headquarters of several tea schools, and I observed several high school and college tea ceremony club meetings, as well as junior high school tea performances. Public tea demonstrations were another focus of ethnographic inquiry, and I attended a number as a visitor or a participant, including community tea performances sponsored by municipal governments for local residents, tourist tea performances at hotels and temples for Japanese and foreign travelers, and ritual tea services at temples held in celebration or remembrance. Becoming a member of one tea school's national association, I took part in official meetings and training sessions, and got to know the organizations that structure the tea world from the inside. I also attended or assisted at numerous small formal gatherings (*chaji*) and large-scale gather-

ings (*chakai*) that dot the calendar of most tea aficionados. While many of my observations were with people affiliated with the Urasenke school of tea, which accounts for a majority of practitioners, I spent extensive time at lessons, gatherings, and in conversations with tea participants of other schools, including the Omotesenke, Mushanokōjisenke, Edosenke, Dainihon Sadō Gakkai, and Sekishū schools.³

In addition to this ethnographic work, I conducted semi-structured interviews with over one hundred tea practitioners, including housewives, students, policemen, school teachers, office workers, real estate agents, monks, geisha, and the simply rich and leisured, in addition to the iemoto heads of tea schools and others formally employed in the tea ceremony industry and related sectors, including tea producers, sweet makers, and museum curators. The participants ranged in age from their late teens to their early nineties, and included over three dozen men. I also informally interviewed fifty people from similarly diverse backgrounds involved with tea. Finally, to develop a picture of the relationship of nonpractitioners to the tea ceremony, I took field notes after several dozen informal conversations with those not directly involved in the tea world, including bartenders, hair cutters, taxi drivers, and regulars at the local pub.

The historical investigation was carried out in Kyoto at the Chado Research Center, where I collected information from tea ceremony periodicals, and in Tokyo at the National Diet Library, where I examined tea ceremony depictions in etiquette books. The Textbook Library in Tokyo and the Tokyo Women's Christian University Library provided additional sources, including school textbooks and women's magazines from across the twentieth century.

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Introduction

Nation-Work

Few practices are simultaneously as exotic and representative, esoteric and quotidian, instrumental and sensual, political and cultural as the Japanese tea ceremony.¹ While most Japanese have never participated in a formal tea gathering, and to many its arcane procedures remain alien, the tea ceremony is all but universally recognized as a defining constituent of Japanese culture, integrating arts, manners, and sensibilities deemed peculiarly characteristic of the nation into a single, striking form. The paradoxes of the tea ceremony offer an unusually rich ground for considering some of the still unresolved questions of nationality today.

Nationalism and Nationness

Broadly speaking, two kinds of literature have dominated thinking on this topic. On the one hand, and starting much earlier—at least four decades ago—scholars have examined the rise and spread of nationalism as a political mobilizing ideology and movement, aiming to create or expand a nation-state. Opinions have divided over the origins of nationalism—whether it is a purely modern phenomenon, going back no further than the

era of the American and French Revolutions, or whether it has much older and more primordial roots. But common to this body of writing, whose landmarks include Hugh Seton-Watson's *Nations and States*, John Breuilly's *Nationalism and the State*, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, Anthony Smith's *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, and Eric Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism since 1788*, is a macro-historical focus on processes of nation-building or destroying and the agents that have driven them. Such studies have shown how myths, symbols, customs, memories, and beliefs that more or less loosely bind members of an ethnic community together have provided raw material for nationalists to work into representative cultures, which then have been used to establish the identity and uniqueness of the nation as the legitimate grounds of its political sovereignty. Traditions were invented, holidays consecrated, and representative dances, landscapes, foods, or sports designated emblems of the country as the state sought to secure the loyalty of its citizens, and as supporting institutions—museums, exhibitions, pageants, statuary, and the like—reinforced the supposed natural congruence of its cultural and political borders. During the originating phase of nation formation, modern school systems—along with military conscription—played a central role in patching together an overarching community effacing regional, class, religious, and other differences, and forging a collective identity so potent that those who came to share it would willingly give their lives for it in battle.

On the other hand, over the past two decades, there has developed a growing body of work, spanning sociology, critical theory, and media studies, that has begun to look in meso- or micro-analytical focus at productions and expressions of nationhood, or “nationness,” in everyday situations, where no overt ideological mobilization or political pedagogy is at stake. Directing attention away from the elite projects that galvanize nationalist will or passion for the ends of state, it has investigated the forms in which the nation is experienced or enacted in the commonplace routines of ordinary lives. In works like Michael Billig's *Banal Nationalism*, Tim Edensor's *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Robert Foster's *Materializing the Nation*, and Richard Jenkins's *Being Danish*, studies of seemingly inconsequential facets of day-to-day existence have explored the internally shared, nationally bounded ways of seeing, thinking, and acting that can form an unconscious doxa of the community.² This is an optical shift that has also increased sensitivity to the ways in which what may appear relatively solid, smooth, and coherent when viewed at a distance appears much

more variable, textured, and differentiated when inspected close up.³ Turning a critical eye toward the quotidian, this strain of research has raised awareness of the often unnoticed yet pervasive “forgotten reminders”—the faded flags at the post office or the symbols on money—that embed the nation in everyday life. It has explored how the proliferation of first-person plurals in the press can point through a “national deixis” back to the homeland, which not only serves as their referent but is reproduced and reinvented by them. Like other identities, national belonging too has also become commodified, the consumption of food, music, media, and other products defining and affirming unspoken national sensibilities.⁴

Though they should in principle be complementary, these two strands of research have, on the whole, evolved independently of each other, studies of nationalism training their eye on major historical developments, and studies of nationness on contemporary practices.⁵ To date, little work has attempted to bridge these literatures, with a notable exception in Rogers Brubaker and colleagues' *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, which moves between the two perspectives. The lacuna is due in part to differences in the temporality and the phenomenal expression of their objects of investigation. While studies of nationalism usually adopt historical methods to inquire into the emergence or resurgence of nations over long swathes of time, research on nationhood has typically turned to ethnographic evidence to explore how nations are instantiated in routine practices and the moment-to-moment unfolding of social interactions. Only occasionally have the tensions between these differing approaches surfaced in open debate.⁶ And even then, the most sophisticated attempts to bridge the two mainly present evidence of a disjuncture, without moving toward integration.⁷ Yet both arenas concern the subjective practices and agencies that give objective reality to the nation.⁸ This social labor of objectifying the nation—that is, of making this abstract concept identifiable and tangible—may be termed *nation-work*.⁹

Bridging the Divide

Nation-work is a material condition both of nationalism, as a movement or ideology, and of nationness, as a form of collective existence.¹⁰ Analytically, it allows the two fields to be unified in a single framework, but as a concept it must be first fleshed out itself. Politically, the legitimacy of the nation-state is typically based on claims to the ethno-cultural uniqueness of a ter-

ritorially delimited group of people. A range of practices, objects, events, or figures will conventionally be identified as markers of the asserted culture.¹¹ Characteristically, the underlying relationship between such cultural markers and the nation is synecdochal, the part standing for the whole. Scholars have long noted that the elements in question may be arbitrarily chosen, but they have less often looked at the different ways selected cultural features may relate to the totality. If we consider these, nation-work can be subdivided into at least two general types: *definition/explanation* and *embodiment/cultivation*. The distinction between the two is heuristic: definition and explanation spotlight the linguistic acts of designating the identifying characteristics of a nation, and embodiment and cultivation its physical enactment.¹² Since language is an embodied capacity and what is corporeal relies on linguistic interpretation to move beyond tacit understanding, the difference between them is not hard and fast. But it is useful in distinguishing between principally expository and principally performative ways of concretizing nations. While the former can be precisely enunciated and qualified, the latter are less open to questioning or challenge, as they operate through the body and are therefore less clearly articulated.¹³

Definition designates characteristics that identify the nation. These may be highly elaborated, or abbreviated and elliptical, but they are always selective, highlighting some features while ignoring others. Though they rely on explicit or implicit comparison with external others, the definitions do not necessarily stand in a neutral relationship to members of the nation: they may contribute to the production of what they seem to designate. To describe can be to prescribe. Authorized definitions create standards to which the world is expected to conform, obliging the beholden to comply.¹⁴ Debates and disagreement may result, but these often enliven national imaginings even as they are contested.¹⁵ The importance early studies of nationalism placed on the intelligentsia recognized the potency of these articulations, but once they are taken for granted, even small talk can perpetuate national understandings.¹⁶ Though some definitions are all-encompassing, others select particular—often classed or gendered—cultural elements as typecasts of the whole, intertwining national assertions with nonnational categories.

Nation-work is particularly potent in pedagogical situations, where definition appears as explanation. In this case, the contours of the nation are not so much clarified as motivated, in the form of new information for the edification of those instructed. This will vary not only according to the

level of knowledge assumed among its recipients, but also their responsibility for the new information, which is conditioned by their imputed relationship to the nation. Not simply Americans but men in particular may be expected to know more about baseball than French counterparts. A primary locus of pedagogical nation-work is schools, where the state crafts the young into good members of the community.¹⁷ Nonetheless, definition and its variations operate across a range of sites that includes advertisements, magazine articles, political debates, pamphlets at tourist sites, and even everyday conversation. Differences, commonalities, and disagreements in characterizations of the nation can be tracked by examining what the definitions select and how this material is organized, presented, and debated across time and space. Attention to the various clusters of categorical distinctions and differentiations can reveal how descriptions are used to establish who “we” are versus who “they” are, how these definitions are inflected by class or gender, or how they are generated through comparison with inadequate or exemplary members.

While the work of defining a nation is expository, that of embodiment is performative and sensual, acting on and through the corpus. Its modes encompass the perception of recognizably national sensory experiences and the enactment of recognizably national movements, postures, and modes of interaction. As a performative representation, it is distinct from what some might consider the unconscious dispositions of a “national habitus”—a modal way of doing things.¹⁸ Though such enactments may occur alongside definitions of the nation, they are, in the first instance, dependent on them to set out the national significances. Embodiment, as an objectification of nationness, requires a measure of distance from the consummately mundane to identify the relevant enactments or sensations as physical encapsulations of what is deemed exemplary of the nation.¹⁹ Yet it is a somatic sensibility or performative capacity, and thus its acquisition may involve an investment of time and effort. Because this type of nation-work operates in and through the body, intersections are common with other social categories, such as gender and class, that are sustained in part through physical enactment.

Embodiment’s pedagogical formulation—cultivation—works to transform people into better or idealized members of the nation, generally by mimicking a practice or sensibility previously defined as national. As an uneven process of skill attainment, cultivation highlights differentiations within membership.²⁰ Indeed, it is precisely because all members of the

community do not equally perform the characteristics or qualities indicative of national culture that refinement of these becomes necessary, transforming—for example—some Japanese into “real Japanese” or “better Japanese.” Embodiment and cultivation can be examined at a range of public sites and cultural performances, as well as in subtle expressions in everyday life. Once the crucible of schools is left behind, these bodily practices in which nationhood is incorporated and enacted become one of the most powerful forms of nation-work.

Nation and Categorization

The nation-work approach builds on the recent cognitive shift in studies of nation, race, and ethnicity, conceptualizing these phenomena as matters of categorization and classification rather than as substances or traits.²¹ Early studies of ethnicity often took for granted a view of the world in which identity, culture, and community were neatly coterminous: ethnic culture was coherent, ethnic communities were bounded, and ethnic groups could be clearly identified by the unique culture they bore. While such Herderian assumptions still inform many common understandings of not only ethnic groups but also nations, analysts over the past forty years have embraced constructivist views of ethnicity as a fundamentally relational process of boundary negotiation.²² Fredrik Barth's 1969 introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* contributed the most substantial push dislodging static notions of ethnicity, replacing them with the interactional, processual, situational, and relational formulations.²³ Proposing that ethnicity emerges as groups are constituted through negotiating boundaries between them, Barth argued that ethnicity should be understood as fundamentally transactional and rooted in the ways such self- and other-ascription canalizes social life.

Since Barth, it has become a truism that ethnicity springs from we–they distinctions drawn in contrast between a collective self and a dominant other or multiple others to create a social distance between “us” and “them.” But a danger lies in too keen a focus on the action at the boundaries, which can lead to a neglect of the variegations that they enclose and their impact on ethnicity formation. The underlying assumption a simplistic boundary-approach courts is that all members within a division are functionally interchangeable: they can be transposed with each other without altering the ethnicity construction under investigation. Certainly other differences may be apparent, but these are treated as irrelevant to the boundary relationships

of immediate analytical interest. The we–they division is, to put it in strong terms, totalizing for the task at hand. But the image of homogeneity that ethnicity projects is often constituted in part through internal heterogeneity, as illustrated in Yen Le Espiritu's evocative study of a Filipino community in the United States, in which she shows how the moral distinctiveness of the group is claimed vis-à-vis Americans through branding promiscuous Filipina teenagers as “more Americanized” or “more Westernized” than others. Labeling these “bad girls” helps constitute an image of internal homogeneity that defines the ethnic community.²⁴

This is to suggest that not only differences across ethnic boundaries but differentiations within them are critical to group formation. Membership in a group may be a matter of degree or qualified in particular ways, as theorists stretching as far back as Max Weber have noted.²⁵ Yet analytic engagement is brief, and the implications of this promising line of inquiry remain underdeveloped. This may be due in part to the paucity of words in English that can be honed into analytic tools for examining degrees of ethnic—and a fortiori, for our purposes, national—membership.²⁶ While intensities of religious faith are captured by the term *religiosity* and qualifications of gender attributes may be expressed by *femininity* or *masculinity*, there are no equivalent English terms such as *ethnicity* or *nationality* to convey relative degrees of membership in ethnic or national categories. Although observable, these differentiations have received little sustained study.

Consideration of nation-work, however, suggests that these may be captured by noting three possible operations it can involve. The first is simply *distinction*—that is, the identification of traits that distinguish the nation from other nations, as in the classic we–they contrasts studied by Barth. The second is *specification*. Membership in a given social category is not always direct, but may be mediated by other categories, as a substantial literature on the way intersecting axes of social categorization, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and class can construct one another, has shown.²⁷ Historically, as is well known, nation formation conditioned the relationship between the individual and the state by gender: men could serve the state as soldiers, and therewith in many cases enjoyed the right to vote, from which women, who could serve the state as mothers, were excluded.²⁸ What is national may also be specified through class categories. Invented national traditions were, as Eric Hobsbawm has shown, often originally practices of the upper classes that filtered downward.²⁹ The middle classes could also supply nation-defining characteristics, as with German *Bildung*

and *Kultur*.³⁰ In other cases, practices originating among the lower classes could become national symbols, like the Cuban rumba, though these—the Argentinean tango would be another example—might need their origins to be obscured to acquire this status.³¹

Nation-work, however, may also involve a third kind of categorization—*differentiation*. Who “we” are may be established not only vis-à-vis “them,” but also other members of “us.”³² A person may be a particularly good or bad member, a typical or strange member, an exemplary or phony member, of the national community. Here the contrast is with neither an external other nor even an internal other. Indeed, there is no “other” in such cases—the comparison is with fellows precisely as fellows, for it is shared membership that enables the differentiation.³³ Often such evaluations are crafted against a standard ideal—patriotism measured by the gauge of a war hero who has risked or sacrificed his life for the country, a *real* American showing up those who are, in a pointed adjective, *un-American*.³⁴ But if in some cases what makes a good compatriot is clear enough, conflict over judgments of this kind may also occur.³⁵

Distinction, specification, and differentiation are not simply alternative modalities of ethnonational categorization, but constitutive of the broader category itself. An individual may be Scottish by being decisively not English; a woman may be a good citizen through procreation; a Canadian may prove her colors by striving to be a good Canadian. Capture of we—they distinctions made across national boundaries, nonnational categories mediating national identities, and differentiations internal to a national community can sharpen analysis of just how nations are evoked and enacted. Nation-work, operating as it does by definition and explanation, embodiment and cultivation, typically involves these further gradations.

The Tea Ceremony

These considerations may serve to bring the peculiarity of the tea ceremony in Japan into sharper comparative focus. To a rare degree, as an object of investigation it stands at a juncture between the two levels at which nation-work has normally operated: nationalism and nationness. The tea ceremony, as we shall see, played an integral role in the construction of an ideology of Japan as a nation-state, reaching a pitch of political intensity as the country plunged into overseas expansion. But if it rose to this position in an epoch of “primary nationalism,” when the nation-state was still being erected, it has

survived into the period of what the sociologist Kosaku Yoshino terms “secondary nationalism,” that is, “the type that preserves and enhances national identity in an already long-established nation-state.”³⁶ There it retains an exceptional position among the range of emblematic practices, places, and objects that in Japan, as elsewhere, define cultural nationhood: the characteristic venues, food and drink, clothes and interiors, sports and spectacles, traditional customs, not to speak of the arts or language itself, that distill the distinctive life of the nation. That tea has been able to bridge successive epochs and forms of nation-work with such *éclat* has in part been due to the remarkable metamorphoses in its primary social carriers—moving from an aesthetic pastime of aristocrats, to a political tool of warriors, to a salon for business elites, to become, in the twentieth century, largely a hobby of middle-class housewives. Unlike most other practices that came to occupy comparable positions in the symbolism of emergent nation-building, the tea ceremony was not, and is not, a recently “invented tradition.” But its longevity is not its least astonishing feature, for it offers a case of extraordinary stability in the face of change—the actual *doing* of the tea ceremony has altered remarkably little over the past four hundred years.³⁷

Tea thus offers a striking site for observing how people may do different things by doing the same thing. Originally an accoutrement of power politics in a premodern society, *chanoyu* as it was known, was recast as a symbol of Japan as a modern state and employed to unify a national community. Transformed into a hobby, it retains enough of this past to project Japaneseness in ostensibly banal conditions, continuing to condense and give form to a pregnant vision of the essence of the nation. As a practice of nation-work, at a nexus between high-flying nationalist discourses and mundane expressions of nationness in everyday life, it is unlike many others. Today, it is a leisure activity like sports, but has no spectators. It is a hobby, but encased in a rigid hierarchical organization. It is a ritual, but also a business. It is an art, but also a routine. It exists in a deliberate, negotiated apartness from everyday life, yet lays claim to a synthesis of everything that is Japanese. It is practiced now mainly by homemakers, among the least prestigious groups in society, yet reaches upward to the political stratosphere of prime ministers and state visits.

The country where tea holds such sway appears—on the surface—to be an unusual example of a strongly bounded monoethnic community.³⁸ Japan is conventionally listed as one of the only two large societies in the world—the other is Korea—where ethnic minorities make up less than three percent of the population.³⁹ Because the ideological habits and beliefs that

reproduce national understandings are embedded in the everyday routines of this relatively stable society, it might be thought that nationality need not be constantly indicated or explicitly reinforced. Yet in a surprising number of instances when the national could be taken for granted or merely implied, it is not, and uncovering the uses of such explicit markings can tell us something about the procedures of nation-work at large. Although contrasts with other nations always contribute to the construction of nationality—whether multiethnic or otherwise—a largely monoethnic case draws out the ways intra-national differentiations may also underwrite its production and reproduction. Thus in Japan what is at stake is less *whether* someone is Japanese, a question that nearly always allows for a clear and automatic yes-or-no answer, but *what kind of* Japanese that person is.

The tea ceremony, as a complex practice involving a combination of traditional arts and exercised within a highly developed organizational structure, offers material of unusual fascination for examining nation-work. Although in principle, symbolically laden objects, events, figures, and practices all enter the repertoire of such work, practices and events—the tea ceremony includes both—offer particularly strategic sites for exploring its operations. Objects can only in a limited sense become a part of the body, supplying at best indirect supports for physical in-corporation of the nation. The same applies to public figures. Practices, such as dance and sports, and events, such as holidays and parades, however, provide abundant material for the study not only of national representations, but also of how national meanings are experienced through and potentially transform the body. The boundaries between the various sites of nation-work are amorphous—practices can be performed at or as events, events often incorporate particular practices, and both frequently include nationally representative objects or public figures. The tea ceremony, as a skill that is formally taught and learned, favors pedagogical formulations and expressions of nationhood, where explanation of what otherwise might be taken for granted is at a premium. But these by no means exhaust it as a medium for nation-work. Chanoyu is richly multifaceted—it physically transforms the participants, requires a large number of material components, and rests on an elaborate written philosophy. Because it is so widely understood as archetypically Japanese, it provides an exceptional variety of angles for exploring how and with what effects Japaneseness is produced.

It would be surprising if a phenomenon as striking as the tea ceremony had not attracted a substantial literature. Academic treatment of it, how-

ever, is relatively recent.⁴⁰ In Japan, Tsutsui Hiroichi's *Chasho no Keifu* opened the field in 1978 for the pioneering work of Kumakura Isao, *Kindai Chadōshi no Kenkyū* (Research on the Modern History of the Tea Ceremony)—covering its development from the late Tokugawa to early Showa periods—which first appeared in 1980, followed by a series of monographs by the same author over the next two decades. Following Kumakura, other Japanese historians producing important contributions to the field include Tanihata Akio, whose *Kinsei Chadōshi* starts with the Muromachi era, and whose *Kuge Chadō no Kenkyū* explores the tea practice of aristocrats since the Middle Ages; Tani Akira, who provides a close analysis of tea records in his *Chakaiki no Kenkyū*; and Tanimura Reiko, author of a penetrating study of the tea involvement of Ii Naosuke, the last statesman of the shogunate.⁴¹ The mingling of tea practice and power politics, and the evolution of collecting and taste, have provided the impetus for much of this scholarship.⁴² Foreign historians have for the most part worked in a similar vein, yielding two distinguished collections, the first edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao, *Tea in Japan: Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, and the second by Morgan Pitelka, *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice*, which brings together some of the best recent research in the field. Outstanding studies of particular forms or figures in the history of tea include Christine Guth's *Art, Tea and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle*, Patricia Graham's *Tea of the Sage: The Art of Sencha*, and Pitelka's *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan*. To date, the historiography of the practice has provided the major contributions to our knowledge of it.

Anthropological approaches, the other leading branch of literature on tea, have been more sporadic. Produced principally by foreigners, they extend from Dorinne Kondo's structuralist analysis of the ceremony, through Herbert Plutschow's geomantic reading, to Rupert Cox's investigation of Zen elements in the practice, and—at greatest length—Jennifer Anderson's *Introduction to Japanese Tea Ritual*, which treats it as essentially a cult, whose functions are closest to those of a religion.⁴³ Sociological studies of the contemporary tea world are still less developed, though here two scholars have broken fresh ground; Barbara Mori argues that the practice offers women an affirmation, however ambiguous, of their role in society,⁴⁴ while Etsuko Kato's compelling *The Tea Ceremony and Women's Empowerment in Modern Japan* claims, more emphatically, that it has become a means for improving women's social status.

A feature common to much of the literature, historical or anthropological, on the tea ceremony has been its close intellectual relationship with, and at times material dependence on, the most powerful institution of the postwar tea world, the Urasenke Foundation. This is a connection that has affected, and constrained, research in the field. The foundation is an arm of the iemoto system that essentially controls the practice of tea in Japan, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. In the aftermath of the Second World War, this system was frequently criticized as a vestige of feudalism. But voices objecting to it were fading by the late fifties, when the first serious study of the iemoto as a traditional pattern of organization in the arts appeared: Nishiyama Matsunosuke's 1959 *Iemoto no Kenkyū*, which remains the standard treatment to this day.⁴⁵ In English, Francis Hsu's *Iemoto: The Heart of Japan* followed in 1975, projecting the iemoto as the core of Japanese social life. Neither work specifically addressed the business interests undergirding the iemoto in the tea world, and there can be little doubt that the lack of a more critical distance from these grand authorities has inhibited research on the tea ceremony.⁴⁶ A notable exception, Robert Kramer's trenchant dissertation, "The Tea Cult in History," never saw publication.

Recently, this situation has begun to change. Morgan Pitelka's treatment of the legends surrounding Raku pottery in his *Handmade Culture* is a sterling example. *The Ideologies of Japanese Tea* by Tim Cross, focusing on the role of tea in nationalist mobilization before and during the Pacific War, and its cinematic representations since, follows in Pitelka's path. This is a work that owes much, in turn, to Tanaka Hidetaka's collection of essays, *Kindai Chadō no Rekishi-Shakaigaku*, which examines the way intellectuals—among them the author's ancestor, founder of the first explicitly nationalist tea association in Meiji times—retooled the tea ceremony as a distinctively Japanese tradition in the early twentieth century. Yet the historical coverage remains partial in most of these studies, and neither the historians nor the ethnographers offer a sustained analysis of the relationship between the national meanings of the tea ceremony and actual tea practice.

Looking Ahead

Profiting from the work across disciplines that has appeared since the eighties, this book tries to remedy some of the lacunae in the literature by at once offering a more rounded account of chanoyu and analyzing it as a signal example of nation-work. The two aims are not identical, but neither can

be approached without the other. In his famous essay on the gift, Marcel Mauss argued that it had to be treated as a total social phenomenon, though the actual expression was the more Durkheimian *fait social total*. His examples were the potlatch and the kula ring, in what he called "archaic" societies, before the advent of a state, let alone a nation. It is therefore not surprising that in Mauss's enumeration of the various institutions he had in mind—including the legal, the economic, the religious, the aesthetic—he did not at first include the political.⁴⁷ Today, in a case like the tea ceremony, that would be harder to do. For much the same reasons, Mauss's agenda also omitted an historical examination. That too would scarcely be feasible in the case of tea. This work will attend to these dimensions. That it is unlikely to satisfy Mauss's full program goes without saying. What it will attempt is to combine a number of angles of vision that have not hitherto been brought together in the same way.

As Max Weber observed nearly a century ago, the concept of "nation" incorporates an almost analytically crippling range of social phenomena, from the multiple definitions and determinations of the collective belonging it denotes, to the great variability in the strength of the emotional attachment of membership, across both time and segments of a population.⁴⁸ Only a many-stranded methodological approach can begin to do justice to this diversity.⁴⁹ Each chapter of this book therefore applies a different interpretive lens—phenomenological, historical, institutional, and ethnographic—to capture the ways Japaneseness crystallizes in the tea ceremony. Here historical reconstruction will seek to establish the events and actors enabling that crystallization in the first place. Institutional analysis will turn from originating to sustaining conditions, to show how national meanings can become invested in organizational structures that facilitate their perpetuation. Phenomenological description will explore the ways that such meanings, in the case of the tea ceremony, are encoded in spatial structures, material objects, and corporeal forms that urge—even mold the body into—a sentient experience of Japaneseness. Ethnographic inquiry will ask how those concerned invoke or enact these national valences in everyday life. Yet whether across long stretches of historical time and wide expanses of collective identity, or more fleeting rhythms of individual experience and interpersonal interaction, a similar repertoire of action can be observed. Nation-work is the cord pulling together these varied dimensions into an overall pattern in what follows.

To bring home at the outset the sheer intensity of the tea ceremony as an instance of nation-work, Chapter 1 offers a phenomenology of it as a per-

formance, treated as a flow of spaces, objects, and movements. Descriptions of tea rooms and the actions within them are readily found in the tea literature, but these typically remain schematic summaries of a complex experience that requires more meticulous subjective reconstruction if its sense and effects are to be analytically understood. Contrasts with everyday life evoke distinctively national resonances, creating a Japanese space within Japan, sustained by connections to other practices marked as Japanese.

Changing register, Chapter 2 looks at the history of the tea ceremony in Japan from premodern to present times, without which its contemporary phenomenology is incomprehensible. As noted above, this history is the dimension of the practice most thoroughly researched, both within and beyond Japan. But it has rarely, if at all, been recounted as a full narrative. The reasons for this, though no doubt in part due to gaps in the record, have more fundamentally reflected the role of the practice in the modern trajectory of the country. While its evolution from the Muromachi to Meiji eras—the fifteenth to early twentieth centuries—has been documented as one of the splendors of a now uncontentious past, its transformation into a national symbol in the inter-war and postwar periods of the last century pose more controversial questions, which tea scholarship has often preferred to avoid. Without pretending to any comprehensive coverage, this chapter tells a more continuous political story than has hitherto been recounted.

One of the impediments to such continuity has been the power of the *iemoto* system in postwar Japan. No study of the tea ceremony can ignore this formidable reality, which dominates the tea field today to a far greater extent than ever before. Yet the contemporary *iemoto*, who patronize much writing about tea, do not welcome investigation of their own operations, which remain a closed book in most of the literature. Chapter 3 attempts to remedy this lacuna with an institutional analysis of the structure and activities of the *iemoto*. Here sociological emphasis falls not only on the ideological and social, but also on the economic operations of the *iemoto* system, now in effect a set of modern business corporations invested in the Japaneseness of the practice they sell.

Chapter 4 shifts register again, moving from institutional to ethnographic terrain, to look at the ordinary practitioners of the tea ceremony: who they are, how they learn the ceremony, and how they invoke Japaneseness not only as they validate the authority of the *iemoto*, but also in their routines in the tea room. Even securely within a well-established nation, tea

aficionados nonetheless occasion and employ the national inflections of the practice in their endeavors, and this chapter examines how.

Chapter 5 concludes the book by turning to the salience of the ceremony in the surrounding society at large as it is projected in the various systems of a media-saturated society. It ends by offering some comparative reflections on *chanoyu*, drawing on other classic venues of nation-work—gymnastics and music—in Europe and Asia, and returning the different dimensions of the tea ceremony to the overall framework under which they are viewed: as an exceptionally vivid and concentrated illustration of one of the fundamental processes of modernity, the work of making nations.

market. Later, the iemoto would fortify their command by building membership organizations that supplied a nationwide apparatus for policing tea preparation techniques and sustaining dependence on iemoto-defined standards of taste and the value of utensils.

Throughout these transformations, the tea ceremony—though not the tea of the iemoto—was wedded to the apex of political power, facilitating its later nationalization. In the first phase, the main competitor to the iemoto in the field of legitimate tea practice was the Sekishū-style of daimyo tea, which remained the variety of choice among the dominant classes through the Tokugawa, Meiji, and Taisho periods. The decline of its latter-day carriers, the sukisha business elite, in the 1920s, and the subsequent rise of nationalist fervor and the mobilization of cultural activities for the war effort, enabled the iemoto to annex associations between the tea ceremony and the Japanese nation diffused through etiquette and history textbooks in the school system, and to represent themselves as the living embodiment of this pediment of Japanese culture. But it was not until after the war that the political need for promoting Japan as a “cultured country” enabled the iemoto to become icons wielding symbolic power not simply over tea practice, but also over Japanese culture in general, and thereby to position themselves firmly among the country’s elites. The iemoto could then employ a conflation of tea and Japanese culture to market new products beyond their traditional base of tea preparation certificates and utensil legitimization, and to diagnose problems of Japanese culture to which they could offer tea as a solution. Thus the tea ceremony remains such a stalwart symbol of Japan not simply because it was ideologically *imbued with* national associations, but because the organizational infrastructure sustaining the tea world has become economically *invested in* its Japaneseness.

The iemoto have been the great beneficiaries of these processes. Though merchandising and mass distribution might compromise the aura surrounding their products as emblems of an authentic traditional culture, they have done little damage in Japan, for the aristocratic bearing of the iemoto, projecting the image of an ancient lineage living *in* but not *off* the world of Japanese tradition, preserves the sanctifying halo. Their commodities offer not merely a distinctively Japanese option alongside other lifestyle variants, but also a way of becoming better members of the nation through them. Who these consumers are, we turn to next.

Enacting Tea

Doing and Demonstrating Japaneseness

Authority cannot simply be claimed, but must be acknowledged to be effective, for its power lies in the belief and submission of those over whom it is held. To decipher the workings of the tea world created by the iemoto, it is necessary to unravel how this power is recognized, validated, and reproduced by his following. These adherents not only activate the iemoto’s authority over the ritual and their symbolic power over Japanese culture, but also enliven it through their own tea practice as they invoke and perform the historically produced national associations grafted onto the iemoto system. This vivification occurs both in their interactions in institutional structures, and in their commonplace tea activities. Indeed, they routinely invoke the Japaneseness peddled by the iemoto in venues far from his gaze. But to grasp how Japaneseness is enacted through tea requires first an examination of the relationship between the masters themselves and those who offer their unflagging allegiance.

Living the Lineage

Genealogy—a crucial tool in the historic extension of the iemoto’s symbolic power—continues today to anchor the tea practice of adepts. Signs of the

ancestral connections to Rikyū woven into the fabric of the tea world provide subtle yet recurrent reminders of the basis of the iemoto's authority, while the kinship metaphors in common use project him as the head of a great family.¹ Indeed, no membership meeting of the Urasenke school can proceed without invoking the symbolic presence of the patriarch, as all participants chant in unison, "The iemoto is the parent, the members are siblings, and because we are thus of one body, we should not forget to embrace when we meet." Symbolic adoption into the ménage—a practice of all tea schools—adds weight to such pledges and positions the inductee within the lineage. With several years of training and certificate acquisition, an initiate may rise to the rank of "tea master." Baptized into the tea world, she receives a "tea name," combining the character *sō* (宗), taken from Rikyū's sobriquet *Sōeki*, and typically a character from her own name, that will henceforth identify her as a member of the clan.² With the tea name comes permission to emblazon one of the iemoto's family crests onto kimonos worn at tea gatherings—a privilege not to be borne lightly. Teachers caution students receiving the insignia to be always on their best behavior when wearing it, as it marks them as representatives of the iemoto, and can be revoked for inappropriate conduct.

In the Urasenke tradition, as in others, a ceremony tinged with the arcane consummates this rite of passage, which typically takes place in a tea room. Dressed in a formal kimono, the inductee kneels humbly before her teacher, who has positioned herself in front of the alcove, the apex in the architectural hierarchy, to assume the role of the iemoto's emissary.³ In his stead, she carefully unfolds a statement on a long, horizontal piece of high-quality paper, written in vertical calligraphy by the iemoto's hand (though a laser copy, of course) conveying his regret that he cannot be present to confer the name. In a solemn pronouncement welcoming the postulant into the fold, she declaims the iemoto's words of congratulation to the student and encouragement to pursue her studies further. An additional statement, included in the packet dispatched from Kyoto, may be read as well, informing the initiate that she has become a full member of the Urasenke school of tea and its historical legacy, but—bringing the family and the business together—that she has also attained the status of teacher and its associated benefits within the Tankōkai association.

But this is just the prelude to the ceremonial climax when the teacher presents the iemoto's certificate bestowing the new "tea name" on the student. Printed on thick cotton paper and written in classical script utilizing a



Students kneel attentively at a name-giving ceremony

different word order from modern Japanese, the document is accompanied by computer-printed transliterations of the texts on a small sheet of office paper—visual and tactile contrasts between the antiquated and contemporary that further underscore the weight of history. These long-awaited prizes are handled with the same care as a treasured utensil. Housed in a cedar box and tied with a thick ribbon in the official Urasenke family colors, they are often afterward displayed in an alcove. As the student receives the documents with a bow, she demonstrates her mastery of etiquette that has brought her this far by immediately offering a token of her gratitude to the teacher: the equivalent of several hundred dollars in crisp new bills, amounting to a portion of, or in some cases, the same amount as, the fee for entering the iemoto's extended family.⁴ Employing a box of sweets or an open fan as a presentation tray, she extends them to the teacher with the same flow of humbling motions as she would a bowl of tea.

The sacrosanct atmosphere invoking the iemoto's presence is replicated in the rituals that sanction progressing adherents to learn the most esoteric tea preparation procedures. Again, those attending don their most formal kimono, but the small corps of students is accompanied by an external instructor, invited to ensure that the procedure—taught mimetically and not to be found in any textbook—is carried out correctly. In a rare display of her own *temae* before students, the teacher performs the almost hour-long procedure before a hushed class, attentively setting the flow of movements

to mind and body, for after the single viewing, the initiates will have to replicate it, relying as little as possible on their mentor verbally coaching them across any gaps in the somatic chain that putatively links them to the grand masters.⁵ Practitioners sometimes talk excitedly about the yet more esoteric procedures that only the top-ranked assistants to the iemoto are allowed to learn. These “ur”-temae, supposedly simplified by Rikyū into the range of preparation procedures accessible to the masses today, lie at the apex of a hierarchy of procedures, whose receding peak ensures both continuous focus on the top and continuous effort to approach it.

In ascending this pyramid, disciples grant the iemoto authority over the entirety of their tea practice: from how it is done to what it is done with. Even after decades of training, few adherents innovate their own temae, and those who do quickly label it “outlaw tea.” While the core procedures remain stable over time, the iemoto may develop one or two new preparation methods, inevitably variants of standard practices. And occasionally they may sanction small adjustments to canonical temae: changing, for example, whether a cord is straightened before tying it. The power of the past legitimates these amendments, with modifications accompanied by statements that recent historical research has revealed that they are indeed the original way the procedure was carried out. Though slight, such alterations spread quickly through the ranks of practitioners via the semiannual lectures and demonstrations by the top-level teachers, in direct service to the iemoto, at regional or local meetings of the national tea associations.

The material components of tea preparation provide conduits for the extension of the iemoto’s command—and even presence—as well. Although practitioners are encouraged, “in the spirit of Rikyū,” to employ as a tea utensil any object they deem appropriate, the styles of implements commonly used are remarkably limited, channeled by the aesthetic preferences of particular iemoto, the *konomi* discussed in Chapter 3 anchoring orthodox forms. Innovations are not unheard of—a plate picked up on a trip abroad might become a tray for sweets, for example—but most utensils employed at lessons and gatherings originate from the canon of iemoto-sanctioned styles. Acquiring an appreciation for the aesthetic taste of past tea virtuosi is, in part, an embodied accomplishment, aided by the regular rotation of utensils by season and type of temae. Students making tea with a *Rikyū-gonomi* ivory scoop—its smooth curves and cool touch contrasting with the natural variegations of the bamboo standard—learn that it is appropriate for use only with the somber colors and elegant lines of the most

formal utensils. When using a *Hō’un dana*—a mahogany-colored wooden stand accented with a few swirling clouds of gold leaf—and told that it was designed by the fifteenth-generation Urasenke iemoto, students receive a lesson not only in genealogy, but also in aesthetic sensibility, as they encounter the stylistic preferences of this iemoto known for his opulent taste. This stands in contrast to the misshapen and worn utensils used in October as the summer withers to winter, when students preparing tea with a rusted brazier may be told—accurately or not—that its use began with the third-generation iemoto in the Sen schools, whose austere aesthetic sense earned him the moniker “Wabi Sōtan.”

Branding utensils with an iemoto’s approval, *kaō* ciphers and *hakogaki* messages ensure his omnipresence, and practitioners may hastily check underneath a lid or a bowl and “see if the iemoto is there” to assess its worth.⁶ More than legitimating the tools they mark, these signs project the iemoto into the tea space, which even if only in symbolic form, still demands a respectful etiquette. Aficionados take pains to ensure that utensils made or signed by more recent iemoto do not usurp those by one further back in the lineage, a feeling that might be invoked, for example, if a scroll made by a sixteenth-generation iemoto is hung beside a bamboo flower container signed by his eleventh-generation forebear.⁷ Viewing and discussing the inscriptions on utensils or boxes—a central activity of tea gatherings—extends the “iemoto’s gaze” yet further. Signed wooden receptacles are typically displayed in the alcove of the waiting room, around which the guests crowd as they try to decipher the implement’s name, maker, and geographical origin inscribed in flowing ink. This skill, enhanced by memorizing indexes of the signature styles of the iemoto, is prized, and those who can identify the lettering share their success with their neighbors, asking, for example, “Is that the new signature of the iemoto? I heard he changed it recently,” or simply uttering a sigh of appreciation, “Ah, that must be the eighth-generation grand master.” In discussing the boxes, the guests not only enact a respect for their contents, but also display their expertise in assessing the meanings and significance of what are, to the untrained eye, simply elegantly written hieroglyphics. For the host, the signed lids exhibit her taste and wealth while connecting her to the apex of the tea world. Hardly cheap—the brush strokes can add up to several thousand dollars to the utensil price—they are nonetheless a necessity on most formal tea occasions: those without such tokens will borrow them from friends, apologize profusely for their absence, or even decline to host gatherings.⁸ What pieces have been en-

dorsed by which *iemoto* is duly recorded on the “gathering record” (*kaiki*), handwritten in elegant brushstrokes on heavy-weight paper. As this document is passed around for examination before or during the tea preparation, guests with an extensive knowledge of the *iemoto*, along with the famous craftspeople, monks, and other historical figures associated with the imple-



Practitioners discuss the box lids on display at a large tea gathering

ments, are alerted to the most prized pieces, an aid in directing the utensil-dominated conversation with both the host and the other guests.

Yet the *iemoto* do more than authorize the rigid rules governing tea-making procedures and define a fuzzier set of aesthetic preferences in utensil combinations; they also serve as the standard in making practical decisions about uncodified matters. If the utensils are tightly arrayed on a narrow *tatami* mat, for example, a teacher may qualify the particular arrangement by saying, “This mat actually is the smaller ‘Tokyo size,’ but at the *iemoto*’s they use the traditional, larger ‘Kyoto size,’ and so the distances [between the objects] should be greater.” An expert practitioner at a New Year’s tea gathering used a similar technique when she complemented the woman who owned the tea room on how fresh the new green bamboo fountain looked: “Before it was a bit crooked, but this one is absolutely straight. Though many people cut the bamboo diagonally, my *gyōtei* teacher [high-ranking assistant to the *iemoto*] says that it should be cut straight.” The tea-room owner, both checking the rule and acknowledging her guest’s connection to the top, promptly responded, “Is that how it’s done at *Urasenke* headquarters?” The *iemoto* may serve as the guide in deciding not only that something is done, but also how it is done, with deviations from the standard justified by invoking his practice. At a lesson where a student followed the common procedure of placing sweets made of sugar pressed into a seasonal shape in the upper right-hand corner of a tray and round, cracker-style sweets impressed with a design in the lower left-hand corner, the teacher scolded her: “How you arrange the sweets depends not only on the rules of what they’re made of, but also their shape. If it’s a waterfall, it goes on top, even if it’s a cracker-style sweet. If you go to the *iemoto*’s, you see these things. They would never do it in an unnatural order there.”

Correcting students might be common for most teachers, but correcting a fellow cognoscenti is a different matter, and the *iemoto*’s practice can be used to assert authority among equals in such cases. This may occur at the large gatherings where teachers mix, and the host may employ unusual implements in an attempt to delight the visitors. A seasoned practitioner who tries to slice a runny sweet with a pick—the typical mode of consumption—might be cautioned by a fellow guest that “at the *iemoto*’s” everyone uses a paper napkin to raise that particular style of delectable to the mouth. A woman who places a handkerchief on her lap before eating the meal—a commonly observed practice—can be corrected forthrightly by the host of the gathering: “No one uses a napkin at the *iemoto*’s.” Someone tempted to

cool herself with the largely symbolic fan all guests carry might be warned that at the iemoto's she would be thrown out of the tea room for such behavior.⁹ As such, the doyen's dictates do not simply confine as they define proper tea, but provide resources for extending a practitioner's own authority.

Though adherents most often acknowledge and enact the iemoto's authority at a distance, direct encounters provide rare yet treasured opportunities to legitimate his command in person. Ancestral memorial rites, part of the annual life of any Japanese family, are magnified into grand spectacles in



Invitees to a large tea gathering enjoy a modified kaiseki meal accompanying the tea preparation

the tea world, with over a thousand invitees from across the country traveling to Kyoto for the celebrations. Although a ticket to attend one of the main memorial services (or the New Year's celebration) at the headquarters costs upwards of \$500—in addition to transportation and hotel fees, as well as the requisite gift money—even middle-class practitioners will squirrel away the funds to attend. These invitations are not easily declined, for it is otherwise difficult to gain admittance to—let alone be served tea in—the famous tea rooms constituting the heart of the family compound, imbued with the mystique of the past iemoto who built them. After years of reading about and viewing photos of these chambers in official publications, invitees are granted the opportunity not merely to tour past, but to experience in actual use the originals, often designated important cultural properties. At Urasenke, items such as the doors on which the eleventh-generation iemoto listed in elegant calligraphy the official temae or the old well used to draw water on New Year's day are pointed out by older, more experienced practitioners, who display as they convey their knowledge to younger ones. While imbibing tea in the rarefied atmosphere of these rooms is attractive, more alluring still is the chance to admire and even handle the original utensils that serve as blueprints for the replicas employed at lessons. The tea services are carried out with select antique bowls, tea caddies, and scrolls favored by time-honored iemoto, as well as tea scoops made by past masters, which are passed around and afterward placed on display, attended—and guarded—by the iemoto's retainers, who relate tales about their origin and history. These are conveyed yet further when practitioners return and recount their pilgrimage to those who remained at home, offering detailed descriptions of the implements that, in the anthropomorphic metaphor commonly used in comparing well-known pieces to stars, “appeared on stage” at the gathering.

While the experience of the rooms and utensils may be intimate, the events themselves are not. Wrapped in their most formal kimono, over a thousand practitioners arrive at appointed times, staggered by half hour intervals, at the headquarters to begin a day of waiting patiently in very crowded spaces. Divided into groups of about twenty and directed to various holding rooms, they sit knee-to-knee and shoulder-to-shoulder with a rigid discipline as they wait up to an hour for each of the half dozen tea services. Nonpractitioners with invitations in hand are nudged to close up the distances and sit efficiently, if uncomfortably, on their knees. The lax are prodded to attention by the top-ranked assistants to the iemoto who stand by to orient the lost and police behavior: folding fans are not to be unfurled



Practitioners wait to enter the tea room at a large gathering at a shrine in Tokyo

in the stuffy rooms, and the cameras that commemorate most tea gatherings must be tucked away.

The chance to witness the iemoto making tea is a coveted highlight, but this—like most encounters—is weighted by pro forma displays of deference and decorum. Those fortunate enough to gain entry to a service by the master will spend most of it snapped into the position traditionally indicating fealty to a lord: rounded hands, with the thumbs and index fingers curving into a circle, placed on the floor at the knees. The less lucky will still have the opportunity to encounter the iemoto as he makes periodic rounds of greetings, offering a wide smile and kind words as he blitzes through the flock bowing in return. Veneration is expressed a final time as the adherents

leave the premises with a formal bow in the direction of the family compound after passing its main gate.

Yet such opportunities to encounter the iemoto in his own preserve are difficult to come by, and for many adherents the chance to see the iemoto in person is limited to public tea services at Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines, known as *kencha*. On such occasions, the top assistant teachers arrive far in advance of the iemoto's appearance to arrange the utensils for his just-in-time arrival, as he is escorted from a chauffeured car to the tea site, official photographers running by his side. Awaiting the grand master are hundreds of kimono-clad adherents, kneeling in straight lines several rows deep, on the broad deck projected from the front of the building. Most will have to crane their necks to view the priests performing a solemn service of Buddhist or Shinto rites that precede the dignified ritual tea performance by the iemoto, but they will still be able to follow along, guided by the a microphone-bearing emcee. Those who did not arrive early enough to get a seat within the building will stand outside, straining for a glimpse, and taking part in the unison bows.¹⁰



An iemoto performing a ritual tea service at a shrine with a cameraman capturing the event



Tea practitioners watching an iemoto perform a ritual tea service at a shrine

After the ritual tea offering, the iemoto changes from a kimono to a well-tailored three-piece suit to attend the accompanying tea services—usually three or four—organized by practitioners. Projecting the image of a gentleman rather than a “grand tea master,” he shifts from a position of responsibility and instruction to that of a guest, though the most eminent one. Some iemoto attend the full tea preparation as would any other participant,

examining the utensils in the waiting room and mingling with adherents before entering the tea room to assume the position of the main guest.¹¹ But if pressed for time, he may visit the accompanying tea services only briefly, in a strictly organized event where even the tea preparation itself is sidelined for photo opportunities—these yielding prized possessions for practitioners who may keep the shots in their wallet or display them in their living room beside pictures of family members. At a kenchu service in Tokyo, an announcement came in the morning that the iemoto would attend an accompanying tea preparation at 8:30 am. Sent ahead to ensure that everything was organized, a handful of his representatives led a dry run-through of an abbreviated *temae*—the lengthy purification motions axed to save the iemoto’s time. His appearance was heralded by several elderly men, large blue ribbons pinned to their suits alerting others to their VIP status, followed by the iemoto, who made a quick round of greetings to the practitioners in charge of the tea service before taking a seat. As the host explained the symbolic significance of the combination of utensils, the iemoto politely kept up the conversation, but without asking the typical follow-up questions that might prolong the narration. After the tea was served, he returned the bowl, and, truncating the closing procedures, immediately began to pose for pictures with various groupings of the participants. His jovial manner, friendly smile, and easy conversation, as well as the rare chance for a personal photo-op, overrode what might otherwise be seen as an abbreviated tea service, short-changing the audience. When he and his entourage left (a top teacher taking on the “bad cop” role, declaring that he was short of time), one of the people in charge said with audible relief that he was glad it went well. The woman beside him replied, “That was the easy part; from here on out you’ll be judged by very strict eyes,” referring to the far more stringent policing by the older tea teachers who would dominate the following tea services. Though such elders may scout for opportunities to display their own expertise though criticism—murmuring, for example, that a sliver of aromatic wood should not be hidden in the incense container on display if charcoal is not prepared before the guests—the iemoto need not concern himself with such direct injunctions, for the personage embodying the ultimate authority can rely on others drawing on his aura to do this work. Aided by a retinue assuming more unpleasant tasks, and supported by flocks of participants willfully cooperating to produce his lofty status, the iemoto can appear as at once rarefied and personable.¹²

Contours of Authority

The concentration of authoritative power over the tea ceremony in the iemoto contributes to the comprehensiveness of his command over all elements of tea practice. Even if this singular figure comes in limited copies, with each school headed by a different master, the monopoly of authority ensures their independence. Though all traditions encompass more or less similar *temae*, the particulars of each vary—a bowl of tea that is passed among guests from hand to hand in one school, for example, may be set on the ground in between guests in another. Novices may pay little attention to whether a person enters the tea room on the left foot, the right foot, or the foot closest to the wall, but these differences become patterned into the body over time. Small variations in the utensils—a pentagonal versus hexagonal foot on a tea bowl, for instance—accumulated in the process of learning tea distinguish membership as well, and *kaō*, *hakogaki*, and *konomi* venerating a particular branch of *Rikyū*'s lineage see little light outside their own tea school. These physical and financial investments are written down as losses if schools are changed, providing insurance for lifelong adherence to one tradition.

Yet it is not the master above who is its direct producer. Because belief in the iemoto is sufficient to perform the social magic that authorizes him to define and certify tea practice and utensil taste, *actual* expertise is unnecessary: the iemoto is largely a symbolic centralizing feature. Although ultimately responsible for the rigid hierarchy of tea-making procedures, he himself performs only a limited number of *temae* and rarely teaches how to make tea. The assistants immediately beneath him are considered the real experts in this area. It is they who are pictured in textbooks, and it is they who instruct practitioners at official seminars. And, for the most part, they train each other in tea practice rather than taking lessons from the crown of the hierarchy. The iemoto's direct involvement in selecting utensils for authorization with *kaō* is probably greater, but even practitioners sometimes doubt that the insignias were written by the iemoto's own hand. Teachers may alert novices, handling a tea scoop made by an iemoto with beginner's excitement, that he simply carved the final bit on it rather than taking the pains to craft it entirely himself. Some practitioners even whisper that iemoto do not raise the brush to their own scrolls, or that the box and *kaō* signings are completed by office staff. Whether or not this is the case is secondary to the crucial point that even if adherents doubt the authenticity of such things,

it matters little. Their preciousness flows from the symbolic worth assigned to the iemoto through an on-going process of collective appraisal by tea practitioners. If personal skepticism brings into question the bond between an individual and the leader, the group belief in his authority reinstates the value. Attesting to this power are the individual doubters who will invest thousands in authorized utensils and certificates because they know others will, nonetheless, recognize their worth, thereby witnessing and enacting the iemoto's symbolic power.

Given the VIP status of the iemoto, it is not surprising that outsiders may mock adherents for treating these figures "like gods or the emperor," or that insiders themselves can be heard grumbling to the same effect. One practitioner complained of the great lengths the local tea group went to in preparation for a visit by the iemoto, trying to cater to nitpicking demands. "Really," she said in exasperation, "it's like having the royal family come."¹³ Those at the top are more than aware of their lofty status. In an interview held with the iemoto of a smaller school, the leader derided the followers of another, more popular, tradition for "doing or believing anything the iemoto tells them." He continued, "If the Urasenke iemoto says 'that crow is white' his followers will believe it, but if I say that," and he motioned toward the top-ranked teacher accompanying him in the interview, "He'd probably have me committed." But rather than laugh, the attendant simply smiled uncomfortably, caught between loyally concurring with the master's words and undermining his rank. Whether or not they agree, practitioners are often obliged to treat iemoto with exceptional respect and care—a demand garnering particular force as tea training itself invests so much in proper etiquette and interactions. Not upholding these standards would signal incompetence.

The implications of this enormous concentration of authority stand out by contrast with contemporary *Sekishū* practice, which lacks the iemoto organizational structure. Teachers issue their own certificates and pass on the right to their more advanced students, such that practitioners attaining a level of recognized mastery are able to branch off, instructing students in their new mode.¹⁴ Thus, the *Sekishū* style of tea is marked by multiple variants of *temae*, rather than a strictly regulated standard—a variety considered a delightful part of gatherings that mix students of different teachers. Differences from one's own practice are pointed out as interesting innovations, rather than infractions of the rule. As a *Sekishū* practitioner remarked, "We don't have the KGB spying to see if you are doing things

wrong. It's not like Urasenke. We're not nearly as critical." Sekishū members also comment on the almost mechanical recitation of greetings at the gatherings of other tea schools, where these nodal points of the conversation fall under the sweeping purview of *temae* strictures. To one Sekishū adherent, it appears as though "they don't just naturally converse. They seem to have a set phrase for everything." Indeed, such formulaic greetings would stand at odds with the role utensils play at Sekishū gatherings, where the value of the implements is not produced through symbols of an *iemoto's* approval. Importance is placed, rather, on the meanings attached to the objects. As a practitioner described it, "Most of the utensils are not worth a lot. If you can tell a good story, that's enough." Even at large gatherings, antiques passed down through the family or objects with an intriguing history are more commonly employed than those from a canon of utensils, and while boxes may be signed by highly respected tea connoisseurs, it is rare to leave such inscriptions on display for the guests. Without the dominating presence of a single *iemoto*, in the Sekishū style tea preparation procedures are less standardized and homogenized, policing is rare, and value issues from sources other than a stamp of approval from the top. But the commanding power of *iemoto*-based tea has even reached Sekishū practice in recent years—a marker of the twentieth-century ascent of the Sen traditions discussed in Chapter 3. Leading Sekishū teachers formed a national organization at the end of the millennium, which now issues a national newsletter, and *hakogaki* and *kaō* by Sen *iemoto* are appearing in increasing numbers at their gatherings. Even those outside the formal *iemoto* system have seen their tea practice bent by its gravitational pull.

Characteristic of the *iemoto's* monopolization of authority and its enactment by practitioners is the way that such performances are inflected with Japanese associations. Indeed, his command is expressed in a modality indivisible from tradition and sustained through juxtaposition with the quotidian. From the postures of fealty assumed in the *iemoto's* presence (otherwise now mostly witnessed only in costume dramas) to the assumption of family crests (now rare, but once commonly impressed on personal items) emblazoned on a kimono, the differentiations discussed in Chapter 1 can be seen again at work. The etiquette required to prove that practitioners are true tea adherents demands competence in a range of embodied postures and practices distinguished by their traditional hues. With them, the *iemoto's* investment in the national significations of the tea ceremony comes to life.

Practitioners

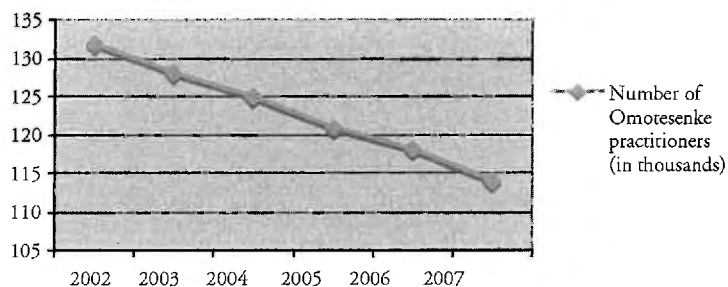
But who is the body of tea adherents that activates the *iemoto's* authority? In 2006, tea practitioners numbered some 2.3 million people, or just under two percent of the population of Japan.¹⁵ Women account for about ninety percent of practitioners—about one in every twenty-five in Japan participates in tea. What kind of women are they? From their distribution by age, traceable over the past twenty years, it is clear that while many learn tea in high school, probably as an extracurricular activity in a tea club, these numbers drop in college, though after graduation women are more likely to take up the practice. This does not last for long, for as marriage, job, and child-rearing duties increase for those in their thirties, the practice of tea declines.¹⁶ But overall numbers are filled out again by women in their fifties and sixties, less burdened by the demands of infants and jobs. This generation of baby-boomers came of age during a time in Japan—uniquely in the OECD—when full-time female participation in the paid labor force dropped sharply under the Income Doubling Plan of the 1960s, producing a dramatic rise in the number of housewives who could afford training in hobbies like tea.¹⁷

Regionally, the practice of tea is spread evenly across the country, albeit at rates slightly below the national average in Okinawa and Kyushu in the south, and in Hokkaido and Tohoku in the north—differences that could, however, be an effect of the rural topography of these zones, as people in urban areas are somewhat more likely to take up the practice. Ishikawa and Kyoto prefectures, which historically have strong ties to the tea ceremony, possess somewhat higher concentrations of practitioners than other areas. Socially, it is clear that participation is also a function of income. The likelihood of men doing tea is the same whether they fall into lower, middle, or upper income brackets. But those at the very top, earning over \$150,000 a year, are more than twice as likely to engage in the practice. For women, class differences are still more starkly drawn. Those from families with annual incomes above \$100,000 per year are twice as likely to practice tea as those in middle-income brackets, and the latter in turn are more likely to be practitioners than women from families earning less than \$30,000.¹⁸

Although still popular among the wealthy, participation in the tea ceremony has fallen in recent years. The somewhat more than 2 million practitioners of 2006 represented a drop by a fifth from the 2.8 million practitioners of 1986. A more detailed picture can be drawn from membership figures of

the Omotesenke school, which has been losing an average of 2.7 percent of its membership every year since the turn of the twenty-first century, its numbers contracting steadily from 132,000 in 2002 to 114,000 in 2007.¹⁹

The decline in practitioners follows the passing of *hanayome shugyō*, or training in activities such as flower arrangement, koto, and Japanese dance, once thought to prepare women for marriage.²⁰ After reaching an apogee when the baby-boomers came of age, these pre-bridal lessons became less of an expectation for women born after 1960, when a driver's license and a college degree came to be regarded as better indices of a desirable partner. The overall decline in women's participation in the paid workforce in the immediate postwar decades produced a generation of housewives with more leisure time for hobbies.²¹ In these years, the women who took up tea often did so more in response to social expectations than as a personal desire.²² "All of my friends were learning it, so I did too," is an avowal I often heard in interviews, with even those more reluctant to learn tea acceding to parental pressure. One practitioner, born in the forties, explained she began lessons because "learning tea was a social requirement rather than an option," a description echoed in the remark of another, born in the fifties: "Tea and flower arrangement were just things you did when you reached a certain age. It was already decided." Instructors were typically found in the neighborhood, through personal networks, and lessons were attended casually. Those who enjoyed the practice carried on with it, while the less interested could use marriage as an excuse for quitting. Of these, a few return later in life, particularly if friends encourage them to join. As a retired entrepreneur said, "When I was young, I was completely against tea. I had to learn it before marriage, but protested hard. I never wanted to wear a kimono. When I

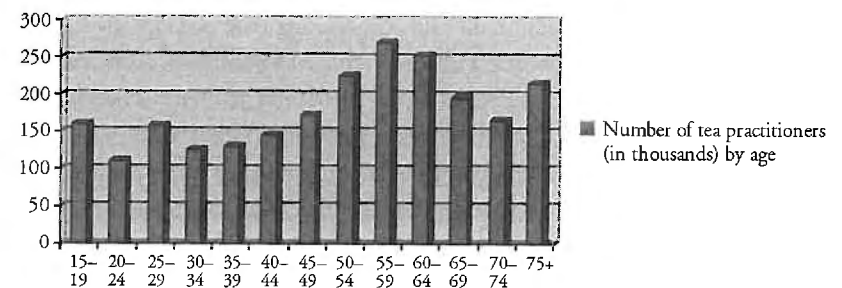


Membership in the Omotesenke Dōmonkai. Access to the data was granted to the author by Omotesenke in 2007.

got tired of working and retired, though, I decided I would take up a hobby. A friend recommended tea to me, and I thought, maybe I would try it. And now I'm really into it—and I love the kimono. I usually wear one to lessons, which makes the time feel much different."

Among later generations, familial expectations or friendship networks may still encourage tea study, but taking lessons is more often a personal choice, frequently prompted by an attraction to history or tradition, or simply the opportunity to wear a kimono. "I was interested in Japanese culture, and if it was going to be Japanese culture, then it was going to be tea," as one young woman in her twenties explained. Or, in a commonly heard variant from another in her thirties, "I was interested in Japanese-y (*Nihonrashi*) things, traditional arts and the like, and so I majored in Japanese history in college. I wanted to try out the entertainment practices of the Japanese of old, and so I took up tea when I graduated." The shift in orientation from social expectation to concern with Japanese tradition could be made quite explicit. When I asked a group of students in a college tea club, two straightforwardly said they were interested in history and historical things, while one admitted she just wanted to eat the sweets that accompanied the tea—another motive commonly offered by the young. My question about whether they were learning tea with an eye toward preparation for marriage was met only with laughter.

The male practitioners I encountered presented a somewhat different picture. Many professed that familial or professional ties drew them into the practice. Their mothers might be prominent tea teachers, or they themselves—monks, art dealers, potters, shrine architects, or chefs—came from occupations related to traditional arts, though some were involved in more



Number of tea ceremony practitioners in Japan (in thousands) by age, 2006. Data from Shakai Keizai Seisansei Honbu, *Reijaa Hakusho* (Time Use and Leisure Survey), 2006.

contemporary trades: middle managers, policemen, scientists, and the like. Those without such professional connections frequently confessed a curiosity about history or tea utensils as a motivation for taking up the practice. "I was always interested in museums," a fifty-year-old remarked, "visiting them on my way home from work. Looking at the objects I developed a pretty good eye for things, including utensils. Then someone said, 'Since you have a good feel for all this, why not do tea?'" A man in his thirties working as a real estate agent offered reasons similar to those spurring women of his age: "Japanese things are disappearing from everyday life, and Western, European things are increasingly taking over. I wanted to make kimonos, Japanese things, and the like, a part of my life. Maybe to do flower arrangement you have to have an eye for aesthetics, but I thought that with tea, all you have to do is learn the form, and so I started." Unsurprisingly, given the feminized image the practice has acquired over the course of the twentieth century, several men in interviews emphasized that the true foundation of tea lies in a noble samurai past. "Now tea is a woman's world, but it used to be men, true warriors at the center. That's been forgotten, but it's really a man's culture, and that needs to be recovered. I wanted to do that, so I took it up as a hobby," a forty-something worker related. The spiritual side entices some as well. As a man in his sixties told me, "You have to try to imagine what a Japanese businessman's life is like. You give everything to the company your whole working life and then you retire. You want to do something meaningful. I wanted to learn something that I could keep doing the rest of my time, so I chose the tea ceremony. The more you learn about it, the deeper it gets."²³

Lessons

While many outside and some within Japan assume that formal gatherings are the mainstay of tea practice, in fact it is lessons that occupy most of the time practitioners spend on tea. Full-dress gatherings—*chaji*—are rare, and most tea enthusiasts hold or attend these lavish events only a few times a year because of the great cost in time, money, and effort required to stage them. In addition to a ritual preparation of thick tea and multiple rounds of thin tea, guests can expect an eleven-course *kaiseki* meal to be served, and the charcoal used to boil the water ceremonially arranged twice, with a break taken in the garden in between. Usually prepared for months in advance, these four-hour gatherings, as infrequent as they are, nonetheless serve as the ideal toward which practitioners strive in their lessons.

To lend a better sense of the training that is the principal experience of tea for most adherents, we may turn back to the *Mushin'an* complex described in Chapter 1 and examine a tea class there, focusing on the instruction. Mrs. Ebara, a widow in her seventies who began learning the practice as a teenager, has been holding classes at the complex for several years. Like most other teachers, she had taught out of her house for decades, but upon retiring to a smaller apartment, she traded her upscale tea room and garden for a much simpler and smaller *washitsu*, and shifted her instruction to *Mushin'an*. Typical of many instructors for whom tea is closer to a hobby than a full-time job, she holds a class for several hours two days a week. A few masters make a living from the practice, teaching all day and every day to maintain a student population of a hundred or more. With only ten students, Mrs. Ebara's group is on the smaller side, though not unusual. All are women, ranging in age from their early thirties to their mid-sixties; the younger ones typically are employed, while the older are mostly housewives. As is standard for lessons in traditional practices, students pay Mrs. Ebara not a fee for each class, but a set sum once a month whether or not they attend, providing her with a steady income, much of which is spent on the tea and sweets that will be consumed at lessons or on other tea accoutrements.

Once married to a successful doctor, Mrs. Ebara is well-off, and only faintly conceals her pride in a fine eye for purchasing exquisite utensils at good prices. Her teaching style is strict, much like that of the severe mother-in-law who initiated her into tea. While many tea classes serve as chances to meet and chat with friends, she discourages such socializing, seeking instead to replicate the thorough hand and unforgiving eye of the top-ranked instructors in service to the *iemoto*. This style is not for everyone, but many students whose teachers take a more casual approach to lessons—overlooking the small details like finger alignment that make for "sloppy" tea, or coaching students through preparation procedures rather than expecting these to be studied beforehand—long for such punctilious attention.²⁴

Students begin to arrive forty-five minutes before class in order to prepare the tea space and implements for the day. Taking out utensils, sifting tea, preparing charcoal, arranging flowers, they bustle around to set up as much as possible before the teacher's arrival. As in many institutional settings in Japan, the students are positioned within junior-senior relationships, here determined by the length of time spent studying with Mrs. Ebara, and mediated to some degree by overall tea experience and age.²⁵ Junior students take care of the lowlier duties, such as arranging shoes or sprinkling water in the garden,

while their superiors fill tea containers and arrange the delicate ash and charcoal. A hurried and anxious air often results as all of the preparations must be completed by the time the class officially begins, or Mrs. Ebara is likely to lecture the students on the central importance of timing and punctuality.²⁶

The tea lesson proper commences and concludes with a formal greeting.²⁷ The students line up outside the guests' door to the tea room, and repeating the modest "no, please after you," they enact a etiquette of consideration while negotiating the order of entry, dependent on their time of arrival and rank on the junior–senior scale. Filing into the room, they position themselves evenly along the wall, kneeling compactly with hands folded in laps, backs absolutely straight, and a small folding fan to the side of each. Once the final student has come to a rest, Mrs. Ebara slides into the room from the host's door. Placing their folding fans in front of their knees, the students bow in unison and pronounce a formulaic request for the teacher's instruction. As they return their fans to their sides, Mrs. Ebara responds with a basic welcome, "I'm glad you could come today," and gives the day's announcements—often information concerning upcoming gatherings, student absences, and tea-related exhibitions. Many teachers take this opportunity to explain the meaning of the scroll selected for the session, providing an interpretation of the often cryptic Zen phrase that encourages a particular spiritual or seasonal awareness within the lesson. The greeting closes with another unison bow, dispersing the students who position themselves for the first tea preparation.

Such openings (and their matching closings) are common in other areas of life in Japan. Office parties and receptions, for example, typically begin and end with a greeting, compelling participants to assemble for the official start and disband in unison at the end. In most mundane cases, however, the expected behavior is not explicitly instructed—it is enough to look around and follow others—and the requirements are simple enough to remember after only one session. But in tea, these moments present more than a commonly employed ritualistic form of session initiation; they are an opportunity for students to enact and display—and have corrected—the etiquette of walking, sitting, and bowing, as well as the timing and consideration for others, that are taught in class.

The particular content of a day's lessons follows an annual cycle anchoring a curriculum of tea procedures. Not simply the decorations, but also the utensils change with seasons, and with them, the rules of their handling and the motions for preparing tea. From November through April,

the colder half of the year, tea is made with a kettle set in a sunken hearth opened in the floor to the side of the host, while in the remaining warmer months a portable brazier is set on top of the tatami mats directly in front of the person whipping up the beverage. With the kettle's change in location, the position of the host and utensils shifts as well, and small adjustments in their handling—such as whether the lid of the water container is lifted with the left hand, adjusted with the right, and then set down with the left, or whether it is picked up with the right hand and then set down directly with the left—must not only be remembered, but seamlessly incorporated, so that the motions flow smoothly from the body. Many months carry thematic associations as well. In January, a time linked to the freshness and formality of the New Year—one of the central holidays in Japan—ornate utensils carrying seasonal motifs, such as pines, plums, or battledores, make appearances as students learn the procedures for preparing tea on very large and ceremonious lacquered stands. In April, the iron trivets on which the kettle rests in the sunken hearth are removed in preparation for the portable brazier of the summer months, and students prepare tea using a kettle suspended from the ceiling, teachers typically commenting that the pot's gentle swaying suggests a spring breeze.²⁸ In August, one of the hottest months, small portable tea sets make an appearance, and students are told these might be taken on a summer hike in the mountains. If they were to do so, they might encounter others, since their peers will be practicing the same procedure. Securing this standardization is not only the calendar, but also the official periodicals, which feature the tea-making procedures associated with the given month, and thus most teachers across the country teach the same *temae* at the same time.

In some cases, seasonal knowledge is explicitly taught, as when Mrs. Ebara names the flowers arranged in the alcove at each lesson, gradually imparting an understanding of what buds bloom in which months (and, concomitantly, of what months are symbolized by which flowers). Such direct instruction is most apparent when selecting "poetic names" for utensils, which the guests inquire about after the tea is prepared. While high-quality tea scoops have names inscribed on their bamboo cases, the anonymous "practice" dippers used at lessons provide an opportunity for students to choose an appellation appropriate to the occasion. The less experienced typically turn to the teacher, who suggests a few possibilities and explains the implied reference. In early autumn, Mrs. Ebara might offer "deer's call" (*shikanokoe*), and clarify that this term appears in a passage of the fourteenth-century po-

etry classic *Essays in Idleness*. Such prompting is not necessary for the more advanced students, who come to lessons armed with a few alternatives found in tea books or taken from their own lists of poetic phrases amassed over the years. Not one, but a selection must be on the tongue's tip, as the appropriateness of their choice for the occasion and utensils will be judged—and corrected—by the teacher.²⁹ When, for example, an advanced student proposed *kagura*—a Shinto dance for the gods—as the name of the tea scoop, Mrs. Ebara immediately interjected, “That’s not a good selection. It’s a name for August or the New Year’s; it’s one for festival times.” The aging student explained that it was November 23, the ancient day of harvest celebration, with which she associates *kagura*. The attempt at novelty, however, was quickly suppressed: “If you are going to make that sort of strained reference, then there should be something else in the utensils that suggests it. If you pull *kagura* out of the blue, no one will get it. *Hatsubo* [referring to the first offering of rice ears at the temple] is better for fall.”

These interludes take place within the lesson proper, during which each student has a turn preparing tea while the others look on as guests. Though they may be merely observing, this is hardly downtime, for with only one opportunity per session to practice the ritual, the students are expected to absorb *temae* by diligently watching their colleagues’ attempts.³⁰ In this active learning, as Mrs. Ebara instructed a young new arrival to her class, “You need to learn the steps not behind, behind, behind, but in front, in front, in front. You need to see what the person [making tea] is doing and think about what comes next.”³¹ When the teacher corrects a posture or the host stumbles on an unusually difficult move, those observing may mime the gesture as well, patterning into their body the proper way they will be expected to demonstrate when their turn in front of the boiling kettle comes.³² Nonetheless, observing similar—sometimes the same—*temae* for an hour or two can be numbing, and those whose minds or mouths wander may be sharply reminded, “You must learn with the eyes.” Pauses between sessions can help to revive, allowing students to move to the back areas to arrange the utensils for the next tea preparation, and as the day wanes, talk about tea more frequently slides into casual conversation.

Like all teachers, Mrs. Ebara kneels facing the student making tea and talks her through the procedure. “Pick up the bowl. Right hand, left hand, right hand. Place it in front of your knees.” These more detailed instructions for beginners are, over time, pared down to a mantra—“right, left, right”—that may echo in the student’s head even when the teacher remains

silent and the motions flow from the body. When words do not suffice to explain complicated or subtle maneuvers, Mrs. Ebara mimes gestures or uses her fan to illustrate. “Don’t bend your wrist when you hold the water scoop,” she corrects, perching her fan in her hand. “It should be like an extension of the arm. You hold it with your index finger at the side and your other fingers lined up at an angle, like this.” With absolute beginners, these visual guides carry them through an almost half-hour procedure—sticking points repeated two or three times—while the teacher’s gestures convey a sense of the overall flow. With several years of training, the more advanced students have less need for an escort, and their movements take on a tranquil rhythm, disturbances in which can alert the teacher to mistakes even when out of view. When sensing something amiss, Mrs. Ebara may mime the gestures to herself, observing what has become thoughtlessly embodied knowledge to aid in their verbal articulation.

The greater part of lessons is taken up with learning how to handle objects elegantly and with proper timing, while showing an attentiveness to guests—that is, the three loci of Japaneseness, discussed in Chapter 1. Mrs. Ebara, like many other instructors, selects a few details each lesson and hones these over time. At one session she may point out how the bowl should be picked up with the right hand, the thumb completely straight, resting on the lip of the bowl. In the next lesson she corrects the student again, telling her not to extend the thumb inside the bowl. Later she may advise the novice to curve her fingers toward the bottom of the bowl, and finally work with the student until her fingertips line up at an angle and her hand and arm are lightly rounded. Observing the teacher’s rhythm as she mimes gestures provides an opportunity to absorb a sense of *ma*, but this may be explicitly instructed as well. When training initiates in how to pour water into the kettle, Mrs. Ebara takes the ladle in hand herself: “You need to pay attention to the sound, it can’t be changing all over the place. It’s an inner, spiritual thing. You scoop deeply and then pour ever more slowly, until the final drop releases.” Drawing attention to the impact of actions on others cultivates consideration, and Mrs. Ebara cautions newer students not to hold tea bowls too high off the ground when examining them—not because they might drop them (less of a concern with lower-quality practice bowls), but because they might worry others that they could drop them. Interspersed between these instructions on the steps and style of tea making are explanations about tea history, utensil meanings, and other domains of what might be termed “cultural knowledge” of a distinctly Japanese variety,

their associations with the nation sustained by a broader cultural matrix instantiated in books, schools, and the media, as discussed in Chapter 1.

As such, the structure and content of the classes make way for Japanese valances, yet it should be emphasized that not everything that goes on at tea lessons is about the nation. Many students attend the sessions for the chance to socialize with friends, get out of the house, or relax after work. Tea is not always whisked with the solemnity of a formal gathering, but sometimes whipped up rather carelessly as practitioners chat about recent life events or ask for advice, such conversations sometimes spilling over into a coffee or a meal after class. Novices are more often focused on trying to remember the convoluted *temae* than on any self-conscious vivification of tradition. Nonetheless, adherents may at times call on the Japanese inflections carried by the practice, and move such national associations from background to foreground, transforming them into an interactional resource.

The addition of a new student to a class offers an opportunity to examine how this is accomplished, for little can be taken for granted with entrants, encouraging teachers to clearly articulate what later may become common sense. A close analysis of an interaction that took place when a novice, hoping to begin lessons, came to observe Mrs. Ebara's class can provide insight into how the tea ceremony is presented as Japanese through the modalities of categorization, presented in the Introduction, that operate in nation-work.

One morning when the students were bustling about to prepare the next *temae*, the front door opened with a *garagaragara* clatter, and Mrs. Ebara, wrapped in her customary kimono, hurried to greet the expected visitor in the entrance area. She guided a Japanese woman in her thirties, hair neatly pulled back and fitting with the conservative brown tweed suit and skirt she had chosen for the day, to the small waiting room, where they knelt on the tatami mat floor, facing each other at a slight angle.³³ After a short greeting, Mrs. Ebara explained her goals and expectations to the new student:

Is this the first time you've come to a lesson? If so, you need to know what to wear and what to prepare. Please take a look around you. See here? After taking off your socks, you need to change them before stepping on the tatami. When you walk on top of the tatami, you should always have new socks. Even me. I drive here, so I don't get them dirty, but I wear tabi covers.³⁴ When Westerners come, they feel strange walking around without their shoes. But I want to teach the spirit and rules of Japan. That's why you need to wear white socks.

In conveying the basic etiquette of entering the lesson space, Mrs. Ebara defines such behavior as also Japanese—the national inflections invoked through a distinction drawn across a we–they boundary between Westerners, who putatively feel uncomfortable walking around in socks, and Japanese, who by implication do not. With the instructions ultimately preparing the student for proper participation in lessons, her explanation encourages the cultivation of Japanese behavioral orientations expected of students. Mrs. Ebara proceeded:

If you think tea is eating sweets, drinking tea, washing up, and just having a good time, that's not what goes on in these lessons. There are places out in the city with those sorts of lessons. But here the architecture is truly Japanese. It's really expensive—such a luxurious, beautiful place. *Everything* is authentic. Just look closely at any part of it. [She refers to the prints on the sliding doors.] Each one of those is made by hand. There is that much skill. [She references the paper on the sliding windows.] Each seam is in a different place. You see how they line up perfectly? Artisans of that level of skill built this tea room. If you aren't extremely careful, something bad might happen. If you go to a tea room out in the city, and something happens, you just say "Oh, sorry." But here, everything, all the paper, must then be changed. This is a place of that sort of standing. That's why study here is authentic.

As she continued her introduction to the class, Mrs. Ebara employed a second modality—specification—to identify what is authentically Japanese through a comparison with what is out "in the city." This set-phrase, commonly used in tea circles, contrasts the mass of middle-class housewives who teach the tea ceremony as a hobby in their homes with a small number of highly ranked teachers and wealthy practitioners possessing tea rooms and antique utensils worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. As such, it marks a class or status divide rather than an urban–rural one.³⁵ Mrs. Ebara stresses the difference by emphasizing the great expense and sophistication of the tea room, pointing to the fine craft skills and attention to detail that make it "real Japanese architecture." Employing a nonnational category—class—to specify the content of the national category, she intimates in the same breath that such costly objects need to be treated with care. She continued:

The other day there was a TV program on [a kabuki actor] performing in Paris that showed the strictness of his training, his preparations from the first day to the time he left, and how he carried things out. Then he had to perform formal greetings, sitting properly. That sort of thing, much more

than in tea, is cultivating Japanese tradition. I think it is incredible that they [kabuki actors] make it a part of themselves. So the Japanese tea ceremony, if you practice it properly from the start, is not that difficult.

Again Mrs. Ebara's explanation encourages the cultivation of a particularly Japanese mode of behavior, but now established in a third way: differentiation within a national category. She avows the Japaneseness of tea training by contrasting it with the asserted far *greater* Japaneseness of kabuki instruction. The variation includes a moral component as well. Lauding kabuki actors for such strict training, she suggests they are not only more Japanese, they are also better. In such subtle ways, even the brief introduction of a prospective student to tea practice can invoke and encourage a distinctively Japanese understanding of the practice and of the sensibilities cultivated at lessons.

Demonstrations

Lessons, though, are not the only locus of nation-work. Tea demonstrations offer adherents valued outreach opportunities where they apply their knowledge of chanoyu. At these spectacles, initiates typically elucidate the practice to an audience of novices, who witness a formal tea preparation and taste a bowl of whipped matcha tea. Such explanations can shade into injunctions for cultivation when the tea ceremony is staged as an archetypal expression of Japanese culture for which the audience, as Japanese, is also responsible. Demonstrations for children offer particularly rich opportunities for observing how the practice can be used to cultivate participants for this purpose.

At a tea gathering in 2007, the members of a baton club at an elementary school in Tokyo were assembled at a tea room by their coach, Mrs. Maegawa, who had been holding such occasions since 2004. The principal and two teachers from the school joined the demonstration and sat as the main guests, followed by a neat line of eleven girls, ranging in age from seven to twelve, each done up smartly in dresses or skirts. Before the event began, I asked Mrs. Maegawa why she had decided to host these gatherings, and she replied:

I want them to learn things they will use later. It's almost New Year's now, and so soon they will visit shrines. Here they can learn how to wash their hands properly beforehand—they wouldn't know how to do it otherwise.³⁶ They can learn "Japanese traditional manners" [said in English]. You know, these days bullying is becoming such a big problem. People don't really think about others any longer, and so I want to teach the children that.

If we have that as a foundation, then bullying will end. Do you know *Edo shigusa*?³⁷ People in the Edo period carried umbrellas, and when they passed each other in the street, they shifted them so others could pass smoothly. It was a basic, unwritten rule—everyone's shared understanding. But now most people don't know those sorts of things, which is why I want to teach them to the children. And then when they become mothers, they will teach their own children, who will pass it on as well.

Mrs. Maegawa's reasoning presents tea as a means to cultivate proper comportment and interpersonal understanding, both here logged as a part of the traditional manners in need of revival and transmission—duties presented as distinctively feminine.³⁸ She calls forth national valences both directly—these reinforced by a switch to English that embeds a distinction between self and other into the expressive form itself—and indirectly, by reference to "people," an indexical expression implicitly identified with the nation in this context.³⁹

Extending these justifications further, a handout distributed to the girls a few days before the demonstration described the tea performance as "offering something that will be useful not only when you go to other tea ceremonies, but also when you invite important guests over to your house"—domestic skills recalling the use of tea in the etiquette training of "good wives and wise mothers" a century before. Dwelling on the details of the extensive behind-the-scenes preparations of a formal tea ceremony, the handout enjoined the girls not to wear difficult-to-remove shoes as part of the "important thoughtfulness of guests," thereby encouraging consideration for others. The pamphlet concluded by presenting the injunctions as part of the traditions and customs of Japan, which the girls, as good nationals and good mothers, are to transmit to future generations: "I would be very happy if you all think about the importance of Japan's wonderful traditions and customs through this tea ceremony and use it as a beginning for passing these on."

During the demonstration, Mrs. Maegawa and her husband explained the symbolic significances of the utensils used and how to drink the tea, while the girls sat quietly for the most part, with only a few, unused to kneeling for long periods, occasionally fidgeting. Later, one of the teachers praised the physical discipline required for such stoic fortitude. "There are so few chances for kids to practice self-restraint and patience these days. Everything is so easy for them. But it's good to practice putting up with things sometimes." Even after the tea preparation concluded, the cultivation of proper comportment continued as one girl asked Mrs. Maegawa about the

correct way to open sliding doors, and three others eagerly practiced how to bow, emulating the model of grace on display during the demonstration.

The event ended with the children taken to enjoy some drinks and snacks in an adjacent room, where, as is common at such parties in Japan, the principal of the school offered a few closing words:

When I was a child I really liked Japanese things, and so I joined the tea ceremony club in high school where I learned just how deep Japanese culture is. It was 1964 when I first began learning tea—the year of the Tokyo Olympics. I went to a high school near here, and at the school's Culture Festival we put on a tea performance outside, under a broad umbrella, with everyone in kimonos. And now, when you think about what you will become [when you grow up], I hope that you will learn more about your own country. Our school is 135 years old, and when it was founded there was tea. Hideyoshi did tea as well—during his time there was tea. It has been around for ages, this part of ancient Japanese culture. In just one bowl of tea, you can think about a lot of things.

Claiming chanoyu as a thread connecting members of the school and the foundational figures of the past, the principal reinforced a historical understanding of Japanese identity, continuous through time, in which tea plays a crucial role. He not only directly marked the national associations, but also evoked them through distinctions with external others, these elicited by the Tokyo Olympics—the first major international splash-out following World War II—and by the other countries implied in the reference to “your own.” The definitions here are minimal, and the specific qualities of Japaneseness are hardly elaborated, but even such epigrammatic expressions perpetuate a tight coupling of the practice and the essence of the nation.

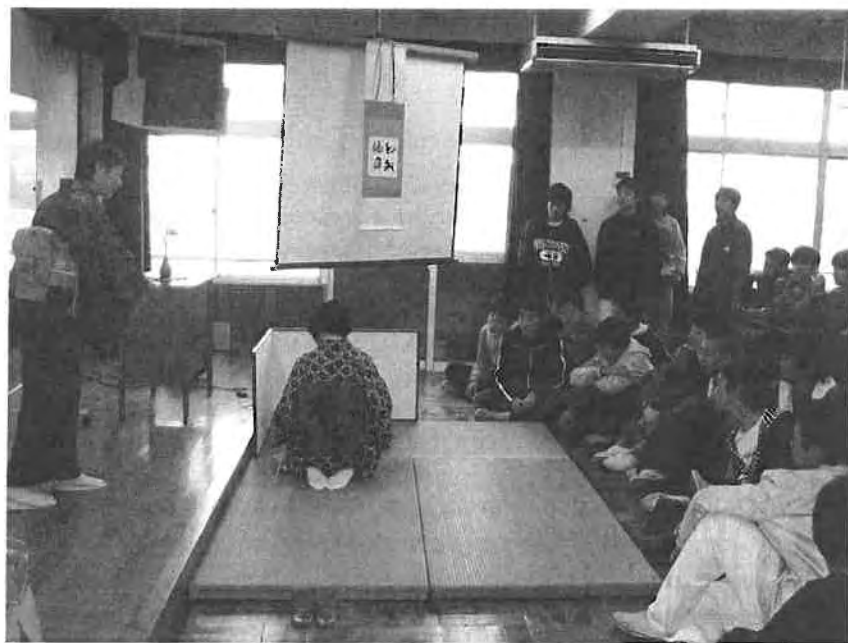
Mrs. Maegawa then wrapped up the occasion, touched to the point of tears:

Your teachers have a very important message for each one of you, and I hope you pay attention to what they say. And, when you become adults, I hope you pass that on as well. [She starts to cry.] When you become mothers, please become wonderful mothers and create a bright world for us. I'm sorry, my tears are just an expression of my feeling of gratitude.

Afterward Mrs. Maegawa explained that she had been overcome with emotion when she saw that a girl who frequently acted up was sitting properly and listening to her teachers for the first time—the embodiment of a successful lesson in how to become a good Japanese had moved her greatly. Yet, as an exercise in cultivating the children, the demonstration was designed to mold the girls as not just Japanese, but a specific type of Japanese. In a

contemporary reworking of the “good wives and wise mothers” creed, they were to both improve household management and become future disseminators of Japanese culture to their own children. Though national specificity was, on occasion, located through the external contrasts of distinction, the overarching purpose of the day invoked a differentiation between the “good Japanese” the girls could become and those who did not—or not yet—possess the requisite national characteristics.

A pair of demonstrations at a Tokyo junior high school the same year offers a somewhat contrasting agenda. As a part of the Ministry of Education's Ibashozukuri Program,⁴⁰ four female volunteers, headed by the 60-year-old Mrs. Suzuki, presented a two-hour demonstration of the tea ceremony to a class of eighth graders. The students' homeroom teachers had decided to split the pupils into gender-segregated groups, as one explained, to prevent the boys from dominating matters and to give the girls a greater chance to participate. Thus a demonstration was held for forty-six boys the first week, and another for forty girls the following. With the school's own washitsu too small to hold the groups, the volunteers erected a tea space in



Junior high school students watch volunteers from their community perform a tea ceremony demonstration

front of a science classroom by spreading plastic judo tatami mats and hanging a scroll from a movie screen. After the students piled into the room, the first hour of the presentation consisted of watching a five-minute video by the Urasenke iemoto, followed by a live demonstration of making tea and the opportunity for everyone to sample the beverage.

A homeroom teacher launched the event with a brief introduction, which for the boys was terse: "Today, we welcome guest teachers and will get to know the tea ceremony, the spirit of Japaneseness." The girls, in contrast, were presented with far greater goals. "You know the term 'Japanese woman' (*Nihon no josei*), and your teacher mentioned that you will be learning about proper manners today, as well as Japanese culture. We have just a short time for Japanese culture and its long history, but I would like you to get a taste of it." Going beyond the simple connection between the tea ceremony and a generic Japanese spirit offered to the boys, the presentation for the girls portrayed tea as an element of a specifically Japanese femininity and proper manners, as well as the long history of Japanese culture. Though perhaps not foremost in the teacher's mind, these introductions laid the groundwork for a difference that would later emerge in what the students were expected to experience through the demonstration—spiritual elements of Japanese culture and proper feminine manners.

Next, the pupils watched a video in which the former Urasenke iemoto told them:

Tea is a composite cultural experience of Japan. I would like you all to understand that first and foremost. We live in a time of international exchange, of internationalization. Yet in this era, the Japanese—the people of Japan—don't know a thing about traditional culture. I think that's quite embarrassing. Yet now foreigners are studying about it very hard. Bearing that in mind, you should know that, although it's just a bowl of tea, with that bowl you can get in touch with Japaneseness. The spirit of thinking about others is deeply aroused. It's about thinking of others. When you make tea, you come to see that. I hope you learn that.

Invoking both a distinction from national others to bring home the importance of knowing things Japanese, and a differentiation from "embarrassing" Japanese who fail to live up to this expectation, the video primed two topics: tea imparts knowledge of Japanese culture, and tea is thinking about others. The latter, defined as a Japanese spiritual orientation, is presented as critical for Japan's position in an internationalizing world. These themes, however, were not immediately integrated into the performance that fol-

lowed, which focused largely on the mechanics of tea making. After the video, an assistant prepared tea while Mrs. Suzuki explained the practice, covering topics such as thin tea and thick tea, and the meaning of the words on the scroll, with no difference in the presentation to the boys and girls until the time to drink the tea approached. At that point, Mrs. Suzuki told the girls of a friend who had taken up tea after a trip to Canada.

She was asked by a lot of people about various Japanese things, and when she started to answer, she found she couldn't. Someone said to her, "What? Why doesn't a Japanese know about the tea ceremony?" And after that she took up study. So, in the future, you'll probably have the chance to go abroad. When you do, people will think that every Japanese knows about their own culture, about Japanese things. Therefore, if you can say, "Ah, I've done tea before," I think it would be wonderful.

Framing the girls as future emissaries of Japanese culture, Mrs. Suzuki proffered their experience of the tea ceremony as a means to cultivate the abilities to fulfill this role. As in the grand master's speech, the move was dual, with distinction and differentiation in play. Accountability for Japanese things to national others grounded the necessity for self-improvement, difference encouraging cultivation that would differentiate them from less worthy members. When talking to the boys, however, she simply mentioned that more foreigners are interested in Japanese culture than the Japanese themselves, without projecting upon them the duties of cultural ambassadorship.

But they too would become the target of cultivation efforts. When bowls of tea were brought out for the boys to taste, they became rowdy. Against the jostling and teasing, Mrs. Suzuki raised her voice and began to scold them:

Why are manners important? Is all of your talking a part of manners? [The boys begin to quiet down.] Good manners mean putting yourself in the position of others. If you can't do that, then you don't have any manners. Understand? I want you all to learn that tea contains that sort of spirit. In the previous video the iemoto said so, didn't he? You are going against the Japanese spirit. You are going against manners. Do you understand?

Claiming thoughtful consideration of others as a hallmark of both the spirit of tea and the spirit of Japan, Mrs. Suzuki railed at the boys for their deficient conduct, differentiating them from those true to the "Japanese spirit." They were not merely bad members of the school, but bad members of the nation.

For the girls, the problem addressed was not classroom but bodily discipline. Though no boy was shown how to bow correctly, the girls were not

only guided step-by-step in how to bow with formality and grace, but also instructed in how to move when in a kimono. Mrs. Suzuki asked for a volunteer from the class to come up to the front of the room, and a girl in a sweatshirt emulated her movements while she pointed out to the others what to look for to distinguish a good bow from a bad one. Afterward, she showed them how to walk in a kimono, with their toes straight or pointed slightly inward. Taking a few steps forward, her body swaying side to side and her feet splayed outwards at a ninety-degree angle, Mrs. Suzuki demonstrated what not to do to the girl's giggles. "It doesn't look good at all. In a kimono, your feet should be straight or if anything pointed a bit inward." Walking with smaller, more controlled leg movements, her upper torso hardly moving, she demonstrated again. "So now, if you keep that in mind, when you wear a cotton kimono this summer, the boys will think you're really cute." As in the boys' session, she employed the tea ceremony and its elements to normalize behavior or correct failings, but with the girls, specification (a feminine Japanese way of walking) and differentiation (contrast with ungainly women) were both at play in the attempt to cultivate a particularly Japanese ideal of feminine movement and manners. In this and other demonstrations, the tea ceremony rarely appears without the Japanese trappings, vibrant or faded, acquired over the preceding century. Yet at stake on such occasions may be not only the national symbol, enlivened for the audience, but the national members responsible for it as well, with tea used to craft them into better incumbents of this role.

Essays

While moments of instruction and infraction can encourage explicit evocations of national significances that may otherwise blend in with the furniture of the practice, texts are another venue that favor articulation of what may be implicit, but not necessarily involved in the immediate task at hand, when making tea. Since 1978 the Urasenke tea ceremony association, Tankōkai, has held an essay competition for the members of tea ceremony clubs at secondary schools and colleges, in which students describe why they began lessons and what they have learned from them. While there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the submissions, they are inevitably guided by an understanding of Tankōkai's educational programs, which concentrate on the promotion of Japanese culture through the tea ceremony, as discussed in Chapter 3. Thus caution should be applied in reading these as a testament of

the continuous tangible experience of Japaneseness for tea ceremony participants. Yet because the essay contest favors such national expressions, the texts supply copious material for examining the mechanics of how Japaneseness is presented, experienced, and naturalized through the tea ceremony. Out of over six hundred submissions in 2002, ten grand prize and twenty first-place winners were published in that year's *Collected Essays of School Tea Ceremony Club Experiences (Gakkō Chadō Takien Ronbunshū)*, discussed here.

Most of the essays report what the pupils had gained through the practice of tea, with personal transformations the predominant leitmotif. In these descriptions of how a better self is cultivated, Japaneseness is consistently established through differentiation. Yamane Mayuko, a student at Kyoto Women's College, explained that before studying tea, she was only dimly aware of seasons, registering little more than whether it was hot or cold or if the flowers were blooming. But by attending tea lessons, she began to shift from an unrefined, geographically unspecific seasonal awareness to a sensitivity grounded in a distinctively Japanese climate. In the tea room, she started "to appreciate, feel—and want to feel more—Japan's beautiful seasons" through the "cherry blossoms in spring, the scent of new green leaves, the light in summer, the autumn trees preparing for winter, the snow dancing on the ground with suspense."⁴¹ She describes how this appreciation for nature has followed her out of the tea room and into everyday life—an experience shared by Wada Sakiko, a senior in high school. Wada recounted how she first noticed the artificial flowers on permanent display at the entrance to her home only after joining the tea club. "Seasonless artificial flowers ignore Japanese seasons, and I realized that to have them in a Japanese-style hall was out of place." Training in tea alerted her to jarring disruptions in what should have been a harmonious coordination of Japanese elements. Taking the flowers used in the tea class home afterward, she began arranging them in the entrance at home to create an atmosphere in which "the spirit could be soothed."⁴² Orthography underscores the Japanese inflections of her awakening, as she elected to write "soothe" (*nagomu*, なごむ, 和む) not with the phonetic hiragana script commonly used to transcribe the word, but with the character *wa* (和), which conveys a sense of both "harmony" and "Japaneseness." In cultivating a heightened "Japanese" awareness of seasonality, differentiation appears through a refinement that separates the author not from others who are less Japanese, but from her pre-tea, implicitly less Japanese self as well.

Fundamentally, Japanese membership across all of these cases is never thrown into doubt—national identity is treated as an internal essence, even

if one that needs to be recovered. As Ogawa Maiko described it, the tea ceremony “provides a place where a Japanese identity can be confirmed.” In everyday life, she explained, “people are anonymous and unconcerned. They generally feel anxious about people they don’t know. But the tea ceremony relaxes these anxieties. When I enter the tea room, I think, ‘Of course I am Japanese.’ Through the tea preparation and the accompanying manners, the tea ceremony enables the Japanese heart to be seen.” She stresses that “the tea ceremony has been one path through which I have been able to become aware that I am Japanese”—a latent identity (“of course” she was Japanese) coaxed out by the practice.⁴³ Suzuki Mami described a similar realization. After encountering the tea ceremony, she “became aware of the importance of learning about the culture of [her] country, which has been passed down over time,” encouraging her to take on the civilizing mission to spread this knowledge among her peers. “Because I was born Japanese, I want to maintain the importance of the culture that has been transmitted from the past. To do that, it is necessary to feel closer to the tea ceremony and know the spirit of Japaneseness. If other students can try tea, they can also get to know the spirit of Japaneseness.”⁴⁴

Some cases, however, require a concerted rehabilitation. Lamenting the decline of a Japanese sense of self, a high school senior in Gifu declared, “Many people are now very disorderly, and an increasing number don’t respect others,” but “the thing that the Japanese are supposed to hold as important—a concern for others—can be revived through tea.”⁴⁵ Ueda Riko also confessed that “an open spirit has been lost in contemporary Japanese society, and I, unfortunately, had lost it too.” But seeing the flowers in the tea room, reading the powerful message of the scroll, and hearing the sound of the tea being whisked, she felt the depth of the tea ceremony and a purification of her spirit. Though, she admits, “I had forgotten the obvious fact that I am Japanese,” through contact with “Japanese ancient culture” she could reclaim “the free spirit that contemporary Japanese are lacking” and discover “the joyful pride of being Japanese.”⁴⁶

If cultivating Japaneseness relies on making a differentiation between better or worse members (or selves), the explanations of it in the texts hinge more frequently on distinctions drawn across national boundaries. Indeed, such borders can supply a spur to action: pupils commonly state that they took up tea in anticipation of moments of being held accountable for explaining Japanese culture in their encounters with foreigners. Yanagita Eriko joined a tea club because “the world has become international, and exchange

with foreign countries has increased, so when I tell foreigners about Japan, I want to know about at least one item of Japanese traditional culture.”⁴⁷ Ogawa Maiko encountered such a situation herself. Only after having spent several years abroad did she become interested in “Japanese culture” because when asked about her home country, she often did not know how to respond. Wanting to learn about something “unique to Japan,” she took up the tea ceremony “to be able to explain Japanese culture with confidence.”⁴⁸

Even if aimed at domestic readers, explanations still frequently invoke foreign contrasts. Noguchi Aya, for example, reported a debate at her school on the differences between Japanese and Western cultures. One of the participants audaciously claimed that “Japanese culture, after all, is only form. Inside the tea ceremony there is nothing at the core.” Noguchi could not agree, but was unable to rebut the charge at the time. Only later did clarification come, through distinction. On a trip to Canada, she introduced the tea ceremony to her host-mother, who began making matcha tea every day by just mixing it in her mug without further ado. Noguchi noted that she wasn’t doing “the tea ceremony I had shown her, but simply an odd form of drinking ‘green tea.’” The experience enabled her to distill what was essential to the spirit of tea: that everything has rules, and if people can embody those rules, they enter the spiritual path.⁴⁹ For her, the contrast with foreign crudity clarified the meaning of the Japanese sense of exquisite form.

Students also portrayed the tea ceremony as a concentrate of universal values capable of overcoming national boundaries, but claims of this kind were typically couched in a distinctively Japanese style. One pupil, who had provided a tea demonstration to a foreigner interested in Japanese history, felt responsible for representing Japan through her performance. Happily, the foreigner had told her that “while the tea is bitter, it communicates the beautiful Japanese heart,” and that samurai and monks in the past had probably shared the same feeling. Although conversation between the two was in a halting combination of pidgin Japanese and pidgin English, the author proclaims that through tea they were able to communicate heart-to-heart.⁵⁰ Yet if the tea ceremony is held up as a means of lowering national boundaries and recognizing a common humanity, the terms of the encounter remain Japanese. The stock phrase in tea circles, that “tea is heart-to-heart communication,” promotes the practice as a means for understanding others without words—a highly valued skill in Japanese society, but one that reduces communication to only a minimal emotional expression. Such empathy does not lend itself to detail or clarification, let alone disagree-

ment, yielding little more than pleasantries. Indeed, the practice may be so charged with national valences in such situations that any attempt to overcome them may fall flat.

Conclusion

The Japaneseness of tea practice comes to life through the actions and interactions of its carriers. Even if not motivated to take up the hobby out of an interest in Japanese culture—though this is an increasingly powerful spur—practitioners animate national associations as they do tea, from the seasonal structuring of tea classes to the required etiquette channeling interactions. With time spent at lessons and demonstrations far outweighing that at formal tea gatherings, the dominance of pedagogy over practice brings to the fore explanation and cultivation. In the everyday activities of the hobby—sometimes so banal they go largely unnoticed, as in Mrs. Ebara's injunctions to an initiate—practitioners invoke Japaneseness both to elucidate the broader cultural significance of what they are doing and to inculcate in others, as they themselves have come to embody, the higher justifications that enabled tea to weather the difficult transition from the premodern to the modern era.

These national associations that vaulted the tea ceremony to the apex of Japanese traditional culture, as the synthesis of everything at its base, have not lost their resonance as the glare of originating nationalism's fireworks faded. With a vested interest in their perpetuation, the contemporary iemoto system encourages the practitioners who sustain both the business and the tradition to continue not only to invoke national grounds expressly for explaining what they do, but to more quietly enact national associations when practicing tea. Even outside direct interaction with the iemoto, these continue to pulse through the actions of their adherents, whether they are bowing in the formal greeting that opens a lesson, or encouraging an audience of children to become better national members through tea practice. Within the tea world, the iemoto system thus provides a powerful link between the nationalist charge of the tea ceremony and the everyday invocations of nationness evoked in tea practice. These, however, would hardly reverberate far if the Japaneseness of the practice were not sustained by powerful wider circuits in society, to which we now turn.

Beyond the Tea Room

Toward a Praxeology of Cultural Nationalism

Although the overall number of practitioners has fallen since the eighties, this has not yet resulted in a diminution of the salience of the tea ceremony in Japan. Almost all in the country recognize chanoyu as a constitutive element of traditional Japanese culture, possess some sense of what it involves, and can name Rikyū as its founder. The practice is even identified by a gesture, intelligible across the country, of waving the right hand over a cupped left in a motion resembling beating eggs. Though most Japanese have never participated in a four-hour formal gathering, they have at least some notion of what the tea ceremony is about—a commonsensical, thin knowledge that is diffused and reproduced through educational and informational institutions, including schools, museums, and the media.¹

Diffusion

Foremost among these are the secondary schools, where all Japanese learn about the development of the tea ceremony during the Momoyama period and its role in elite culture. Even if he or she has never tasted matcha, anyone who has passed through the ranks of the school system thinks of Rikyū

30. Sen, “Shacha’ no Deai”; Sen, “Hinshu Gokan.”
31. Sen, “Hinshu Gokan.”
32. Sen, “Tomo ni Heiwa o.”
33. Currently, Urasenke’s Tankōkai consists of 17 blocks containing 167 branches within Japan and 99 offices in thirty-five countries outside Japan. Omotesenke adopted this Rotary-based model in 1975, when the Dōmonkai became a corporation and opened its membership beyond teachers to include regular members. The Dōmonkai has since established 53 branches in Japan and 3 overseas.
34. Membership is difficult to estimate. According to the Shakai Keizai Seisansei Honbu’s survey, *Reijaa Hakusho*, 2.3 million Japanese in 2006 claimed to practice the tea ceremony. Of these, about 710,000 participated in the ceremony at least two or three days a month, suggesting that they were taking lessons. Citing an anonymously written newspaper article from 1997, Pitelka, “Introduction to Japanese Tea Culture,” puts Tankōkai membership at 300,000 (6), but this figure might be a bit higher. Given that Omotesenke had 114,000 Dōmonkai members in 2006 and Urasenke is between three and four times its size (see Mori, “The Tea Ceremony,” 89), a rough estimate suggests that Tankōkai may count upward of 400,000 members.
35. Legally, tea schools fall under the purview of the Traditional Culture Section of the Cultural Properties Division of the Cultural Affairs Agency in the Ministry of Culture, Science, and Education. In exchange for generous tax breaks and financial assistance for the maintenance of assets considered Important Cultural Properties, the government may make demands on the schools, commonly requests from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for tea gatherings in honor of foreign dignitaries.
36. See Bourdieu and Johnson, *Field of Cultural Production*, 75–76; and Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*, 141–76.
37. www.tankosha.co.jp/corp/index.html (accessed March 2009).
38. www.sabie-group.com/greeting/index.html (accessed March 2009).
39. www.sabie-group.com/business/kougei/index.html (accessed March 2009).
40. www.wanogakkou.com/aisatu.html (accessed March 2009).
41. www.urasenke.or.jp/textm/headq/recruit/wanogakko/wanogakkooor/wanogakkooor.html (accessed March 2009).
42. www.urasenke.ac.jp/school/gakuen/gakuen.html (accessed March 2009).
43. www.chado.or.jp/bunkakyokai/recruit/member.html (accessed March 2009).

Chapter 4

1. Not only standard fare in textbooks and reference materials, family trees are even reproduced on the pocket calendars carried by many tea aficionados and on the small folding fans they always have to hand in the tea room. Teachers commonly ensure that students are versed in the lineage by selecting a different iemoto each month as the person who putatively carved the tea scoop used at lessons, thus encouraging students to memorize the dynastic succession over the course of the year. Sets of tea scoops made in each iemoto’s style and bearing their source’s name on the back connect lineage training to implement identification skills through a

pedagogical device that ensures the near impossibility of not committing to memory the chain linking the current iemoto to the ur-ancestor of chanoyu.

2. Such name-taking practices are common in other traditional arts as well.

3. Like Western dress, kimonos come in a variety of patterns and levels of formality, and the inappropriateness of wearing the bright, repetitive patterns of a *fudangi*—the casualwear of the kimono world—to a wedding, or a black *tomesode*, its sobriety interrupted only by a splash of color at the bottom hem, to a summer festival is clear. The most formal kimonos carry one, three, or five family crests. On kimonos, see Dalby, *Kimono*; and Goldstein-Gidoni, “Kimono.”

4. While some teachers explicitly state the amount of “gift money” they expect on such occasions, most are oblique, relying on the student to query her seniors for information about the proper response to the name conferral—an opportunity to engage the hierarchy of adherents and confirm one’s place within it.

5. The shift away from articulate explication may itself be verbally forewarned. One teacher cautioned two students about to receive their first instruction in upper-level procedures: “Look at the scroll and how it’s written, how it is set. Look to the left very closely and notice what flowers are arranged there. Now that you are entering the upper levels, you must learn with your eyes. These deeper lessons build on what you learned before, but the instructions are not as explicit. You must watch very closely and learn with your eyes.”

6. While an iemoto’s signature or inscription can increase the monetary and prestige value of most utensils, extremely valuable historical antiques are an exception. In one practitioner’s words, “With utensils like that, you don’t need a signature. They’re valuable enough on their own.” A thin stratosphere of elite tea gatherings today—much like those of the *sukisha* of the past—bypasses this nod to recent iemoto in utensil selection, and relies on either the antique worth or the endorsements of more ancient figures to call forth their value.

7. A teacher I observed getting ready for a formal gathering cautioned a student against displaying a small piece of writing by an iemoto in the waiting area if she did not have a scroll by him in the tea space. “It would be an affront to put the iemoto here [in the waiting area] while hanging a scroll by any old monk in the main room.”

8. Much of the time organizing a tea gathering—large or small—is spent acquiring such pieces through purchase or loans, with the stature of the main guest determining the appropriate rank of the utensils (and this, in turn, decided by the generation of the iemoto endorsing them, along with the prominence of the craftsman and sometimes the pedigree of prior ownership). If inviting a respected teacher to a tea gathering, the host will seek out such valued implements months in advance—an endeavor that is hardly cheap. Utensil shops keep down overall costs for their customers by buying back the utensils they sell, though at a cut in price, effectively renting out their wares. And these shops themselves are networked, circulating among themselves expensive utensils that have made an appearance at a large gathering but have returned to the store, or simply those that have sat on the shelf for more than six months. According to a utensil dealer I spoke with in Tokyo, the rule of thumb for an exceptional utensil that has debuted at a large gathering

and been bought back by the shop is that it spends ten years out in the countryside before returning to the metropolis.

9. At the headquarters this breach is contained by the assistants to the iemoto, who, with steely glances, note that “looking at the waterfall painted on the scroll should be enough to invoke the feeling of coolness.” Recalling one of “Rikyū’s Seven Rules” that commands adherents to bring forth a sense of the cool in summer and warm in winter, this injunction against surrender to the heat defends against the derogatory suggestion that the iemoto has not faithfully lived up to the edicts of his ancestor.

10. In taking part in the iemoto’s service, practitioners may even overproject themselves as a part of the entourage. At one point during a kenchā ritual in Nara, the emcee invited all participants in connection with the iemoto to stand. As his assistants rose, the tea practitioners in the audience began to hesitantly stand up as well—a false step quickly corrected by the anxious handwaving of the iemoto’s aides.

11. Yet the shift in status can be difficult to maintain. At a kenchā service I attended, the Mushanokōjisenke iemoto, rather than the host, controlled the conversation about the utensils. Breaking the tension that lay thick in the room (the man in charge of the service was so nervous that he sat blocking the entrance of the person preparing the tea and had to be told to move), the iemoto began with an inquiry about the flower vase—an asymmetrical, dark brown bamboo container with a large indentation on one side. Offering a comic cause of the aesthetically subtle asymmetry, he joked, “I have to ask about the flower vase. What was it, a car?” Laughter spread across the room, the shock value and clever temporal disjuncture overriding the atmosphere demanding polite restraint, as the host explained, blushing with embarrassment, that it came in a box signed by the grandson of Rikyū.

12. When an iemoto appears to transgress such boundaries, it is through a “strategy of condescension” that asserts his authority while bringing him momentarily to the same plane as practitioners, who simultaneously embrace the closeness while reaffirming his aura. See Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 124.

13. While the iemoto was waiting to go on stage to greet the local group, she explained: “The air conditioner was on, apparently ruffling his hair. He didn’t say anything—he just looked up at it, and his assistant came over to us and told us to do something about it. What were we supposed to do? We had to go around to the building manager to try to figure out how to turn it off, which of course we couldn’t.”

14. For an overview of the Sekishū style of tea and its current practitioners, see Nomura, *Sekishūryū*.

15. The statistical data are drawn from the Shakai Keizai Seisansei Honbu’s *Reijaa Hakusho*, carried out in 2001 and 2006. This nationwide study of 200,000 people in 80,000 households has been implemented every five years for over three decades by the statistics bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Since 1986, one question has been asked about participation in the tea ceremony. Though the raw numbers are not open to the public, tables are provided in published reports and online at www.stat.go.jp/english/data/shakai/index.htm. At the

time of writing, the figures from the 2006 survey were the most recent available. Prefectural-level breakdowns and information about incomes are accessible to the public only in the 2001 survey.

16. Unmarried women under fifty years of age are, on average, almost twice as likely to learn tea as married women. Wives who are childless are also more likely to engage in the practice. Men, less burdened with the second shift, exhibit little such variation.

17. On the postwar changes in family patterns, see Ochiai, *Shinpan*.

18. Shakai Keizai Seisansei Honbu, *Reijaa Hakusho* (2001), www.stat.go.jp/english/data/shakai/index.htm.

19. Ibid. I was granted access to the Omotesenke membership figures in 2007.

20. On the early history of these bridal lessons, see Suzuki, “Taishō, Shōwashoki ni okeru Josei Bunka.”

21. Ochiai, *Shinpan*, 47–48.

22. Their responses, as well as those of the younger women and men I spoke with, concur with those found by Kato, *Tea Ceremony and Women’s Empowerment*, 150–93.

23. On the importance of self-improvement in the leisure activities of working men, see Mathews, “Can ‘a Real Man’ Live for His Family?”

24. In the words of one practitioner, dissatisfied with the laxness of her lessons, “My teacher has completely given up on me. The lessons are just easy fun, and she doesn’t correct me any more. But to teach strictly takes a lot more energy from the teacher. Some get old and they don’t have that any longer, or they give up on students like me.”

25. On junior–senior relationships in other settings, see Ogasawara, *Office Ladies and Salaried Men*, for business offices; Kondo, *Crafting Selves*, for confectionary factories; and Haase, “Learning to Be an Apprentice,” for pottery benches.

26. As she once reprimanded the class for moving too slowly, invoking the considerateness discussed in Chapter 1, “You have to calculate the time backward—you can’t leave anything up to chance. Take, for example, the moist ashes [lining the sunken hearth]. You have to time it so that only the middle is a bit dry when the guests arrive. If you do it correctly, they’ll be impressed. That sort of thing is showing consideration. There’s no time to talk when preparing. With time, that becomes natural, though, and it comes into your everyday life. People who do tea have good timing in everyday life.”

27. Some teachers instruct for longer stretches of five or six hours during which students will come and go as their schedules permit. A unison formal greeting is dispensed with in these cases without an official start time, but as at all tea lessons, each individual tea preparation begins with the student on deck making a formal bow and asking the teacher for instruction.

28. The suspended kettle requires extra care when ladling tea. As another teacher I observed once warned a student who set the pendulum swinging too hard, “You should invoke a breeze for your guests, not a gale-force wind!”

29. This can even become a source of momentary anxiety. At a summer lesson

when the heavens suddenly opened with rain, a student in the back room preparing the next *temae* let out an audible groan. “I was going to use ‘water springing from stones’ (*iwashimizu*)!” Her more advanced neighbor came swiftly to her aid: “Why not use ‘rain from the bright sky’ (*baku’u*)?”—a selection that garnered the immediate praise of the teacher.

30. Such self-conscious learning through observation is common in other traditional arts as well, and in some forms of training, the first year will be spent solely engaged in menial jobs—such as dishwashing for those aiming to become a *kaiseki* chef. Apprentices are expected to use the opportunity to observe and absorb as much as possible.

31. As another teacher explained to me, “With the tea ceremony, you watch and remember it. Eighty percent is watching and remembering, and then twenty percent is doing it yourself and learning. But watching is the most important, which is why when there is a new *temae*, you watch it first and then do it yourself.”

32. The most orthodox tea instructors forbid notetaking under the stricture that everything must be learned through the body; still, many teachers encourage jottings to facilitate self-study. Though textbooks are available, the most diligent students copy down after class the various procedures learned, and check the following week with the teacher that they have in fact noted all the steps. In the words of one veteran, “If it’s not my own writing, then I don’t remember it. It’s through writing and rewriting that you learn the procedure.”

33. Though I was not directly involved in the interaction—I sat outside of the room and out of the participants’ line of sight—and had been visiting the class for more than a year, my presence in the tea complex may have nonetheless encouraged the explicit references to Japaneseness that followed. This is less a complication for the present analysis, which concerns not *that* such marking is done, but rather *how* it is done. Other examples examined in this chapter and the next show that explicit references to Japaneseness are often made unprompted by even the ancillary attendance of foreigners, and are not merely an artifact of my presence.

34. *Tabi* covers protect the split-toed socks worn with a kimono.

35. In an interview, for example, an aging owner of a successful publishing house who studied tea with one of the high-ranking teachers assisting an *iemoto* described the utensils used at lessons and then added the praise, “He gives such detailed explanations; teachers out in the city don’t do that sort of thing.”

36. The ritual hand cleansing before entering a shrine is similar to that before entering a tea room.

37. These “Edo period manners” have received popular attention in recent years through an Edo etiquette book boom.

38. This trope extends far beyond the tea world. See Duara, “Regime of Authenticity”; Ueno, *Nashonarizumu to Jendaa*; and Yuval-Davis and Anthias, *Woman-Nation-State*, on women as bearers of national culture.

39. On this manner of national deixis, see Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 94.

40. This government program, run from 2004 to 2007, was introduced to integrate children into their community by inviting local adults to give short lectures or

demonstrations at schools of their specialized knowledge or abilities. If a volunteer stepped forward, tea demonstrations were included as a part of the program.

41. Yamane, “Chadō to Watashi.”

42. Wada, “Chadō to Deatte.”

43. Ogawa, “Jibun ga Kawaru.”

44. Suzuki, “Chadō wo Jugyō de.”

45. Yanagita, “Chadō tōshite.”

46. Ueda, “Shunpū ni Nabikareta.”

47. Yanagita, “Chadō tōshite.”

48. Ogawa, “Jibun ga Kawaru.”

49. Noguchi, “Dō.”

50. Yamane, “Chadō to Watashi.”

Chapter 5

1. Others have analyzed the importance of such institutions in disseminating national imaginings and creating a shared set of national referents. On museums, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 178–85; on the radio, see Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions*, 42–49; and on newspapers, see Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, III–19.

2. Examples include Inoue and Kasawara’s 1980 *Yōsetsu Nihonshi*, 92; Hōgetsu’s 1966 *Nihonshi*, 169; Inobe’s 1937 *Shinshū Teikoku Shōshi*, 102; and Kunugi’s 1912 *Kokutei Rekishi*, 173–74.

3. The English translation on the neighboring plaque renders this as “one of the world-renowned traditional cultures of Japan.”

4. Other museums dedicated to the tea ceremony include the Uno Museum in Fukui Prefecture, the Tsugaru Museum in Aomori Prefecture, and the Kimura Museum in Niigata Prefecture.

5. Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 29–65, provides an incisive analysis of exoticism as a spur for internal tourism in Japan.

6. Seasoned practitioners at the event sometimes comment that the corner-cutting spectacle is only a shadow of its true form. And even novices who, for the most part, may delight in the new experience, also recognize its abridgments. Such sensitivities do not undercut the ritual but produce “real tea” as a counter to what is happening in the present. See Shryock, “New Jordanian Hospitality.” Indeed, the hostess at the Gion Corner even keeps on hand a photograph album of “real” gatherings to show interested visitors, as they whisk their bowls of tea, what the tea world is “really like.”

7. At the two English-language performances I attended, I found as I mingled through the group that at least half of the audience were Japanese. Most explained their presence by pointing to a foreign visitor they had brought along to experience Japanese tradition or by citing a personal interest in learning how to explain Japanese culture in English.

8. The manga has received wide acclaim and was awarded the 2008 grand prize in the Tezuka Osamu Cultural Award manga competition, and the 2009 superior prize in the manga division at the Japan Media Arts Festival hosted by the Ministry of Culture.