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From Selling Tea to Selling Japaneseness: Symbolic Power and the Nationalization of Cultural Practices

Abstract

This article investigates how institutions of cultural production become invested in the national meanings of their products and employ these associations for their own reproduction and expansion. The case I take is of the tea ceremony in Japan, from its pre-modern origins, through its capture by the organizational form of the *iemoto* system, and to its contemporary projection as a quintessence of Japaneseness. The ritual offers a particularly vivid illustration of the ways in which symbolic power can not only be periodized, first through its accumulation and then its routine exercise, but can also be successively articulated, at first with the state and then with the nation.

Keywords: Symbolic power; Cultural fields; Nationalism; Japan; Tea ceremony.

OVER THE PAST GENERATION, the relationship between cultural practices and institutional arrangements has become a thriving field of sociological research. A broad set of analysts has explored their connections in such fields as art (Becker 1982), music (DiMaggio 1982; Peterson 1999), film (Baumann 2001), literature (Bourdieu 1993) and cuisine (Ferguson 2004). These studies have shown how aesthetic practices, including criteria of taste and value, are produced, harmonized, and legitimated by cooperative (Becker 1982) or competitive (Bourdieu 1993) relationships among educational institutions, certifying agencies, critics, dealers, and management boards in particular historical settings (DiMaggio 1982) or via specific media (Ferguson 2004). Building on everyday distinctions between popular and high culture, much of this literature has turned an attentive eye towards the ways class and status shape – and are shaped by – the social production of artistic prestige, meaning, and taste (Peterson and Kern 1996; Peterson 2005; Johnston and Baumann 2007).

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But while this line of historically rich sociological research has examined the relations between class determinations and symbolic meanings in fields of cultural production, it has – perhaps unexpectedly – tended to leave aside those between the production of national meanings and their relevant institutional configurations. Baumann (2001), for example, does not consider how the constitution of the Hollywood film industry might have contributed to its status as a particularly American icon, and the impact this representational role might have had on its transformation into a respected art form. Neither Peterson (1999) nor Cruz (1999) engage the ways in which the particular versions of Americana enacted by country music or black spiritual singers help compose the genres of their work. Even Ferguson's (2004) sophisticated analysis of the gastronomic field in nineteenth century France does not ask what was designated as distinctively French about the cuisine whose rise it traces. France is treated simply as the geographical container surrounding a space gradually homogenizing under a centralizing authority that facilitated the dissemination of a formalized set of practices constituting a coherent culinary tradition.

Yet these studies recognize that central to the operation and autonomy of any cultural field are the beliefs – authorized and legitimated by a complex institutional structure – that define the merit or meaning of a practice within it. The players – artists, critics, patrons, and the like – propel a field forward as they manipulate or vie over these standards from their dominant or subordinate positions. Such shared (or contested) understandings do not simply define, but constitute the field by delimiting at once what determines the worth of a work, the knowledge needed to appreciate it, and the mechanisms of its production – that is value, taste, and technique. In Bourdieu's terminology, they embody a "symbolic power" that naturalizes authoritative judgments into taken-for-granted statements of reality, transforming what in fact are acts of constitution into mere acts of description (Bourdieu 1991).

To date, applications of this notion to national configurations have been rare. An instructive exception, however, can be found in a recent study by Loveman (2005) of popular struggles over civic registration in nineteenth century Brazil, which distinguishes between two possible moments of such power: its original "accumulation" and subsequent "routine exercise". The focus of her suggestive essay is essentially state-construction – the drive by the imperial regime of the 1860s to assert its central authority at the expense of local, above all clerical, instances, and the popular resistance it unexpectedly aroused. But the distinction she draws can be usefully extended to

processes of nation-building as well. The two are, of course, interconnected, but asymmetrically: if nation-building always implies state-construction, the reverse is not true, as all pre-modern history testifies. In this essay, I will trace a particularly vivid illustration of the ways in which symbolic power can not only be periodized, first through its accumulation and then its routine exercise, but also be successively articulated, at first with the state and then with the nation.

The case I will take is of the tea ceremony in Japan, from its pre-modern origins to its contemporary capture by the organizational form of the *iemoto* system, and projection as a quintessence of Japaneseness. The history of social gatherings revolving around tea preparation, refined comportment, and the appreciation of aesthetic settings and objects, stretches back over five hundred years in the Japanese archipelago. From an aesthetic past-time of aristocrats, to a political tool of warriors, to a social salon for business elites, the tea ceremony has wound a meandering path to become, in the twenty-first century, largely a hobby of middle-class housewives. Yet by the end of this journey, it had acquired national meanings and institutional armatures that make it an exceptional example of mutations in symbolic power, across the same practice, in the passage from a feudal to a post-industrial society.

Early Development of the Tea Ceremony

Late sixteenth century Japan witnessed, in the space of a few decades, a remarkable period of political upheaval and aesthetic efflorescence, in which patterns of both power and culture underwent dramatic redefinition, as the two great warlords of the time, Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), consolidated expanding zones of control over the country, and laid the bases of the new social order that would take shape under the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1868) of the next century. In the growing economic prosperity of these years, group-based *za* arts, popular during the medieval period, proliferated and matured from boisterous social events into distinctive artistic styles, while increased demand for training in "elegant pastimes" (*yûgei*) started to cut across class boundaries, from samurai to commoners (Ikegami 2005). Competence in an array of aesthetic activities became an expected part of social life,

most strongly in urban areas, but in the provinces as well, as not only aristocrats and warriors, but even monks, merchants, and artisans gathered to produce forms of linked poetry, flower arrangement, incense appreciation, and tea ceremony.

In the hierarchy of these practices, poetry traditionally stood at the summit. It was tea, however, that proved the most dynamic, with the most significant life ahead of it. For at least a century, loosely arranged aristocratic tea gatherings had been occasions for social display revolving around the appreciation of rare Chinese utensils, whose prestige lay in their ornate finish and foreign origin. Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, elite tea salons of this kind were becoming eclipsed by much smaller gatherings of successful merchants, who began preparing tea themselves for three or four invited guests, incorporating more easily accessible local utensils in creative juxtaposition with overseas treasures, and developing a set of more ritualized procedures (Berry 1997, pp. 259-285). The inclusion by these wealthy commoners of asymmetrical, rough, and intriguingly imperfect local pottery and other pieces in their tea practice shifted the aesthetic taste of the period towards the values of the "cold and withered" that had long dominated Japanese poetry. An austerely rustic setting was created for the resulting *wabi* tea, as every object and movement was selected with the utmost care for detail, and interactions between host and guest were governed by strict rules of proper comportment.

At this juncture, decisive for the future of tea practice was its annexation by the two most powerful figures in the land, the military hegemons Nobunaga and his vassal successor Hideyoshi. Like other ruthless warriors of the period, neither possessed any of the accoutrements of the court or the aristocracy – Hideyoshi, indeed, coming from origins so obscure they remain uncertain to this day. But as *de facto* supreme rulers, both sought consecration as men of culture. Though they tried their hand at it, fluency in poetry, the highest of the arts, required more literary training than either could hope to acquire. Tea, by contrast, required less painfully assembled knowledge, and offered social opportunities in two directions. Emulating older aristocratic forms of display drew legitimating links to the past. But, pragmatically more important, appropriating forms of merchant tea offered a means to win the favor of urban commercial establishments, particularly those trading in military supplies and key staples and metals – essential during this battle-riven time of territorial consolidation.

Simultaneously, the hegemons transformed the tea ceremony into a key political tool, as utensils became war prizes, small gatherings

functioned as networking opportunities, and large gatherings marked triumphal military victories (Watsky 2003). The practice served as a medium for negotiating rivalries, with merchants-cum-tea masters acting as intermediaries in negotiations off the battlefield. Among the handful of powerful tea masters, Sen Rikyû (1522-1591) rose from his commercial origins to become one of Nobunaga's three favored tea masters, and subsequently Hideyoshi's right-hand man, taking charge not only of the grand tea gatherings that marked his ascension to regency, but also of Hideyoshi's more subtle negotiations, using the tea room as a space to arbitrate confidential matters (Bodart 1977). While taking *wabi* tea to new levels of refinement, Rikyû had simultaneously to minister to Hideyoshi's displays of ostentation, helping him construct a portable gold-plated tea room, the flamboyant antithesis of *wabi* restraint, in which the regent received emissaries from China. Ultimately condemned to commit suicide,[1] Rikyû was succeeded as tea-master to Hideyoshi by the warrior Furuta Oribe (1543-1615), who promoted a glitzier *karasuki* aesthetic employing many ornate Chinese-origin utensils, more appropriate for the ruling daimyo class.

After Hideyoshi's death, the division between daimyo- and merchant-style tea ceremonies became entrenched under the early Tokugawa shoguns, who appointed as their most trusted tea masters the daimyo Kobori Enshû (1579-1647), followed by the daimyo Katagiri Sekishû (1605-1673). These two domainal lords-cum-tea masters set out to reform tea in a manner more suited for warriors. Under their influence, the tea room became a site for reaffirming divisions between ruler and ruled, adopting the classical aesthetics of court culture, and developing principles of comportment enforcing external social rank within the tea room (Tanihata 1988; Varley 1989). The *sankin-kôtai* system which required daimyo to divide their time between Edo (Tokyo) and their domains ensured the transfer of the practice as a key form of sociability from the entourage of the shogun to lesser lords. By the end of the seventeenth century, proficiency in tea was expected of any elite warrior, and most turned to daimyo-style tea, rebuilding the hierarchical lines of authority within the tea room that had been suspended in the sixteenth century (Tanimura 2003).

[1] The reasons for Hideyoshi's *seppuku* order remain shrouded in much musing and mythologizing, but it seems likely that as thetarget of his military ambitions moved from Kansai to Kyushu and then towards Korea, so did the requisite power networks – realignments that disfavored Rikyû who had potentially grown too powerful (Bodart 1977, pp. 66-75).

Still, merchant-style tea persisted. After Rikyû's death, his grandson Sen Sôtan (1578-1658) continued and expanded his practice as a family concern. An able social climber who used Rikyû's name to establish a large network of tea associates and disciples, Sôtan employed his elite connections to garner appointments for three of his sons as tea masters to major domainal lords. These patrons solidified the reputation and wealth of the ensuing trio of Sen family branches: Omotesenke, Urasenke, and Mushanokôjisenke.[2] Although commoners serving in prominent warrior houses, the Sen families enjoyed a special status, being permitted to retain residences in Kyoto and to supplement their incomes by teaching tea to well-off commoner clients. But although their influence grew as the seventeenth century wore on, they were not the most important tea leaders, the more prestigious forms remaining the warrior-style ceremonies patronized by the shoguns.

The founding association of the tea ceremony with the pinnacle of political power in Japan on the eve of the country's unification under the Tokugawa would be critical for its subsequent history, providing the material for its nationalization in the modern era. One must note that strong sense of Japanese identity, as distinct from Chinese, was a traditional mark of the archipelago's elites. Hideyoshi had even claimed that the purpose of his projected conquest of China, for which his unsuccessful invasion of Korea was intended to clear the way, was to bring Japanese culture to the (putatively less enlightened) Chinese. Indeed, forms of tea preparation were generally distinguished based on the Chinese or Japanese origin of the utensils employed. But it would be an anachronism to suppose that in the Japan of the time, the tea ceremony had come to possess any "national" connotation, since no nation in the modern sense of an inclusive community of inhabitants sharing a national identity then existed. What it did acquire – and what inflected it decisively thereafter – was a symbolic association with the state in its emergent neo-feudal form, as a concentrate of legitimate political authority.

Consolidation of the Iemoto System

The consequences of this form for the evolution of tea as a practice were soon manifest. Since medieval times, warriors, following religious precedents, sought to legitimate their grasp for power by

[2] Omotesenke was affiliated with the Kii branch of the Tokugawa house, Mushakôjisenke with the Takamatsu domain, and Urasenke with the Maeda house of the Kanazawa domain.

constructing genealogies to furnish themselves with noble pedigrees. But during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, warriors solidifying their hold over vast territories began writing the household (the *ie*) into law. Hereditary distinctions drawn through patrilines became the foundation of a status-defined society. Legal designations of family membership monitored through land surveys and temple registration were established to prevent peasants from taking up the sword, and warriors from taking up the plough (Rath 2004, 116-8). At the summit of power, an ideological keystone of the Tokugawa Shogunate's domination became deification of the first shogun in the family, Ieyasu, a practice that inspired others to base their authority on the glorification of heroic or martyred ancestors (Ooms 1998, pp. 60-62).

It was in this setting that the innovations that had marked the aesthetic pursuits of the sixteenth century began to harden around authoritative precedents in the seventeenth, with genealogy providing the central axis of this consolidation (Rath 2004, pp. 116-158). The results in the tea ceremony were striking. Although he had historically been one of a handful of influential tea masters taking the form in new aesthetic directions in the sixteenth century, Rikyû was, by the end of the seventeenth century, set apart from his peers as the "patron saint" of the ceremony. The hundredth anniversary of his death was celebrated by the Omotesenke branch with the erection of a statue of their ancestor at the famous Daitokuji Temple. The dubious "discovery" in the same year of a set of Rikyû's writings, *Nanpôroku*, and the subsequent composition of the collection entitled *One Hundred Gatherings of Rikyû*, helped to codify a set of doxic principles purportedly derived from the founding father of the practice. The concomitant rise of a mass-publishing industry facilitated the wide circulation of these foundational myths of the Rikyû Revival. By the end of the seventeenth century, essays and instructions on the tea ceremony could gain wider diffusion and greater popularity if they were presented as "discovered" Rikyû originals (Rath 2004, pp. 168-169). While the Sen families, through familial claims,[3] benefited most

[3] These family ties, however, are hardly straightforward. The early bloodlines were complicated, and the tradition was not passed down to the eldest son – the person who in most cases would continue the main family line (*honke*). Sôtan, Rikyû's grandson, was the child of Shôan, the son of Rikyû's second wife and a different father. Sôtan's mother was supposedly Rikyû's daughter, Okamae, although supporting historical evidence is weak. Rikyû's line was passed down through Shôan, his adopted son, rather than Dôan, his biological son. And Shôan's child Sôtan had four boys of his own. The eldest chose not to continue in the tea business, which was divided among his three younger sons, who became the heads of Mushanokôjisenke, Omotesenke, and Urasenke.

from the elevation of their ancestor to the lofty position of "tea saint", the leaders of daimyo tea, such as Sekishû, also legitimated their authority through connections to Rikyû, by asserting that they transmitted his core teachings in their purest form.

Innovation waned as "good tea" became "proper tea", or preparation conforming to precedent-based rules. As Rikyû's protocols became authoritative, claims of descent from him facilitated increasing monopolization of the tea arena in two ways. First, genealogical connections are inherently limited. Even a century after Rikyû's death, direct ties established through intimate teaching or blood relations were already scarce, and would become yet scarcer over time. Grounding authority in inheritance claims created natural limits that confined possibilities for new schools to arise. Second, the genealogical form itself prefers a delimited, static, "thing-like" inheritance – a property in the objective sense. Such pedigrees were encased, in turn, within a more general institutional form that became increasingly salient over the next century, the iemoto system. Fusing the characters *ie*, meaning house or family, and *moto*, meaning origin or root, the term *iemoto* refers to the person who simultaneously heads a particular school or style of aesthetic activity and a given family that has passed down the authority to define this style for generations. Many Japanese aesthetic practices, from incense enjoyment to flower arrangement, were organized through iemoto systems – at one count there were over thirty of them in eighteenth century Kyoto. And while their contours varied across fields, they were all marked by a hierarchical structure of master-disciple relationships in a patriarchal form based on the household, combining real and fictive familial relationships to control the preservation of cultural authority and transmission of specialized knowledge (Smith 1998).

In the case of tea, the Sen iemoto succeeded, not to Rikyû's innovative ingenuity or creative skill, but to a body of knowledge they defined and attributed to the master. Formalizing Rikyû's legacy and standardizing modes of preparation, the rival schools reconfigured the diversity of tea practices into a codified field. Charged with preserving and passing on this inherited expertise, iemoto rarely introduced novelties (and on the few occasions when they did, they generally passed them off as being within the tradition of Rikyû). Claiming Rikyû's mantle, the iemoto gradually extended their authority over the three critical domains of tea practice – preparation techniques, utensil values, and standards of taste.

Techniques: extending authority over preparation procedures

A hallmark of the tea ceremony is the set of refined motions carried out in a series of steps for making tea, known as *temae*. Iemoto could accumulate control over *temae* only if preparations were formalized and standardized into rule-defined bodies of knowledge. From the sixteenth to the early seventeenth century, tea masters apparently shared their tea practices and theories freely with their students, and, in varying degrees, passed on the right to transmit that knowledge to others. As the iemoto system took shape in the late seventeenth century, the once readily dispensed teachings were increasingly transmitted in their entirety only to the iemoto's successor, with other students gaining access to only part of that knowledge. Reconstituted as an inheritance, knowledge became the birthright of the eldest son or family successor, whose exclusive ownership reinforced his privileged status (Nishiyama 1959, pp. 381-389). The mystery of *sub rosa* knowledge served to further valorize the iemoto, as they were the only ones who could lay claim to such privileged expertise. Secrecy thus defined orthodoxy and served as a buffer against upstart disciples usurping their masters (Rath 2004, pp. 32-114).

In consolidating their expertise, the Sen iemoto in the 1740s developed formal curricula of procedures that could be used to draw in new learners and sustain their interest over time (Pitelka 2005, pp. 94-96). The curricula were organized around the so-called "seven exercises", in which students drew lots to determine which of the roles as hosts or guests they would assume while making tea, with lots redrawn and the roles changed during the course of play. A strict choreography of movement was institutionalized as procedures for making and drinking tea were disassociated from individuals and solidified into roles that all participants had to be capable of assuming at the turn of a chip. The drills promoted formalization and standardization, such that students in disparate places learned the same thing, and that people who had never engaged in tea together could, at least ideally, participate smoothly in a highly coordinated activity.

The iemoto elaborated and formalized these exercises into a proficiency system with seven grades. These selected transmissions of the iemoto's knowledge were arranged in a hierarchy of sanctity that disciples could gain permission to learn through the purchase of certificates. Acquired *before* a particular preparation procedure was taught rather than *after* it had been mastered, these certificates

represented the express permission of the iemoto to gain access to the knowledge in his keep, purportedly passed down from Rikyû. Grounding authority in genealogy resulted in a system in which the iemoto did not certify skill, but granted access to a body of inherited knowledge, and thus tea leaders could retain authority while selling expertise. The hierarchy of licenses not only ensured a steady income to the iemoto but also ranked the students in distance from the apex of a pyramid they could strive to climb. Furthermore, the certificates themselves offered a rationalized means for maintaining the iemoto's authority over the tea preparations of a large community of practitioners, most of whom he would never meet. By objectifying verbal permission, these certificates freed the iemoto from physical presence when granting access to the meted teachings. Serving as his emissary when confering these licenses, teachers channeled and thus became endowed with his authority, a process from which they gained so long as they (and others) accepted the iemoto's influence.

Of course, express permission from a distant iemoto was not necessary to teach or learn tea preparation procedures, and independent practices of tea plainly persisted throughout the Tokugawa period. The late seventeenth century publishing boom made printed texts on tea practice widely available, and a person who had mastered all of the procedures could simply learn or start teaching on his or her own, independently of any school. But to the extent that the authority of the iemoto was recognized, the certificates conferred a legitimizing aura on those who held them, setting them apart from dilettantes. And the printed tea texts that potentially undermined the iemotos' control over inherited tea expertise also reinforced their exalted lineages as these frequently claimed to be based on the teachings of Rikyû or a particular school of tea (Pitelka 2005, p. 114). Dependence on the formal structures was sustained, in addition, by the mode of training. While instructions for basic tea preparation procedures could be found in printed texts, a longer tradition of "secret teachings" in a wide range of domains helped to ensure that the most "profound transmissions" were taught orally, both reinforcing dependence on the iemoto and sustaining a sense of privilege – real to the extent it was believed in – as practitioners gained access to the "sacred core" of Rikyû's tea.

Taste and value: extending authority over utensils

The iemoto generated and extended authority not only over how people made tea, but also over the objects they used to make it.

Central to the spirit of creativity characteristic of sixteenth century tea preparation was the innovative incorporation of found objects – the baskets, bowls, and containers from everyday life – as utensils in formal tea preparation. A well water bucket placed beside the kettle as a water container or a fisherman's basket hung on the wall as a flower container produced interesting, aesthetically subtle juxtapositions. But as Rikyû and his closest disciples became the venerated sources of "proper tea", such innovations were increasingly classified – and thereby legitimated – as following the styles of these masters. During the seventeenth century, the label *konomi* came to be used to recognize that a tea utensil, garden, or architectural form reflecting the stylistic tastes of a particularly revered aesthete (Isozaki 2006, pp. 291-305), not only bolstering the iconic status of these "great masters" but also further ensconcing the division between the more muted aesthetic of the Sen families' *wabi* tea and the more glamorous *karasuki* aesthetic of daimyo tea. Eventually, by the mid-nineteenth century, the "iemoto's gaze" (Pitelka 2005, pp. 94) grew so strong that iemoto increasingly named *konomi* directly. Taking control of their own stylistic canons by designing and producing utensils themselves, they extended their aesthetic reach by supplying and promoting authorized tea objects.

Iemoto also asserted aesthetic authority by certifying utensils as particularly suited for the tea ceremony by writing on or signing the boxes containing them, or even the utensils themselves (*hakogaki* and *kaô*, respectively). Tea utensils had long been revered objects, even given proper names, and possession of particular items of exalted provenance symbolically associated the owner with great men of the past. Because tea utensils served as a center point of tea gatherings – aesthetes since the sixteenth century recording which utensils were used on such occasions in carefully kept diaries – significant associations added to their value. From around the 1720s, the Sen iemoto began ordering special tea bowls from prominent ceramicists – sometimes even carving bowls themselves – and signing the wooden boxes in which the receptacles were stored. Giving these bowls as commemorative gifts on special occasions, the iemoto realized that associating utensils with the family line increased their value. Proliferating from the eighteenth century, these inscriptions – the *hakogaki* messages on boxes or the *kaô* ciphers on boxes or utensils – became visual signs of the iemoto's authority, adding monetary and prestige value to the utensil. Furthermore the iemoto's expertise in utensil appreciation provided an additional source of cultural capital through authentification. Practitioners would bring tea scoops or

bowls of anonymous pedigree to an iemoto, who might decide that something in its construction indicated that Rikyû had carved it, inscribing in ink this revelation on the scoop's box (*ibid.,* p. 102).

Naturally, utensil makers also prospered from association with iemoto, as official sponsorship could increase both the demand for and the value of their products. Iemoto benefited from such close relations as well, with intimately connected craftsmen producing, sometimes in large numbers, tea utensils conforming to the iemoto's taste that could be purchased by disciples. Indeed, the Raku pottery family, whose tea bowl style was supposedly developed in conjunction with Rikyû, enjoyed so much success that by the end of the eighteenth century production could not meet demand, a popular text revealing the family production "secrets" went through multiple prints, and dozens of kilns across the country were producing Raku-style ceramics (*ibid.*, pp. 111-112). But if the parentage of a bowl was disputed, it could, of course, be taken to an iemoto or the Raku family for authentication. As this proliferation indicates, objects representative of an iemoto's style or bearing an iemoto's stamp of approval became models for extensive reproductions, encouraging practitioners to develop an aesthetic sense based on the iemoto's taste. Even in cases when the actual objects were not available, the multiplication of printed catalogues with images of famous utensils accompanied by descriptions of their construction and pedigree of ownership helped to develop skills of connoisseurship in line with aesthetic standards of tea leaders (*ibid.*, pp. 123-124).

Thus as the iemoto elaborated mechanisms for marketing their expertise to disciples during the eighteenth century, they intensified their authority over technique, taste, and value, regulating and routinizing tea practice and codifying hierarchies of utensil choice. Copies and mass-production aided in this endeavor as printed texts and utensil catalogues spread the "iemoto's gaze" beyond his immediate interlocutors. Utensil dealers quickly became allies in this effort, producing replicas of favorite objects and benefiting from the vibrant market produced by iemoto adherents. The success of the genealogically-grounded system of authority is observable at its delicate edges. While through the mid-eighteenth century, expert disciples occasionally split from the Sen families and began teaching their own styles of tea, they usually justified their rebellion by claiming to pass on the "true" spirit of Rikyû. And even if they were themselves critical of the iemoto system, the schools they created took on much the same trappings within a few generations.

Elite Tea and the Limits of the Iemoto

Firmly entrenched by the eighteenth century though they had become, the influence of the iemoto was still circumscribed. The Sen families enjoyed the patronage of a handful of daimyo, but amateur disciples paying for certificates, *kaô*, and *hakogaki* were necessary for the development of the iemoto *system*, and these were for the most part supplied by well-heeled commoners – merchants, artisans, monks, and even some agriculturalists – who enjoyed tea as one of several "elegant pastimes". While the legitimizing authority of formal certificates and the like was desirable for these types, the iemoto did not have the infrastructural capabilities to ensure that distant practitioners continued to practice tea as dictated from the center. Students of different schools, moreover, often attended tea gatherings together, in a further centrifugal pull against homogeneity.

At higher social levels, the iemoto had still less presence. At the summit of power, tea continued to form an essential moment of the rituals of rule. Both the last effective reformer and the doomed final *tairô* of the Tokugawa system – respectively, Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829) and Ii Naosuke (1815-1860) – wrote manuals on the ceremony as an adjunct of statecraft. But this was in a stratosphere well above the iemoto. The Sen families had no access to the Shogunate itself, where the Tokugawa *rôjû* practised the aristocratic style of tea developed by Sekishû, and most daimyo followed suit. Initiated by a feudal lord, this form of tea had no need to petrify its aesthetic choices into a codified body of knowledge that could be appropriated and sold. From such heights, iemoto were surplus to requirements: throughout the Tokugawa era, daimyo tea remained free of any institutional corsetry. At somewhat lower levels, moreover, free-wheeling literati, inspired by Chinese example, developed a subversive alternative to the tea ceremony – drinking not powdered tea (*matcha)* but infused tea (*sencha*) in uninhibited bohemian settings, in which the small-minded rituals and mercenary undertows of the iemoto world were despised, and on occasion openly mocked (see Graham 1998).

When the Shogunate eventually collapsed in the 1860s, there was thus no guarantee that the iemoto would necessarily survive, let alone flourish, in the drastically altered conditions of Meiji Japan. The Restoration swept away the parcelization of power among the daimyo, who were finally dismantled with the abolition of the status system in 1871. For the iemoto, who lost their patrons and whose "traditional"

aesthetic domains were discredited by the out-with-the-old, in-with-the-new fervor of the times, this marked the beginning of two decades of financial crisis. The Urasenke family sought to reassert itself by forging ties to the emperor, serving tea to the Chrysanthemum Throne in 1860 with a "rediscovered" procedure said to have been used by Rikyû (Kumakura 1980, pp. 112-115), and claiming that tea training provided a means for cultivating the Confucian values all good imperial subjects should now possess (see translation in Kramer 1985, p. 145).

But no easy transition to a post-feudal society was within reach. If the tea ceremony itself, as a tradition, remained too deeply associated with the exercise of power to be discarded, the new capitalist elites sought to emulate aristocratic rather than commoner forms of it. Despite the loss of its warrior-elite carriers, daimyo tea returned to the upper altitudes of society as the captains of industry enthusiastically took up latter-day versions of it around the turn of the twentieth century. By adopting the cultured practices of prior rulers, these businessmen tea aesthetes (*sukisha*) could temper their image as ravenous economic animals, and appropriate legitimizing links to past elites. They also spurred a thriving market for famous tea utensils, now redefined as objects of art and treasures of the nation, while their gala tea gatherings were attended by the powers-that-be and lavishly covered in the press. But their modes of tea preparation remained unregulated by the iemoto, they were critical of the acquisition of certificates, and indifferent to the iemotos' *kaô* and *hakogaki*. Still it was they who held the spotlight down to the 1920s.

From a State Tool to a National Tool

The emergence of these industrialists formed, of course, part of a much wider reshuffling of the social deck in the Meiji period (1868-1912), as the new rulers of the country sought to build not only a powerful centralized state, capable of competing with the imperial predators of the West, but also a modern nation in which every citizen-subject was educated to identify with the fate of the state. Victories in the Sino-Japanese (1894-1895) and Russo-Japanese (1904-1905) Wars gave a tremendous boost to a fully-fledged nationalism, propagated at official and assimilated at popular levels. In this atmosphere, tea was promoted as a distillation of the essence of the

nation, rather than, as traditionally treated, a caparison of the state. In this conversion, two figures were of particular significance. Better known abroad, Okakura Kakuzô (1862-1913) produced with *The Book of Tea* (1906) an international bestseller, translated from its original English into many languages, and appearing in ever-larger runs. His depiction of the practice, projecting the tea ceremony as the acme of Japaneseness, was embedded in a corpus of writing – *The Awakening of the East* (1902), *The Ideals of the East* (1903), and *The Awakening of Japan* (1904) – that called not only on Japan but Asia at large to repel the "white plague" attacking from the West. More immediately influential at home, Tanaka Senshô (1875-1960), founder of the "Great Japanese Society for the Way of Tea" (*Dainihon Sadô Gakkai*) in 1898, published his *Chazen Ichimi*, imbued with still greater nationalist fervor, in the same year as Okakura's work. Unlike the latter, a *freischwebende* and often expatriate intellectual, Tanaka was a tea master at the head of his own school, and in a position to affect the future of the ceremony.

For meanwhile, another social change of the period was transforming the practice of tea in Japan. Under the Tokugawa, as earlier, tea ceremony was the reserve of men. Under the neo-feudal order, some women learned the practice as a form of etiquette training, but they were endowed with only a thin knowledge of the basic procedures and no records indicate that they hosted formal gatherings. Under the Meiji regime, however, women were not only increasingly liberated from status restrictions, but expected to contribute to the national polity of which they too were now, if still a lesser, part. The rising number of women able to afford tea lessons as part of marriage training supplied a profitable basis for expanding the iemoto's certifying and sanctifying authority. From the 1890s, local educators at a number of girls' schools incorporated the tea ceremony as a part of the curriculum and extra-curriculum (Kobayashi 2001, 2006). The Urasenke School quickly latched onto this trend, its iemoto not only donating utensils to girls' schools, but teaching classes at them as well. In the nation-making atmosphere of late Meiji, girls' home economics and etiquette textbooks increasingly emphasized the tea ceremony as part of the long and unique history of Japanese manners. Tea was described as a part of the "qualities of our country's women and of the ways of our country's people of the past" (Kondo 1893), and proffered as a *vade mecum* for the state-supported ideal of the "good wife and wise mother". The national image of the practice was further disseminated in school history textbooks, which generally included

a section on Rikyû and tea practice during the glorious period of territorial consolidation under Nobunaga and Hideyoshi.

For the iemoto, young women were particularly well-suited to becoming a lucrative pool of customers, as they could make use of the iemoto's certifying authority beyond the tea world. Included as part of a dowry, iemoto-issued certificates – some of them consecrating novel distinctions in expertise – imparted official assurance of a woman's worthiness as a wife. Following the Russo-Japanese War, the Sen iemoto began granting special licenses for upper-level preparations only to war widows, which may have supplemented the income of impoverished teachers. And less than a decade later, they developed licenses certifying tea teachers for instructing tea classes at schools. While no accreditation was technically necessary, the iemoto's approval could conceivably serve as the deciding factor when secondary schools chose among similar candidates. Since these licenses were awarded after attending a training course, the iemoto established a further opportunity to monitor tea practice among their new adherents (Kumakura 1980, p. 303).

Increasingly strict control over women's tea practice was also facilitated by the spread of official texts. While prior iemoto had been concerned about the potential of print technology to undermine their authority – earlier texts had been issued by dilettantes rather than the sanctifying center – Tanaka was able to utilize the form in a way that reinforced institutional centralization by prescribing officially standardized movements. In 1901, he began publishing detailed texts of all tea preparation procedures with the intention of encouraging the spread of tea to the widest extent possible. After initially condemning the publication of textbooks, Urasenke soon followed suit with the release of its own series of manuals in 1903. Tanaka also began the first tea ceremony periodical, *Chadô Gakushi*, in 1900 to keep in touch with his adherents, in which he spread his refrain that "tea is the basis of national morality". Declaring that the true purpose of the practice was to preserve the "national essence", he argued that it should be employed as a basis for training in moral education by the state (Kumakura 1980, pp. 177-178; Tanaka 1987). This combination of developments strengthened the iemoto's grip on the bodies and performances of their adherents: tea was to be done in a particular, officially sanctioned manner, and harmonized across the country. Deviations from the standard could be checked against the official manuals and corrected into a homogeneous end product. Tanaka's efforts to modernize the moribund iemoto system through institutional innovations were interlocked with a distinctively nationalizing

program of using the practice to produce good imperial subjects among the masses.

Because women's tea participation focused strongly on training and certificate acquisition, the iemotos' rationalization and codification of tea procedures engendered normative standards and methods of control that disproportionately affected women. The official textbooks contributed to an image of the tea ceremony as comprising a set of clear and rigid rules governing the physicality of practitioners, who were increasingly feminizing. Women were also more dependent on the rationalized system of control through certificates. While elite men were largely uninterested in certificates as they had little need for external validation of what was, in essence, simply aesthetic entertainment, these paper proofs supplied women with an authoritative affirmation of the graceful comportment and proper manners that formed the core of their training. Displaying licenses of their tea expertise on the marriage market, they were more dependent than men on the iemoto's sanctification – external recognition that they would, indeed, serve as good marriage partners. As the iemoto extended their authority over increasing numbers of female practitioners, recognition by these new adherents of their legitimizing power bolstered their authority, in a process that increasingly linked tea to nationalizing efforts.

Faced with difficult financial times and an uncertain future at the outset of the Meiji period, the iemoto were able to resuscitate themselves by expanding their institutional umbrella to include women, utilizing the school system to promote their tea and gather new practitioners, while developing membership organizations that strengthened the demand for and their grip over tea technique, value, and taste. But women remained, of course, second-class citizens, and down to the end of the Taisho period (1912-1926), the iemoto could not compete in the scale of tea prestige with the millionaire *sukisha*, collecting priceless utensils for their own free-form ceremonies. It was not until the economic crash of 1928, followed by a sharp depression, that this changed. Their public image was severely damaged by the crisis (more than one was assassinated), and as the Robber Barons passed from the stage, their heirs took up more modern forms of entertainment (Guth 1993, p. 4, p. 161). The financial and geriatric decline of these Meiji and Taisho plutocrats opened space for others to maneuver, in a Showa Japan of escalating militarism and ultra-nationalism.

In the new decade, a rising tide of chauvinism saw increasing official energies invested in defining the particularities of the Japanese.

The Ministry of Education's *Kokutai no Hongi* (Cardinal Principles of the National Polity) of 1937, printed in an initial run of 300,000 and expanded to millions of copies circulating through Japan and its possessions, declared: "Our national Way appears strikingly in the arts that have come down to us from of old. Poetry, music, calligraphy, incense ceremony, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, architecture, sculpture, the industrial arts, and drama culminate in the entry of the Way, and find their source therein". In this catechism of the "jingoiost" ideology of the period, the *wabi* aesthetic of tea was enrolled as a prime expression of the national spirit: "In the narrow tea room, sitting knee to knee, one enjoys the chance to meet as if for only once in one's lifetime. The host and guest become one and the same, and as such ranks of high and low merge, and without the individual self and without discrimination, a state of harmony is attained. This spirit in which an impartial concordance is created, reversing the time-honored discrimination of rank and occupation, accordingly nurtures the spirit of selfless duty".[4]

In this atmosphere, the iemoto were able to claim the limelight for themselves through two large tea events: the Showa Kitano Tea Gathering of 1936 commemorating the 350th anniversary of the spectacular mass tea ceremony staged by Hideyoshi at a shrine in Kyoto, and the memorial tea service commemorating the 350th anniversary of Rikyû's death in 1940 (Tanaka 2207, pp. 90-118). Use of grand gatherings to bolster their image was not a new technique for the iemoto, who had since the late eighteenth century employed tea events commemorating Rikyû for fundraising and publicity (Kumakura 1980, p. 102, p. 110). Now, however, the accessible public was greater, and new broadcast media facilitated the transmission and magnification of their symbolic performances.

Hosted by the three Sen Schools, the Showa Gathering of 1936 was a mega-event held at Kitano Shrine and numerous other sites in Kyoto. Notices touted the reenactment as an historical celebration and rare chance to view an iemoto's *temae*. While a handful of *sukisha* participated, by this time they assumed a subordinate position to the iemoto, who performed a quasi-religious *kencha* tea service at the shrine in commemoration of Hideyoshi's spirit (Tanaka 2007, pp. 97-103). Pioneered by the Urasenke iemoto Gengensai, executing *kencha* tea offerings to the gods at shrines and spirits at temples not only

[4] The translation is of section five. The original is available online at http://www.j-texts.com/showa/kokutaiah.html.

transformed the practice into a sacrament offered to national deities (Cross 2009, pp. 82-83), but served simultaneously as public spectacles placing the iemoto's tea performance on display for a public who would otherwise have little to no chance of viewing the "most correct" way of preparation. Advertised and covered widely in newspapers, the event drew over ten thousand attendees – outstripping by ten even the scale of Hideyoshi's own assembly.

Four years later saw a smaller yet grander gathering as the iemoto of the three Sen Schools commemorated the 350th anniversary of Rikyû's death by hosting a set of tea performances, at which Rikyû's tea was propounded as containing the essence of the national spirit and ethical bearing of good imperial subjects. Although participation in the event was limited to 700, the gala affair was amplified and radiated across the country though national newspaper coverage. The national radio broadcast of the event projected the nationalized image of tea yet further, declaring that "the 'harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility' expressed by Rikyû… is a culture of *wabi* whose spiritual basis accords with the national essence of the Japanese people" (Tanaka 2007, p. 92). The Mushanokôkjisenke iemoto and several academics offered a series of public lectures as a part of the activities, and the wider public interest in Rikyû was evident in their packed audience consisting largely of non-tea practitioners (*ibid.,* pp. 91-95).

Thus while the *sukisha* had been engrossed with the daimyo tea of figures such as Sekishû and Enshû, around 1940 the spotlight had shifted to Rikyû's tea, the spiritual elements of his practice raising the public status of those connected to his tradition, namely, the iemoto of the three Sen Schools. Rallying Rikyû's tea as a means to transmit a militaristic nationalism to the populace, the iemoto wove the practice into the imperial narrative, transmitted through extensive radio and press coverage, and abetted by a Rikyû book boom. A rash of titles on Rikyû helped erect his tea into a practice "representative of Japanese culture" at a time when Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro's 1938 promulgation of a "New Order" (*Shin Taisei*) moved the revival of tradition high up the political agenda. Looking towards the 350th anniversary, Takeuchi Jôo's 1939 book *Sen Rikyû* used the spiritual expression of a Japanese essence in Rikyû's tea ceremony as a pivot on which to elevate the servant above his master, Hideyoshi, claiming that "Rikyû's eternal achievement abides in the spiritual culture of the Japanese […] his spirit burns in all areas directly connected to Japanese life – food, clothing, and shelter" (Tanaka 2007, 107). In 1940, Nishibori Kazuzô's book *Rikyû* stressed the importance of "self-control" as

a central part of the tea ceremony and of a distinctively Japanese national culture. A year later, Suzuki Keiichi's *Sen Rikyû Zenshû* recruited Rikyû for Japan's "holy war" to unify Asia (Cross 2009, pp. 103-104). As the war effort commandeered all facets of political, economic, and social life, the iemoto were serving the imperial mission in person, with the future Urasenke master Hôunsai (1923-present) even recruited into a kamikaze squad, offering final tea services to his confederates who stepped before the inheritor of Rikyû in the line of duty.

From Symbolic Power over Tea to Symbolic Power over Japanese Culture

Military collapse and occupation left the iemoto, as earlier at the fall of the Bakufu, once more in a potentially precarious position, exposed to attack as remnants of a discredited patriarchal tradition that had become adjuncts of an authoritarian order. Over two centuries they had accumulated significant symbolic power, but they had not yet secured it as a routine attribute of their calling. Under the Tokugawa, they had engineered and exploited genealogical connections to assert authority over the domains of practice and taste that define tea ceremony. But even when they acted as tea advisers to selected daimyo, they remained social inferiors of the ruling elite, who might have employed objects or practices sanctified by iemoto, but did not depend on them to legitimate their tea practice. Recovering from economic and social setbacks at the outset of the Meiji regime, they incorporated women under their umbrella as a new layer of novitiates legitimizing their authority, but still had to operate in the shadow of the showier and more powerful *sukisha*. With the eclipse of the latter, the iemoto could finally move to the front of the stage, as beneficiaries of the nationalizing undertones of women's tea instruction, and the promoters of the tea ceremony as central to the national heritage. Magnified through media coverage, their efforts to rally tea for the nation at the height of Japanese expansionism garnered broad public attention. By the time of the Pacific War, the balance of prestige had shifted: the iemoto were now able to claim an elite status for themselves as icons of Japanese culture and embodiments of a venerated national tradition.

Imperial collapse at the end of World War II put at risk all these gains. Just as Meiji modernization had threatened to reduce the iemoto to relics of an outdated past, so post-war democratization under SCAP brought criticisms of their rigid hierarchies as an antithesis

of the new patterns of freedom and equality introduced by the victors. But as the occupation regime came to rely increasingly on rehabilitated pre-war elites, the ensuing ideological adjustments allowed the iemoto not only to recover but to enhance their position as guardians of what was inmost and best in the nation. For following Prime Minister Katayama Tetsu's call in his first address to the Diet under the postwar constitution, political leaders now aimed to redefine a demilitarized Japan as a "Land of Culture" (*bunka kokka*). As early as 1948 the state instituted "Culture Day" as a national holiday, and began establishing cultural affairs offices in localities across the country. The iemoto lost no time in taking advantage of this turn of events to reframe their practice of tea as the epitome of a peace-loving Japanese civilization.

They were able to do so by refashioning their position in society in two complementary directions. Economically, they would convert themselves into modern business corporations, in syntony with the high-speed Japanese capitalism of the post-Occupation period. Socially, they would ascend to the status of cultural elites at a time when culture was one of the few legitimate arenas for nationalist expression – a branding association that could also serve as a pitch for marketing a new range of business endeavors. Though often represented as disinterested cultural icons, iemoto remained tea professionals living off their craft. Traditionally, they had reaped their profits from the sale of tea certificates, classes, *kaô*, texts, seminars, and publications – what might be termed "tea expertise." But from the mid-twentieth century onwards, the iemoto would enlarge their business interests in new directions by trading on the strategic potential of the tea ceremony as a presumptive synthesis of Japaneseness at large. In this process, symbolic escalation and market expansion went hand in hand.

Historically, emblems of nationhood in Japan – as elsewhere – had formed a variegated repertoire from which different groups or individuals could choose according to their commitments or interests. Since late Meiji times, the tea ceremony had always figured among them. But others were still more prominent in the high Showa period, when the cult of the warrior code, *bushidô*, was a more formidable expression of the national spirit. In the aftermath of defeat in World War II, this was no longer a presentable contender for capturing it. Of the remaining possibilities in the palette of traditional symbols and practices, tea was now in many ways the best positioned. Other arts might be more ancient, and even today command a greater audience – sumo went back to the Heian age, and would soon be a magnet on

television. But wrestling is a spectator, not a participant, sport. Other possibilities – say, the composition of haiku, still practised on a mass scale – lacked an inherent collective dimension. Nor, of course, could any compete with tea in the potency of its association with the summits of political power in the past. The post-war situation thus offered the iemoto an unprecedented opportunity to upgrade the status of tea in the national pantheon, which they seized by promoting the practice as not just one among other august manifestations of Japanese tradition, but as the veritable center of its web of different aesthetic activities and objects. Tea was not only seen, but also explicitly advertised, as standing at the core of traditional Japanese culture. According to this new ideology, the roots of which lay in Okakura's book, the tea ceremony was a "cultural synthesis" (*sôgô bunka*) of all the Japanese arts, combining within one form architecture, pottery, painting, calligraphy, cuisine, flower arrangement, not to speak of corporal grace (Kato 2004). These other arts were not slighted by this claim, but rather enhanced by it, as the tea schools soon formed mutually beneficial strategic alliances with others employed in the tradition industry. The density of these connections to other national traditions aided in sustaining the Japaneseness of tea ceremony.

Its elevation to the rank of overarching cultural synthesis was accompanied, moreover, by its presentation also as a cure for specifically contemporary ills. Here the main strategies can be readily culled from the introductory greetings by the Urasenke iemoto in the monthly periodical, *Tankô*, in which the tea master addresses practitioners across the country, though the motifs in these greetings reappear in public speeches, television appearances, and books authored by him. In these, by far the most common theme – occurring in around one-fifth of greetings published during Hôunsai's tenure as iemoto (1965-2002) – was the role of tea as a salve to the putative crisis in Japanese culture in a period of rapid economic growth. The activity was regularly presented as a felicitous solution to the decline of human relationships and the loss of tradition associated with rise of individualism and excess of Westernization: tea practice cultivating precisely the fading qualities essential to, if not definitive of, Japaneseness. In his first address, Hôunsai declared, "Contemporary Japan is missing a foundational element, human interaction [...] as people think not about the country but only about themselves". Under these conditions, he went on, "all compatriots should turn to tea and the decorum of thinking about others, to spread a natural respect for humanity" (Sen 1965). Two years later, he was reiterating that "traditional Japanese

ways of life are withering". What was needed was a "Japanese attitude to life of which we can be proud", rather than "this confused society, in which the good taste of a Japanese life is being lost". The solution? "The tea ceremony can return society to its true abode" (Sen 1967). Even an act as common as eating was under threat. In the 1980s, he explained, "In the past, Japanese table manners were ordered in detail", but now the sense of gratitude once expressed in salutations before and after a meal "has become completely lost" and that even "Japaneseness has become forgotten". But here too "one can learn all those manners in the tea ceremony, in the serving of the *kaiseki* [meal]" (Sen 1986). At work throughout these texts is the notion of an intrinsic Japaneseness, that all Japanese have claims to, and are even responsible for, but have failed to maintain. Consequently, it becomes the duty of every Japanese individual to learn tea ceremony in order to recover the threatened essence of the nation.

Ideological intensification was accompanied, and secured, by economic fortification, as the iemoto developed much stronger infrastructures than in the past. During the war, membership organizations were instituted at the most popular tea schools under a 1942 decree requiring large social groups to establish official organizations enabling stricter government monitoring and possible future mobilization. At first run as small teachers' associations with only a few hundred members, these organizations were greatly expanded after the war. The Urasenke iemoto, Hôunsai, retooled his following along the lines of the Rotary Club system by founding a national network of regional associations and local branches managed by various advisory boards – a pattern subsequently copied by other larger tea schools. Because the Urasenke membership organization, Tankôkai, is the largest and most elaborately developed, it can be taken as a template for trends that were more broadly generalizable.

Essentially a powerful tool for creating a national tea presence, Tankôkai currently has over 160 branches in local communities, each required to hold several large-scale public tea gatherings a year, in addition to arranging tea demonstrations at culture festivals or exhibitions. As volunteer associations, the local groups are an extremely cost-efficient way for the main headquarters not only to organize tea events across the country, but to staff the tea ceremony clubs it runs at over 6,000 elementary, junior high, and high schools, not to speak of colleges. Since participation in the organization is a requirement for moving into the upper echelons of the tea hierarchy, Tankôkai also strengthens the iemoto's grip and refines his control over practitioners' tea preparation

techniques. At least twice a year, an emissary of the iemoto visits each association and conducts a public class with local students in a community center or concert hall. Instructed in the single, official way of carrying out the *temae* demonstrated, audience members return to their tea groups endowed with the ability to police wayward gestures of others by invoking the "correct" way. In Tokyo, the disciplining gaze is drawn to the smallest details of movement by two large screens projecting simulcast images focusing on the hands, feet, and eyes of the participants on stage. Practitioners interested in more personal attention are encouraged to join the week-long seminars held at the main headquarters twice a year to ensure they are making tea properly. And even when the minutiae of their own motions cannot be corrected by representatives of the center, they can self-adjust them against the procedures narrated in dozens of photographs featured in Tankôkai's monthly magazine.

Tankôkai also bolsters the market for iemoto-approved utensils. At the large-scale gatherings which the heads of local branches are required to hold several times a year, the organizers are expected to use scrolls and tea scoops made by the iemoto, and employ tea bowls and other utensils bearing his signature, or labeled as a *konomi* consonant with his taste, in recognition that the event is held under his auspices. Utensils may be borrowed, but lending expensive, iemoto-endorsed pieces that will be handled by a number of people during the event is a high-risk proposition even among friends. Therefore heads of local Tankôkai branches own a large number of iemoto-approved utensils they can mix and match on such occasions. For some practitioners, the large outlay needed to purchase these may inhibit them from seeking leadership positions, but the proliferation of such normative standards is quite lucrative for the iemoto. Unsurprisingly, in the Urasenke School the writing of *kaô* greatly expanded under Hôunsai, the leader who retooled Tankôkai.

Finally Tankôkai organizes a ready-made group of consumers for the iemoto's other business endeavors, addressed in greater detail below. The iemoto's stamp of approval sanctifying a product makes it a safe choice for practitioners who are guaranteed that it is therefore appropriate or "authentic". One cannot go wrong with a product legitimated from the top. Advertisements or articles carried in Tankôkai periodicals and newsletters inform all practitioners about what is available. Even if all do not become consumers, readers are transformed into a body of practitioners educated to recognize utensils consecrated by the iemoto.

In this new tea world, the Urasenke School, with around 70 percent of tea practitioners in Japan today, holds the upper hand. The Omotesenke School follows a distant second, encompassing around 20 percent of practitioners. The remaining students of tea are members of one of about a dozen smaller schools, including the Mushanokôjisenke, Dainihon Sadô Gakkai, Edosenke, Yabunouchi, Sôhen Schools, along with the Sekishû and Enshû styles. The public relationships among the various iemoto are congenial rather than competitive, but beyond annual celebratory tea gatherings and occasional meetings, interaction among them is generally minimal. Sharing the same form and similar content, the field of largely self-contained schools can be visualized as an array of identical, bounded units differing mainly in size. They draw their clientele from the 2.3 million Japanese who currently report engaging in the ceremony as a leisure activity, nearly 90 percent of them women, and most middle-aged (Shakai Keizai Seisansei Honbu 2006). "Doing tea" today means largely attending weekly classes, often held at a teacher's home or community center, at which an average of between two and eight students take turns as the teacher coaches them through the strict procedures for preparing and drinking tea. These vary according to the seasons, utensils used, and to the styles of the particular school, which dictate such nuances as whether one enters the tea room on the left foot, the right foot, or the foot closest to the wall.

Legally, tea schools fall under the auspices 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 particular, though generally light, demands on the schools – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commonly requesting them to host tea gatherings for foreign dignitaries, in a well-crafted experience of Japanese culture and hospitality. All the major schools are registered as family foundations, but these are not small businesses. While Urasenke consistently declines to release financial information about itself, a closer look at the numbers behind Omotesenke can offer a benchmark for the scale of iemoto operations.[5] In 2006, the Omotesenke family trust, Fushinan, was worth about 17 million dollars. Activities such as lessons, seminars, tea clubs, and large gatherings – worth about 10 million dollars – were largely self-sustaining,

[5] I was granted access to the Omotsenke records in 2007.

while the pyramid scheme of certificates gathered substantial profits. Although new members purchasing the relatively inexpensive entry-level certificates brought in only a few hundred thousand dollars, older members purchasing the much more costly upper-level *sôden* certificates generated over 4 million dollars in revenue. The largest single source of income came from "contributions" amounting to over 6.5 million dollars. Yet these were not enough to keep the entire operation from running at an overall 2.6 million dollar loss. Still, with assets including properties and utensils amounting to 18 million dollars, the organization was able to stay in the black.

Membership in the two largest tea schools is organized through much larger enterprises. Valued at some 75 million dollars, the Omotesenke membership organization, Dômonkai, is worth substantially more than the family trust. In 2006, an office of a mere 28 employees managed the affairs of 116,000 members, consisting of 37,000 regular members, 52,000 tea masters ("lecturers"), and 27,000 top-level experts ("professors"), who paid almost 11 million dollars in dues. Nearly 15 million dollars in revenue was generated by activities, including tea events, lectures, and seminars, and the entire operation ran an 18 million dollar profit. If these figures are to be trusted, Omotensenke, combining the Fushinan and Dômonkai operations, was worth around 90 million dollars in 2006. Given that Urasenke has roughly four times its membership, the tea schools as a whole amount to around a half billion dollar industry.

In many traditional fields of cultural production, producers have an interest in appearing relatively indifferent to economic gain, in order to sustain belief in the autonomous value of the work of art (Bourdieu 1993, p. 9, pp. 75-76; Bourdieu 1996, pp. 141-176). In Japan, the iemoto have leveraged their cultural authority to market new products beyond the domain of the tea ceremony, while maintaining an overall, but not absolute, appearance of economic disinterestedness. Again the Urasenke School has been the trendsetter, with other schools attempting to follow suit, but with less success. Here the younger brothers of the Urasenke iemoto have taken the lead in establishing businesses dealing in Japanese culture that offer symbiotic support to the central tea enterprise.

The first of these subsidiary companies was the Tankôsha publishing house, founded by Hôunsai's younger brother in 1949, which today has grown into a major industry, with over one thousand titles currently available. In addition to producing Urasenke staples, such as periodicals for members, manuals, reference books, trade journals, and instructional videos, Tankôsha also publishes titles dealing with

Japanese culture more broadly understood, including architecture, art and design, calligraphy, photography, religion, history, culture, cuisine, travel, and other traditional arts. "Using the tea ceremony, the cultural synthesis of Japan, as an axis", the company's website explains that it "publishes [books] concerning history, religion, art, crafts, architecture, gardens", with the goal of "endeavoring, day and night, to develop Japanese culture through the management vision of 'an enterprise aimed at leading Japanese culture as a transmitter of information concerning traditional culture centered around tea ceremony'".[6] In the service of this ambition, Tankôsha does more than simply print books; it also offers classes in Kyoto and Tokyo on pottery appreciation, flower arrangement, sweet making, and letter writing.

In 1984, Hounsai's second son began the business group Millieme to "promote modern living with Japanese culture" and "propagate the Japanese heart".[7] Merchandising a Japanese identity, Millieme presents itself as "suggesting scenarios for modern lifestyles imbued with the traditional aesthetic consciousness cultivated in the tea ceremony". A product line within the company sells a variety of traditional sweets – often given as gifts at Urasenke events – advertised as "absolutely delicious and bringing together only things that do not forget the Japanese heart", assortments of ceramic dishes intended for "a modern life instilled with the value of tradition and the beauty of authenticity", and a set of tables designed by the iemoto for performing tea in modern rooms.[8] Maintaining production within the family, the Sukiya Architecture group within Millieme builds the tea rooms that Urasenke donates to cultural centers, embassies, universities, and museums in Japan and abroad. The company also supplies over 2,000 schools with tea utensils and other material requirements. Visitors to the Millieme office building located down the street from the Urasenke headquarters can also purchase tea utensils and supplies from the associated dealership occupying the ground floor – one-stop shopping for all tea ceremony needs.

In addition, Millieme runs the non-profit organization *Wa no Gakkô*, or School of "Wa" – a term meaning both "harmony" and "Japaneseness". The goal of this online academy is to "carry out activities in which anyone can easily participate to recover the goodness of Japan that is being lost and make for a society rich in spirit".[9] Founded in 2003,

[6] http://www.tankosha.co.jp/corp/index.html.

[7] http://www.sabie-group.com/greeting/index.html.

[8] http://www.sabie-group.com/business/kougei/index.html.

[9] http://www.wanogakkou.com/ aisatu.html.

the "school" serves as a repository for basic explanatory information about standard elements thought to comprise Japanese culture. Building a network with over fifty other tradition industry business, it provides links and information to related enterprises – including kimono dealers, training in manners, and incense shops – along with essays and explanations about Japanese tradition, history, and culture. Biographical and family information concerning the heads of these associated businesses reassures customers that what they are purchasing is, indeed, authentic Japanese culture. Because the enterprise is, at least formally, a school, occasional real-life lectures, classes, and performances are held to instruct participants about festivals, traditional practices, and the Japanese past.

In parallel, Urasenke set up the Chadô Culture Promotion Foundation to "further the progress and harmony of humanity by all citizens doing tea". Also offering classes on sweet making and basic etiquette, the organization aims to encourage "parents and children to learn about the cultural spirit that Japanese are losing".[10] More recently, the foundation has instituted a national "Tea Ceremony Culture Expertise Examination", using the four-level format found in most skills-assessment tests in Japan. Urasenke provides not only the exam, but also the means to prepare for it to the registrants – over 9,000 the first year it was offered – who can purchase a study guide or attend one of several preparation seminars. Urasenke also runs a junior college in Kyoto with a three-year program covering "art, philosophy, sociability, morality, and religion through the cultural synthesis of the tea ceremony". In this finishing school, where life "begins and ends with a bow cultivating the rich spirit that is being lost, the docile heart, the proper manners, and feeling of independence", potential students are promised they will learn not only "the true meaning of Japanese culture, but also become a true international person".[11] The tuition fees of this enterprise are similar to those of other private colleges, the full three-year course costing $50,000.

As icons of Japanese culture heading wealthy corporations, the iemoto were well positioned to cultivate new social networks in the worlds of business and politics. The Japan Rotary Club offers a notable example. The iemoto of the Urasenke and Mushanokôjisenke Schools have both been closely involved with the Rotarians, Hôunsai even serving as the

[10] http://www.urasenke.or.jp/textm/headq/recruit/wanogakko/wanogakko001/wanogakko001.html.

[11] http://www.urasenke.ac.jp/school/gakuen/gakuen.html.

president of the Japan Rotary Club Association, and both schools have used these ties to establish tea clubs at many Rotary branches. Urasenke has deployed connections with the Junior Chamber of Commerce in similar fashion, its iemoto becoming president of the Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce Association and making tea clubs a fixture there as well. The membership organizations of the tea schools themselves have also been mustered for networking opportunities. In Urasenke, each branch of Tankôkai is overseen by an elite male in its local community. Rarely active practitioners themselves, these representatives are invited to exclusive annual tea gatherings held by the iemoto, at which they receive the chance to meet and interact with similar local notables from around the country – networking opportunities of benefit both to them and to the tea school, which gains leverage in local power networks. At the national level, the organization is overseen by an advisory board populated by wealthy businessmen, famous craftsmen, and powerful academics with ties to the iemoto, allowing them to capitalize on their accumulated prestige.

Crucially, such elite networking helped to solidify the status of the iemoto as icons of the "Land of Culture" that the political establishment wished to foster as a replacement image of Japan in the wake of military defeat. Meeting this demand, the iemoto plied their wares as carriers of peace and good-will, preeminently capable of rehabilitating the national abroad. Urasenke was again in the vanguard of this development, as its iemoto crafted a new position as a Japanese cultural emissary to the world at large. At the close of the US occupation in 1950, Hôunsai, then heir apparent, undertook a four-month "tea ceremony mission" to the US, followed by a year-long sojourn in 1951 devoted to the goal of sharing Japanese culture with Americans and changing their impressions of the Japanese. These two cultural tours marked the beginning of a long career, initially as a self-appointed, and later as an official one, representing Japan under the auspices of the United Nations. Not only had he opened tea chapters in Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Mexico, by 1960, he had given tea lectures and demonstrations in Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines; organized a tea demonstration at the Brussels World Fair; donated a tea room to the Boston Art Museum; hosted tea for the Shah of Iran's visit to Japan; and represented Japan at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the hundredth anniversary celebration of US-Japan Friendship in Washington DC. These activities – international tea lectures and tea room donations, tea service for foreign heads of

state, and missions on behalf of the Foreign Ministry – continued with increasing frequency in the following decades. In 2000, Hôunsai presented ritual tea at the Berlin Wall and to the German President, gave the keynote speech at the UN Millennium Kyoto conference, and offered tea at the UN headquarters in New York at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Naturally, such performances received national newspaper coverage, fostering widespread recognition of Hôunsai's role as a stellar figure among the nation's cultural elite. Other iemoto have since followed in Urasenke's footsteps, arranging meetings with foreign heads of state and hosting tea services at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The heightened profile of the iemoto as the cultivated bearers of Japanese refinement abroad has, in turn, assured their integration into the topmost levels of society at home. It is enough to note post-war marriage patterns. The next-in-line to the Dainihon Sadô Gakkai school has secured a match with the Tokugawa family – a prospect inconceivable under the Bakufu – while the sixteenth generation Urasenke iemoto has married a cousin of the emperor, an imperial connection whose chance for mention is rarely missed. With yet more publicity, the pinnacles of elective office invariably pay homage to the iemoto. Every year, the incumbent Prime Minister and an entourage of top bureaucrats attend on New Year's Day a celebratory tea preparation at the Urasenke complex in Tokyo. This spectacle, relayed to the public by press and television, stages the continuity of the role of Japanese rulers in the practice of the ceremony since the time of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, and the novelty of the status of the iemoto in presiding over it. Little could better illustrate the passage of symbolic power from its accumulation to routine exercise.

The Japaneseness of tea ceremony, as a concentration of national meanings, has been captured and secured by the iemoto in an historical process of wider significance. In the first stage, the iemoto projected the authority to define and certify authentic tea onto single master figures – the individual leaders of tea schools. Grounding legitimacy in genealogical connections to Rikyû, the iemoto then transformed a variety of innovative tea practices into a body of formalized knowledge that could be inherited and controlled. Administrative mechanisms were developed to enforce this oversight, including the elaboration of a curriculum and certificate system that codified and meted out limited access to the preparation procedures the iemoto monopolized, and the inception of standards of utensil value and taste, based on the iemoto's genealogical authority. Print

media aided in these endeavors, with the early publication of texts attributed to Rikyû, the later distribution of official texts on tea preparation, and the proliferation of utensil catalogues all regulating and transmitting aesthetic standards beyond the arena of immediate contact with the iemoto. Their authority was augmented by mutual cooperation with utensil artisans, who supplied extensive copies of favored items. Broadening the base of adherents and bolstering the strength of the iemoto's authority, women from the late nineteenth century provided a profitable foundation for its expansion, as a group who benefited from the objectification of the iemoto's authority in certificates, which held value outside the tea world in the marriage market. For their part, the iemoto were able to fortify their position by building membership organizations that supplied a nation-wide apparatus for policing tea preparation techniques and instilling dependence on iemoto-defined standards of utensil value and taste.

Throughout this period, tea ceremony – though not the tea of the iemoto – was wedded to the apex of political power, state connections that facilitated its later nationalization. In the first phase of the accumulation of symbolic power, the main competitor to the iemoto in the field of legitimate tea practice was the Sekishû-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 start annexing associations between tea ceremony and the Japanese nation diffused through etiquette and history textbooks in the school system, and 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 "Land of Culture" enabled the iemoto to become icons wielding symbolic power not simply over tea practice, but Japanese culture in general, and thereby ensconce themselves firmly among the country's elites. Iconicity was facilitated by the concentration of authority into the single figure of an iemoto – albeit in limited copies – avoiding the proliferation of conflicting claims to representativeness. The iemoto could then employ a conflation of tea and Japanese culture to market new lines of product 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 became a Japanese practice not simply because it has been ideologically *imbued with*

national associations, but because the organizational infrastructure sustaining the tea world has become economically *invested in* its Japaneseness. At this point, a second stage has been completed, as symbolic power is exercised as a routinized practice.

Organized by a system that concentrates authority in a single figure, the tea ceremony is no doubt in some respects an idiosyncratic example of how fields of cultural production can become permeated by and dependent on national meanings. But it is a highly revealing one. In systems using patrilineal genealogy to ground authority, the condensation of iconicity in a single spokesperson eases the expansion of the boundaries of the group represented from adherents to a national populace. But the mechanisms of authority accumulation and exercise are broadly generalizable. The elaboration of administrative techniques enables the constitution and regulation of a cultural field, print and broadcast media magnify its importance beyond the boundary of direct participants to broader society, elite networks aid in elevating symbolic status, and historical junctures can temper or facilitate these endeavors. These processes enable actors to lever a cultural practice into symbolic national status while transforming the cultural field itself by material investment in its national meanings.

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Résumé

L'objectif de cet article est d'explorer comment des institutions chargent de significations nationalement marquées leurs produits et utilisent ces associations dans leur stratégie de développement. Le cas étudié est la cérémonie du thé au Japon suivi depuis ses origines d'avant la modernité, puis, passant par l'organisation apparue avec le système *iemoto* jusqu'à sa forme contemporaine comme quintessence de la spécificité japonaise. Le rituel offre une illustration étonnamment vive de la façon dont un pouvoir symbolique peut, certes passer de la concentration à la routinisation, mais aussi se conjoindre successivement d'abord avec l'État puis avec la Nation.

Mots clés: Pouvoir symbolique ; Domaines culturels ; Japon ; Cérémonie du thé.

Zusammenfassung

Ziel dieses Beitrages ist es, zu erkunden, wie Institutionen ihre Produkte mit nationalen Werten versehen und diese Assoziationen in ihre Entwicklungsstrategien einbauen. Der hier untersuchte Fall ist die japanische Teezeremonie, von ihren Ursprüngen über ihre Organisation im iemoto-System bis hin zu ihrer gegenwärtigen Form, als Quintessenz des Japanischen schlechthin. Dieses Ritual stellt eine erstaunlich lebendige Form symbolischer Macht dar, die nicht nur nach einer Phase der Konzentrierung zur Routine wird, sondern nacheinander sowohl den Staat als auch die Nation miteinbezieht.

Schlagwörte: Symbolische Macht; Kulturelle Gebiete; Nationalismus; Japan; Teezeremonie.