

# TEA CULT OF JAPAN

An Aesthetic Pastime



Yasunosuke Fukukita

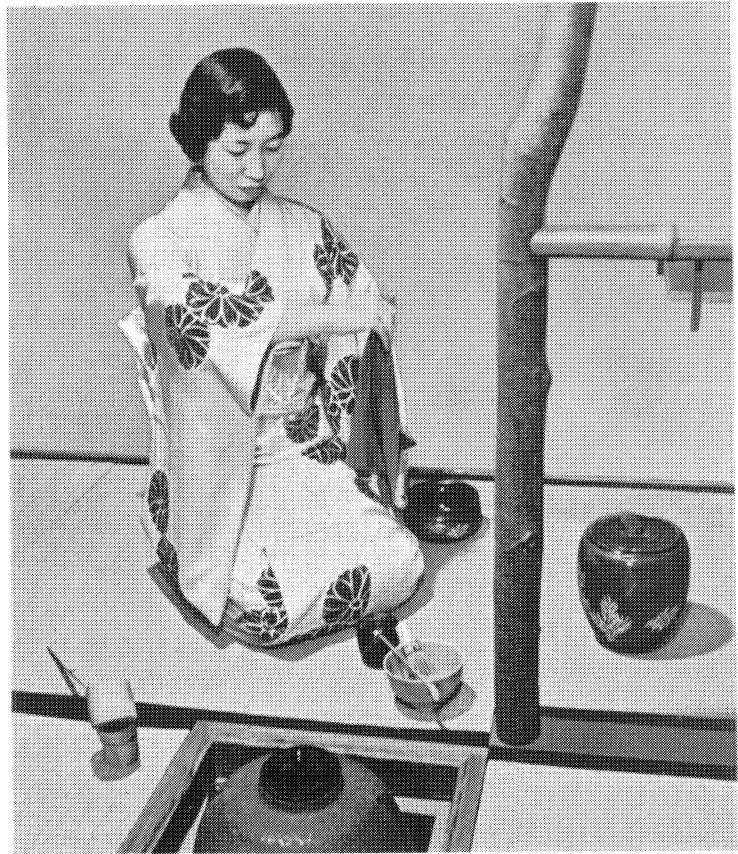
# TEA CULT OF JAPAN

The tea cult, commonly called the tea ceremony in English or *cha-noyu* in Japanese, is an aesthetic pastime that features the serving and drinking of powdered green tea. An art unique to Japan, the tea cult has played an important role in the artistic life of the Japanese people and nation for more than four hundred years since it originated in the medieval period as a form of ethical aestheticism born under the influence of Zen Buddhism.

Indeed, in the ideal of the tea cult may be gleaned a picture of the traditional Japanese esteem for the virtues of peace, harmony, courtesy and beauty in life's simplest things. '*Cha-noyu*' is a subject', the author declares, 'with manifold bearings upon religion, literature and philosophy, as well as the arts and crafts'. In developing this idea, he describes the fundamental principles of the tea cult, giving an outline of its origin and history in a concise but masterly fashion. He also gives practical information about the main forms of the *cha-noyu* ritual, showing the difference between ceremonial teas; the etiquette of serving tea; the design of tearooms and gardens; the various tea utensils used and a list of Japanese words associated with the tea ceremony. With these detailed explanations and the accompanying illustrations, the reader will be able to obtain insight into this classical art.

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Japan Travel Bureau

*Chanoyu*, the aesthetic art of serving and drinking tea in a graceful and ceremonial way, embraces in its scope many other graceful arts and sciences such as architecture, landscape gardening, the art of fine cookery, etiquette and other social graces. Here a young hostess is about to make a bowl of tea.

# TEA CULT OF JAPAN

*An Aesthetic Pastime*

YASUNOSUKE FUKUKITA



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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The purpose of the Tourist Library Series is to give the foreigner interested in Japan a basic knowledge of various phases of Japanese culture. When completed, the Series is expected to include a hundred volumes or so, and will give a complete picture of Japanese culture, old and new. It is hoped that by perusing these studies of Japanese life the reader will gain some insight into the unique culture that has developed in this country throughout the ages.

Each volume in the Library is the work of a recognized authority on the subject. The present volume, "Tea Cult of Japan," is the work of the late Mr. Yasunosuke Fukukita, who devoted himself particularly to introducing the classical art of the Tea Cult to foreigners. His "Cha-no-yu, Tea Cult of Japan" is regarded by advanced students of tea ceremony as an authoritative treatise on the subject.

We wish to record our sincere appreciation to Mr. Matsunosuke Tatsui, Mr. Sutemi Horiguchi, Mr. Sōen Yanagisawa and Mr. Seizō Hayashiya, who gave us valuable information and suggestions in the editing of the text. We also take pleasure in expressing our indebtedness to the Chadō Kaikan, Tea Ceremony Hall, Tōkyō, The Tōkyō National Museum, the Cultural Properties Protection Commission, Mr. Yoshihiko Maejima, Mr. Tatsuzō Satō, Mr. Fumio

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THE EDITOR

*April, 1955*

{NOTES} 1. In the text (page 1 to page 164)  
all names of Japanese people are given in the  
Japanese manner, i.e., the surname before the  
given name. 2. The-sign used over o and u  
in Japanese words means that the vowel sound  
is lengthened.

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## INTRODUCTION

In acquiring a knowledge of Oriental lands, it is necessary to obtain an insight into the cultural life of the people. Even a cursory glimpse into any branch of the ancient culture of Japan is helpful in forming an appreciation of the manner and customs which differ from those prevailing in other countries.

To those who are interested in the cultural life of the Japanese people, there are innumerable avenues of approach of great significance. Nothing is more closely associated with the arts and crafts of Japan than *chanoyu*, an aesthetic pastime in which powdered green tea is served in a refined atmosphere. It is a subject which requires a life-long study to appreciate fully the underlying subtle aestheticism, with its manifold bearings upon religion, literature and philosophy, as well as the arts and crafts. A knowledge of *chanoyu*, however slight, will therefore be highly useful to understand and adequately appraise the home life of the Japanese people.

It is the author's purpose to give in this brochure some fundamental principles of *chanoyu*, and briefly to expound the etiquette generally observed by those who participate in the entertainment. A general but correct idea of the Japanese custom of serving

powdered tea will be helpful in obtaining a deeper insight into the nation's cultural life. The author would therefore suggest that visitors to Japan avail themselves of an opportunity to observe, or participate in, the refined entertainment of *chanoyu*.



A stone lantern and a water-basin in a garden near a tearoom.

## CHAPTER I

### HOW TEA-DRINKING BEGAN

The custom of drinking tea is now universal. Although Oriental in origin, there is today no Western country where tea is unknown. In Japan the people drink tea during and after each meal, and it is customary to offer a cup of tea to callers at any time of the day.

A fine powder of choice green tea is used in *chanoyu*. To serve powdered tea, it is put in a bowl much larger than an ordinary tea cup, and hot water is poured over it. The mixture is beaten by means of a bamboo whisk, which resembles a shaving-brush more than anything else. This practice, which is older in origin, is not in such common use as the later way of steeping cured leaves in hot water.

*Chanoyu* is peculiar to Japan. It was originally a monastic custom introduced by Japanese Buddhists who had gone to China for study. It is forgotten in the land of its origin, and survives in Japan as an aesthetic pastime, a cult in which the beverage is idealized. Devotees of *chanoyu* appreciate Art and worship Nature through the medium of the indescribably delicate and refreshing aroma of powdered tea.

So far as written evidence is concerned, the