

Generative Moments in the Enactment of the Japanese Tea Ceremony

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Abstract: Studies on the tea ceremony have tried to answer the question, “What is tea?” for decades from historical and philosophical points of view. This paper deliberately converts the viewpoint from such an essential one to a processual one, in order to elucidate the generative moments in the enactment of the tea ceremony. Employing a perspective on the anthropology of art put forth by Alfred Gell, this paper analyzes a tea connoisseur’s enactment of the tea ceremony. Contrary to the former anthropological, symbolic analyses of the tea ceremony, an enactment of a tea ceremony is not perfectly prescribed, but temporarily engendered by communication between host and guests through conversation via things (i.e., utensils) as a medium of their agency. Yet, because every single tea ceremony is nonrecurring temporary event, these utensils—indexes in the enactment of a tea ceremony—do not exist forever. Instead, the repetition of the generative moment weaves out the social, relational world of tea.

Key words: Tea ceremony, Anthropology of art, Agency

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This paper deals with the Japanese Tea Ceremony (*Sa/Chadō*)¹ as an interactive socio-cultural practice done by participants living today, which is generated by, and reflexively generates, the world of tea, through how utensils, host, and guests interact with one another in a tea ceremony. Therefore, I focus not on history, aesthetics, and philosophy of the Tea

¹ There are various ways to refer to this activity in Japanese, such as *sadō*, *chadō*, *chanoyu*, or just *cha*. In this paper, capitalized “Tea Ceremony” signifies the whole package of activities involved in the Japanese Tea Ceremony, and lower-case “tea ceremony” means an event of tea-serving-and-drinking.

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Ceremony per se, which tea participants and scholars have conventionally discussed as a kind of doctrinal belief of tea, but on how “tea” is enacted by the practice of preparing, hosting, and being a guest of, a tea ceremony.

To put it simply, a tea ceremony (*chakai*) is, indeed, a systematic procedure of serving and drinking tea. The manners and procedures have been developed and unified through time by the rigid hierarchical teaching system of each school.² *Iemoto*, the head of each school, draws his/her authority from his/her lineage as a genuine successor of the tradition, and distributes his/her taste for—and knowledge of—tea throughout the world to tea practitioners who belong to his/her school. But the activity itself is not always static and conventional; participants are not just following a prescribed program like machines. What I have observed, and participated in, are lively human practices, in which participants have fun, and which they discuss, or even criticize and complain about.

In this paper, I regard a tea ceremony as an occasion to entertain guests and also to be entertained by a host. It means not only that the host should play her/his role as a host, but also that the guests should willingly and actively accept their entertainment by playing the guest role. Thus, even if a person who hosts a tea ceremony is an experienced tea practitioner, or if the utensils he/she uses are authenticated by the *Iemoto*, the experience of the tea ceremony will not always be a *good* tea ceremony if the host’s social relationship with the utensils and the guests is not in a particular state—that is to say, a tea-like situation. Therefore, my aim in this paper is to elucidate how a tea ceremony as an event is generated and experienced by various actors: in what situation a systematic-procedure-of-serving-and-drinking-tea becomes a *good* tea ceremony when mutual entertainment is successfully performed. Through analyzing ethnographic examples of the enactment of tea ceremonies, I would like to depict the dynamics of human and non-human actors generating a tea ceremony in its nonrecurring nature.

Before I start the discussion, it should be made clear that I am not an experienced tea connoisseur (*chajin*). However, since this paper is not a study of the Tea Ceremony performed by tea connoisseurs for the sake of the Tea Ceremony, I would rather remain a methodological philistine (Gell 1992) in analyzing the activity. Alfred Gell took this stance in developing an anthropological study of art—turning his back on an aesthetic understanding informed by the question, “What is art?” and instead seeking to establish an action-oriented, relational understanding of art-objects. I employ this stance in order to avoid pursuing a symbolic analysis of the tea ceremony, which regards the ceremony as a ritual removed from the mundane that represents a macrocosm of the Tea Ceremony.

Another major approach to art taken by anthropologists and sociologists is to analyze social and power relations of human actors involved in giving credibility to mere artifacts, which allows them to become artworks (e.g., Danto 1964; Becker 1982; Clifford 1988). In particular, Becker analyzed how art works are produced by the cooperative activities of various people with shared understandings of the value of art works, and termed this

² For more detail on the *Iemoto* system, see Surak 2013, Chapter 3.

phenomenon “art world.” Although Gell avoided such an understanding of art, which focuses more on micro-social interactions that an art-like object mediates, I cannot be indifferent to wider social and power relations when considering the Tea Ceremony, because such relations are also mobilized in the enactment of a tea ceremony. Another aim of this paper is to find a clue for further research aiming to elucidate how the enactment of a tea ceremony, which is a temporary event made up of both human and non-human actors, serves to generate the *tea-world*, and vice versa.

In the following sections, firstly I introduce precedent studies on the Tea Ceremony and the tradition of study itself in order to clarify my point of discussion. Secondly, I review the precedent anthropological studies on tea, whose focus shifted from the structure of ritual to the participants, which is also my concern. Then I explain how to employ anthropology of art perspectives to the study of the tea ceremony in the fourth section. The fifth section offers ethnographic examples of how a tea ceremony is prepared and enacted by the host and the guests mediated by the utensils. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion.

Tea Studies Constructing the World of Tea

From the very early stage in the history of the Tea Ceremony, tea participants have left numerous notes and records of their activities, which are collectively called *chasho* (books on tea). Taking these and the experiences of tea as their resources, modern tea connoisseurs advocated treating tea ceremony as an academic subject of study. While these studies have contributed to the formation of the world of tea itself, they correspond to the very attempts to elucidate the essence of tea: to answer the question, “What is tea?” My intention to study the tea ceremony is not to discover such an essentialistic understanding of the Tea Ceremony but to learn how such a venue of understanding is being produced. Before I assert my point of view of the contemporary tea ceremony, I give an overview of the tea studies that have constructed the current notion of the Tea Ceremony and analyze the process in this section. The first half introduces the history of tea studies from the pre-modern to the modern era, and the latter half deals with precedent studies concerning the Tea Ceremony as an invented tradition.

As the oldest tea ceremony records³ show, feudal lords and wealthy merchants enjoyed tea ceremonies from the early sixteenth century onward. Tea participants took notes on utensils used, and meals served, in tea ceremonies they hosted or were invited to. Moreover, they left books on empirical learning and philosophy on the Tea Ceremony and utensils. For example, Yamanoue-no Sōji—a wealthy merchant in the town of Sakai and a pupil of Sen-no Rikyū—wrote esoteric books on celebrated tea utensils called *meibutsu* and his philosophy on the Tea Ceremony. He explained and evaluated famous utensils in use at that time, and elucidated his opinions on how a tea connoisseur should be.

³ For example, *Matsuya Kaiki* (Matsuya record of tea ceremonies) is contained in Sen 1957.

Authors of *chasho* in the pre-modern age empirically and subjectively studied Tea Ceremony, but modern tea connoisseurs (*kindai-sukisha*)—mostly rising businessmen of the new era—and also scholars, brought such studies of tea into academic fields in their attempts to revive the Tea Ceremony from decline in the beginning of the Meiji period (Tanaka 2007). Tea is “a religion of aestheticism” (Okakura 1994: 219). By stating this, Tenshin Okakura tried to introduce Japan to western countries.⁴ Japanese scholars and tea connoisseurs have inseparably related the tea ceremony and Japan as a nation-state since the modern age, along with the uprising of nationalism. For years they have made assertions like “(1) Tea Ceremony is unique in Japanese culture, (2) Tea Ceremony is the ultimate essence of Japanese culture, and (3) Tea Ceremony is synthetic (because it has all the elements of Japanese culture)” (Tanaka 2007: 392-393). These have been their answers to the question, “What is tea?” and it affected the essential understanding of the Tea Ceremony among lay participants.⁵ Since the emergence of the modern tea studies, scholars have continued to pursue historical studies of the Tea Ceremony in order to elucidate how such an essential Japanese cultural activity started, and developed, for a better understanding of what tea is.

Regarding the Tea Ceremony from the Meiji period onward, the subject of analysis is how such studies have contributed to constructing the status of the Tea Ceremony: how their discourse *reinvented* the Japanese Tea Ceremony as a national tradition (Kumakura 1980; Tanaka 2007). For example, Tanaka intentionally employed the perspectives of invented tradition (Hobsbawm 1983) and imagined communities (Anderson 1991) in order to elucidate how publications by tea connoisseurs and scholars including *Iemoto* shaped the current recognition of the Tea Ceremony in the modern age.

In these studies, nationalism was one of the key factors in the revival of the Tea Ceremony in the Meiji period onward. In the process of the revival of the Tea Ceremony under the uprising of nationalism in the Meiji period, tea connoisseurs and scholars tried to recontextualize the Tea Ceremony into the modern context. One example is considering the tea utensils as works of *art*, a newly introduced concept from western countries in the modern age. A cultural activity, which was then criticized as old and pre-modern, became a cradle of modernity of Japan.⁶ Subsequently, legendary founders of the tea ceremony, such as Sen-no Rikyū, came to be seen as artists who established the aesthetics of tea.

Recent studies on the relationship between the Tea Ceremony and art argues that tea utensils were *included* in the category of art in the modern age (Yoda 2013). Today, indeed,

⁴ “The Book of Tea” was first published in English, and then translated into Japanese in 1929. Tanaka (2007) and Yoda (2013) analyzed its influence on the discourse of Japanese tea ceremony in Japan.

⁵ See, for example, Kato 2004, chapter 3.

⁶ After the rapid social change and modernization initiated and supported by the Meiji government, which aimed at establishing Japan as a nation-state, the newness of modern Japan was marked off as such by comparing it with the past. But what a nation-state requires are a polity and a national culture that can nurture a national identity among the people. Gluck mentions, “(t)he logic of Edo-as-tradition implies that even as modern Meiji strode purposefully away from its feudal past, it had nowhere else to turn for its national material.” (1998: 266) The rising nationalism since the middle of the Meiji period led to a movement centering on the revival of culture from the past.

tea utensils appear in Japanese art history as representative of a mode of art, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Arakawa 2013). The basis for labeling these as works of art is the argument that imaginative genius founders of the Tea Ceremony selected and celebrated these utensils based on a sense of beauty called *wabi*. Such a discourse widely spread in the modern age along with the formation of the categories of Japanese art and craft. Consequently, some celebrated tea utensils were designated as national treasures in the beginning of the twentieth century. Tea utensils have become nationally-acknowledged masterpieces of Japanese art, having developed from the Tea Ceremony.

The Tea Ceremony is not just about serving and drinking tea; studying tea was originally a part of the practice of tea, and then it became an academic subject of study in the modern age. Such studies, aiming at elucidating the meaning and essence of tea, have contributed to constructing the current status of the Tea Ceremony according to the recent studies on the modern Tea Ceremony. But this is not merely something that happened in the past. Participants today are keen to learn about the results of studies by contemporary scholars, renew their knowledge, and mobilize this into their Tea Ceremony practices.

Anthropological Studies of Tea: From Symbolic to Practice

Native and non-native anthropologists in the 1980's and 1990's regarded the Japanese Tea Ceremony as ritual and analyzed its structure and symbolic/metaphoric meaning (Kondo 1985; Anderson 1987; Colby 1991; Suzuki 1999). From their viewpoint, a tea ceremony was read like a text that represents a religious cosmology that is considered to be unique in Japanese culture. All the things, persons, and procedures were symbols that constitute the cosmic model as a whole. According to them, tea ceremonies are kinds "(s)pecific rituals" which "may deal with all or part of the cosmic model and concern themselves with integrating individuals or groups in a variety of ways" (Anderson 1987: 495). From this perspective, every single tea ceremony exists for forgetting "the contingencies of everyday life and frees the mind for 'greater' thoughts" (Kondo 1985: 302). Indeed, the Tea Ceremony has a ritualistic aspect, such as tea offerings at a shrine or a temple, but regarding every single tea ceremony as a ritual would conceal and mystify peoples' emotions and their actual practices of tea.

Recent anthropological studies, however, have cast a new light on tea. Etsuko Kato focused on the actual *practice* by female tea participants that had rarely been discussed (Kato 2004). She employed Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, and focused on contemporary female tea practitioners. According to her, these women obtain their own positions in society by accumulating cultural capital, not by being subordinated to their husbands.

I share Kato's stance of looking at the actual practice of current tea participants and the construction of their social relationships, and not grasping at a symbolic, idealistic understanding of tea. What I would like to add is the fact, as the earliest *chasho* and the precedent studies on the relationship between tea and art show, that relationships between

persons and things have shaped and transformed the world of tea. Therefore, my focus in this paper is both on relationships among persons, and between persons and things, especially concerning the enactment of a tea ceremony.

How Does a Tea Ceremony as an Event Occur?

As mentioned above, the structure and ritualistic function of a tea ceremony and of tea utensils as vehicles of meaning cannot explain a tea ceremony as an experienced event just by themselves. If every single tea ceremony universally functioned for freeing a participant's mind for greater thoughts away from the mundane, nobody would ever complain about their tea ceremony experience. In fact, tea participants I have met often comment negatively on their tea ceremony experiences, even if they have previously been satisfied with a tea ceremony hosted by the same person or performed with similar utensils. In my opinion, how an event is generated and experienced by participants depends not only on what the event and the elements that comprise it signify, but also on the relationships between all elements mobilized in the event being enacted.

Anthropologist Alfred Gell put forth a similar conversion viewpoint concerning the anthropology of art, focusing more on the social and causal relations of art-objects and actors surrounding them than on the object's symbolic functions. Eschewing a reliance on aesthetic, interpretive, or institutional theory,⁷ he proposed that what anthropology of art should deal with is "not what art objects represent or symbolize, but what they *do* within their social worlds" (Chua and Elliot 2013: 5). He developed his idea into what he termed "art nexus theory," employing terms from Peircian semiotics (Gell 1998). He assumed an artwork to be an "index" of social agency that triggers the recipient's "abduction" of agency. He calls instances of this "art-like situations ... in which the material 'index' (the visible, physical, 'thing') permits a particular cognitive operation" (Gell 1998:13) not confined to an aesthetic response. One famous example shown in a 1992 paper, *The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology*, is the Trobriand canoe-board.

...it is not the eye-spots [carved in the canoe-board] or the visual instabilities which fascinate, but the fact that it lies within the artist's power to make things which produce these striking effects [the successful Kula expedition]. We now can see that the technical activity which goes into the production of a canoe-board is not only the source of its

⁷ Aesthetic theory provides the most essentialistic understanding of art. From this perspective, objects that are aesthetically superior can be defined as art. It is quite similar to the reasoning behind considering tea utensils as artworks, as these represent the aesthetics of *wabi*. Interpretive theory explains artworks as something "interpreted in the light of a system of ideas that is founded within an art-historical tradition" (Gell 1996:16). Institutional theory, according to Gell, "does not presuppose the historical coherence of interpretations. A work may be in origin unconnected with the mainstream of art history, but if the art world co-opts the work, and circulates it as art, then it is art, because it is the living representatives of this art world, i.e. artists, critics, dealers and collectors, who have the power to decide these matters, not 'history'" (Gell 1996:17).

prestige as an object, but also the source of its efficacy in the domain of social relations... (Gell 1992:56)

Gell focused not on what art is but what art does. An object does work as a social agent, when a person (the recipient) encounters it and infers its embodied intentionality.

Similarly, from my view, utensils presented in a tea ceremony cannot be reduced to mere symbols or vehicles of meaning. Tea utensils, indeed, represent something: the theme of a tea ceremony, the history of the tea ceremony itself, and the authoritative power in the world of tea. Yet, because holding a tea ceremony is, for the host, to entertain the guests, and for the guests to be entertained, no single element mobilized in a tea ceremony can autonomously generate the tea ceremony alone. Focusing on preparation and enactment of a tea ceremony would foreground the utensils' mediatory role as social agents just like tea participants in a particular situation, hence the generation of each tea ceremony as a consequence.

Preparations and Enactment of a Tea Ceremony

A Local Tea Connoisseur

This section introduces ethnographic examples of the preparation and enactment of tea ceremonies: how a tea connoisseur prepares, hosts, and acts as a guest of a tea ceremony, along with his relationships with others including his pupils, the guests, the host, and the utensils in each occasion. All examples here concern one particular tea connoisseur, Mr. Hayashi,⁸ in Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture, whom I have been observing since 2014 as a student of his at a culture school. Being in his sixties, he has nearly forty years of Tea Ceremony experience. As with many other tea teachers, Mr. Hayashi does not make his living only by teaching Tea Ceremony; he is also a painter and a university art professor. Regarding tea, he serves as a supervisor of a branch of the school, consisting of around twenty members, and holds a small monthly Tea Ceremony study group at his house. His advantage concerning the Tea Ceremony lies in his ancestry. Although the Urasenke School is dominant, he belongs to a relatively minor school because his Meiji-era great-grandfather was a locally-famous tea connoisseur of the same school. When Mr. Hayashi was young, many senior tea connoisseurs in the city encouraged him to pursue the Tea Ceremony because of this. In addition, his ancestors were craftsmen who provided services to the *Kaga* Domain during the Edo period. Hence, he inherited numerous tea utensils, antiques, and *chasho* from his ancestors. I chose him as a main informant in order to learn about the reciprocal relationships between practices of tea and the local tea world, because he occupies an important position in the tea-world in Kanazawa City; he is involved in almost all major local *ōyose* tea ceremonies, of which he and his tea connoisseur friends are in charge.

⁸ All the names of tea participants are pseudonyms.

I remember the first time I visited his office in a college for an interview. In a small room, there were heaps of tea utensils and antiques everywhere. Some were individually stored in wooden boxes on the floor, and others were visible, in a metal bookcase: tea bowls, incense burners, ceramic plates, flower vases, hanging scrolls, and heavy iron teakettles. Since then, I have visited him for private interviews several times, and each time he has shown me some of his possessions and explained about them, telling me where, when, and sometimes by whom they were produced, and also the production methods. He always said, “This is a pretty good one, don’t you think so?” after showing me a particular utensil. I could not help agreeing with him, even though I could not understand why the utensils made him so happy.

His devotion to tea utensils motivated me to join his monthly Tea Ceremony study group. Four to six people from the branch meet at his house once per month to learn about tea utensils and study *chasho*, or the history of Tea Ceremony, from him. The teaching materials are, of course, his possessions. He makes opportunities for the participants to observe, touch, and try explaining about the utensils by themselves. While the study group meetings are learning opportunities for the participants, they also function as Mr. Hayashi’s preparation for upcoming tea ceremonies that he will host. In the next section, before describing how he prepares to host a tea ceremony, I explain what kind of tea ceremony he usually hosts.

Variations and the Process of the Tea Ceremony

Mr. Hayashi hosts a tea ceremony once per month on average. The general image of an authentic tea ceremony is something that takes place in a small teahouse with one and half tatami mats at minimum. The host invites only a few people who are her/his intimate friends. However, such a situation is quite rare for Mr. Hayashi, who mostly hosts “*ōyose*” tea ceremonies, where hundreds of anonymous guests gather, in a hall with a *tokonoma* alcove due to his social status in and outside the world of tea. This section explains variations and the process of tea ceremony, including *ōyose*, of which I did participant observation in my research. I divided all varieties of tea ceremony roughly into three types that differ in openness and formality: *chaji*, *chakai*, and *ōyose*.

Chaji is the basic and the most formal tea ceremony style. It consists of a *kaiseki* meal,⁹ thick tea (*koicha*), and thin tea (*usucha*), and lasts nearly four hours.¹⁰ Ideally, the host should

⁹ A *Kaiseki* meal begins with rice, soup, and another dish on a tray, and other dishes follow one by one.

¹⁰ Although *chaji* ceremonies vary according to season, time, and occasion, the most basic style is as follows (based on Abe 2007). Invited guests arrive at the venue and wait until all guests have gathered in a waiting room (*machiai*). Then they proceed to the garden, where a path of stepping-stones leads them to a teahouse. However, they wait for a while on a bench in the garden until the host emerges from the teahouse. The host and guests greet each other in silence across a low bamboo gate in the middle of the path. Once the host has returned to the teahouse, the guests purify their hands and mouths at a stone washbasin near the teahouse. They then enter the teahouse from a small entrance one by one, and appreciate a hanging scroll in the alcove. Meanwhile, the host waits in a kitchen for all the guests to enter. The snap of the door closing tells the host that the guests are ready. Before serving the meal, the host sets charcoal in a fireplace and puts an iron teakettle over the coals as the guests watch. While waiting for the water to boil, the host serves a simple *kaiseki* meal to the guests. After enjoying moist Japanese sweets at the end of the meal, the guests temporarily leave the room and rest at the bench while the host prepares for serving thick tea. When they hear the sound of a gong, they reenter the teahouse. Instead of the hanging scroll, seasonal flowers welcome the guests. The

prepare and carry out all procedures alone, or at least nearly so. Although *chaji* can be carried out in a somewhat casual atmosphere, its prominent characteristic is the friendly relations of the participants. Choice of guests is an important consideration for a host in order to achieve *chaji*. The host should decide who is going to be the first guest (*shōkyaku*) and let all the guests know by sending letters of invitation. All members must be close friends; the totality of the atmosphere would collapse if only one were a stranger to the others. *Chaji* requires that guests act properly as guests in a prescribed manner, and it takes years, or even decades, to form such a close relationship with the host and other guests, who are also experienced tea practitioners. In *chakai* and *ōyose*, which Mr. Hayashi usually hosts, this is not always the case.

I define *chakai* as semi-closed, and being both formal and casual. A good example is the first tea ceremony of the year, called *hatsugama*, in which I participated three times, hosted by Mr. Hayashi. As with *chaji*, this consists of *kaiseki*, *koicha*, and *usucha*, and the guests are all his students or acquaintances. However, how long they have been practicing Tea Ceremony does not matter: beginners and masters assemble, connected through their relationship with Mr. Hayashi. It is semi-closed because everyone has some kind of relationship with the host, but not always with the all other guests. If it is one's first time to join the *hatsugama*, he/she might feel a bit awkward and tense, surrounded by experienced seniors, but if the student enjoys a close relationship with the host and other guests, and he/she is an experienced tea practitioner, it will be a joyful and casual tea party. When I was invited to the *hatsugama* for the first time, I was not yet a pupil, and did not know anybody except Mr. Hayashi and a couple of his pupils. The role of the host is mainly to lead the procedure by talking. It is not necessarily to make and serve meals and tea, as his pupils generally do this.

Ōyose is quite different from *chaji* and *chakai* for its system of participation; the guests must buy tickets regardless of the formality. In this sense, *ōyose* is the most open tea ceremony. The price of the ticket will reveal the level of formality. The minimum cost of participation in *ōyose* ceremonies that Mr. Hayashi has hosted is 1,500 yen. Of course, experienced tea practitioners and friends have come, but so have complete beginners and tourists who learned of the event by chance. In such cases, only *usucha* was served, and less than one hour was spent on one session. Only the first guest can drink tea made in front of everyone; all others receive bowls of tea whipped in the kitchen, called *mizuya*. Because

host then starts making a bowl of thick tea for everyone to sip (from the same tea bowl.). The difference between thick tea and thin tea is the richness of the taste. Because thick tea requires more *matcha* tea powder than thin tea, it looks like a smooth, deep green paste. The first guest should ask the host about the name and maker of the moist sweets and the tea he/she has had. Once the last guest has drunk the tea, it is time to appreciate the utensils: the tea bowl, the ceramic tea container and its bag, and the tea scoop. The first guest takes the utensils by the hands and crouches over them to look at them closely, putting their elbows on their knees so as not to raise any item too high over the floor, in case one should drop, and passes it to the next guest. Then, the utensils are changed, and thin tea service starts. While the host makes a bowl of thin tea for each guest, the guests enjoy eating dry sweets and talking with the host in a more casual manner compared to the mood of the thick tea phase. Again, the guests appreciate the utensils, and the host makes closing remarks.

nearly three-hundred tickets are sold in total, Mr. Hayashi has to repeat *usucha* service eight times due to the capacity of the venue. The role of the host is to lead the tea ceremony by talking, as with *chakai*. Even though the students perform all of the making and serving procedures, it is the master's tea ceremony.

I have helped hold *ōyose* and *chakai* hosted by Mr. Hayashi more than ten times and have participated *ōyose* hosted by other tea connoisseurs with Mr. Hayashi and his pupils, or heard stories about them. Regardless of the ceremony style, even if a host follows these procedures properly, a tea ceremony can leave different impressions on the participants; in this paper, either mutual entertainment is successfully achieved or it isn't. Here, I think, lies a clue to elucidating the ways in which a tea ceremony as an event is generated by various actors and experienced by the participants.

Things, People, Conversation

There are three major criteria by which participants describe their negative impressions of a tea ceremony: things, people, and conversation. The monthly tea ceremony study group hosted by Mr. Hayashi works also as an opportunity for the students to share their experiences of participating in a tea ceremony. They review tea ceremonies among themselves, in which only a few of them participated. This section analyzes the crucial issue of what kind of situation gives tea participants positive or negative impressions of a tea ceremony—in what situation, in other words, a systematic-procedure-of-serving-and-drinking-tea becomes an experienced event when mutual entertainment is successfully achieved.

The first criterion is things. Although the reason to participate the study group may vary from person to person, the participants mostly study the utensils and history of the Tea Ceremony. The first class I participated in focused on pottery and its terminology. Mr. Hayashi provided us with handouts copied from an encyclopedia of pottery and explained important terms, such as those for types of pottery, producing districts, production methods, and also the names for the parts of pottery pieces, showing photos from other books, or sometimes his own items. At such (and at other) times, Mr. Hayashi may produce a tea bowl or some other item and challenge his students to explain about the piece:

Mr. Hayashi: Can anybody say something about this tea bowl?

Ms. Kosaka: It must be... *Karatsu*.¹¹

Mr. Hayashi: Exactly! You're becoming a connoisseur (*mekiki* =having a sharp eye)! Can you explain about it more precisely.

Ms. Kosaka: This grass pattern is... *Tetsue* (black patterns drawn with pigment containing iron). And it has *tokin* [pointing at a projection on the center of the backside of the bottom of the bowl].

Mr. Hayashi: Good, well done. This should be called *Tetsue Kusamon Karatsu* (a *Karatsu* tea bowl with grass patterns drawn with iron pigment).

¹¹ *Karatsu* is a type of pottery made in Northern Kyūshū area, centering mostly around Karatsu City.

Through such conversations, students acquire the ability to discuss tea utensils and improve their vocabulary, because what host and guests mostly talk about during a tea ceremony is not their private concerns but rather the tea utensils before them.

Such utensils are major parts of the tea experience enjoyment, yet they can be sources of disappointment. “There were no great utensils in particular” (*taishita odōgu ga nakatta*), someone might say after participating in a tea ceremony. But what does this actually mean—that there were no celebrated utensils (*meibutsu*), or there were none that they liked? Perhaps yes, but listening to such comments and stories, I came to realize that guests do not talk so much about each utensil but rather about the array of items as a whole when they complain. When the manager of the branch, woman in her sixties named Ms. Nakamura, talked about an annual national tea meeting of the school, in which designated branches would be in charge of *koicha* or *usucha* in the *ōyose* style, she expressed disappointment in the selection of the utensils by saying “the selection simply followed the preferences of the head of the school (*iemoto*).” Although it would seem proper to accept the *iemoto*’s personal tastes, she concluded that the tea ceremony was boring. Mr. Hayashi always tells his students to be creative regarding the selection of utensils, and an *ōyose* of the kind mentioned above lacks creativity according to him. By calling the experience “boring,” Ms. Nakamura meant that she did not feel that the host had shown an intention to entertain the guests through his/her own creativity.

The second criterion is people. Mr. Hayashi often tells his students to be careful about the selection of the guests if they host a tea ceremony because if there were a stranger or somebody who is not in good relationships with other participants, it would be difficult to infer the intentions to entertain and be entertained one another among the host and the guests. Problems with (and between) attendees can become rather serious. Mr. Hayashi and his students often complain, especially, about disgraceful behavior on the part of the guests. At one *ōyose*, as a participant, I watched many guests enter the tearoom and get stuck at the entrance. This was because the first seat and about five others near it were empty. The reason was simple: everybody always hesitates to be the first guest. Students of the study group invariably complained about this endemic behavior after every tea ceremony they joined. They consider such behavior disgraceful. Nevertheless, it is also rude to sit closer to the first seat than a more experienced senior guest. This strange problem is, indeed, related to the hierarchical teaching system of tea but also to the third criterion—conversation.

Although *ōyose* is often held in a casual manner, only the first guest is allowed to communicate with the host directly during the tea ceremony. Therefore, tea participants are generally frightened to be the first guest at an *ōyose*, where anonymous guests gather. The first guest’s role is the same as at a *chaji* ceremony, starting with a seasonal greeting, and then moving on to questions about the sweets, the tea, and the utensils. Tea teachers generally tell beginners not to sit in the first seat, as they do not yet know what questions to ask, and when. Furthermore, even if they have already learned, it is still difficult to make

lively conversation during a tea ceremony, avoiding mere routine dialogue. One time, when Mr. Hayashi explained the reason for learning about utensils, he said, “At an *ōyose*, if there is one male participant and the others are female, the man will automatically be the first guest, even if he is just a beginner. But he won’t know what to do and what to talk about.” Mr. Hayashi seemed to consider a silent first guest to be a source of trouble for the host and for other guests, as such a guest cannot open any conversation during a tea ceremony.

Yet, conversation is not only a matter for guests (or for the first guest) but also for the host. Once, Ms. Nakamura frowned with displeasure while reflecting on the host of the national tea meeting: “She just talked about the difficulty of preparing to host that prestigious tea ceremony, such as having to pick flowers in the early morning that day. And there were few references to the utensils.” While other students nodded in agreement, another intriguing remark followed: “Not a single utensil left any strong impression on my mind.” She finally concluded that the tea ceremony was boring and a disappointment, after referring to all three criteria covered above.

Things, people, and conversation are inseparable and irreducible elements that generate a tea ceremony as an activity of mutual entertainment. In the next two sections, I will focus on how Mr. Hayashi prepares and performs a tea ceremony, in order for these three elements to work in harmony.

Hosting a Tea Ceremony

In order to host any style of tea ceremony, the host needs a set of utensils. Mr. Hayashi spends a lot of time selecting these, sometimes even until the morning of the very day. Here I explain how Mr. Hayashi prepares a tea ceremony as a host.

Mr. Hayashi is a member of a local tea connoisseur society, about 12 members of which host a tea ceremony consisting of *usucha* and *kaiseki* once in a month in rotation. Thus, each hosts at least once a year, and participates in eleven tea ceremonies hosted by the other members. They are all male, and all of them are either experienced tea connoisseurs such as tea teachers, tea-related craftsmen, or business executives. If someone ever expresses interest in joining this exclusive club, the existing members will determine if he is suitable for the society. According to Mr. Hayashi, the society has nearly a century of history. The ethnographic account that follows reflects his preparations for the tea ceremony he was in charge of in 2016.

One evening in early February, I went to Mr. Hayashi’s house for the monthly study group meeting. At the time had about one week left to prepare for hosting the tea ceremony. As usual, the meeting started with his monologue. Pointing at a hanging scroll on the wall, he explained the theme of the ceremony. Since the ceremony was to take place a few days after *setsubun* (the eve of the first day of spring on the calendar), he planned to display a painting of *mamemaki* (ceremonial bean scattering for *setsubun*) on the wall of the *tokonoma* alcove. He also said that he would put a heap of soybeans in a square wooden measuring cup (*masu*) below the painting.

About one hour after the meeting started, Ms. Suzuki arrived. A sub-manager of the branch in her forties, she has more than ten years of tea experience. “Did you bring that one with you?” asked Mr. Hayashi excitedly upon hearing her voice. “Yeah, yeah,” she replied, appearing before the group and taking something wrapped in a cloth from her bag. Mr. Hayashi opened the wrapping with a grin; it was a glazed porcelain bowl with a design in red. He had asked her to lend him the bowl for the upcoming tea ceremony.

Actually, it was not a tea bowl. Ms. Suzuki had bought it at an antique shop for around five thousand yen. “I think this is a dish for *mukōzuke*,¹²” she explained. “I bought it because I thought I could just barely use it as a tea bowl.” Indeed, the bowl looked a little too shallow for a tea bowl, yet it could scarcely contain one serving of tea. In addition, its rim had three obtuse-angled notches, so the bowl looked like a flower with three petals from above.¹³

I could not understand why Mr. Hayashi had chosen such a cheap and irregular bowl for such an important tea ceremony, because tea practitioners—in response to my questions about what constitutes a “good” tea bowl—usually say that the rim should be smooth and fairly even. If the rim is rough and uneven, a host will have trouble because the cloth for wiping and purifying the bowl will not slide smoothly, and a guest will also be inconvenienced because it will be hard to find the place to drink from. Although the surface of the bowl was smooth, the shape of the rim seemed likely to confuse guests.

“This bowl is for the fifth guest,” said Mr. Hayashi. Since the tea ceremony was for the society members, he already knew the order of the guests. Ms. Suzuki made fun of him by saying that the fifth guest, Mr. Sato, was very much looking forward to the tea ceremony, which she knew because she had a good relationship with him. Then Mr. Hayashi returned, “I will make him say, ‘wow!’ with this bowl!”

His aim seemed to be to exceed the guests’ expectations in order to delight them. Referring to a professional ceramist who was to be the first guest, he said, “Even he will not be able to recognize what the bowl is!” He selected the set of utensils considering the guests—all tea ceremony experts—expecting them to pause during the ceremony to wonder at each item. These pauses induced by things create opportunities for conversation between the host and the guests. Ms. Suzuki has observed many discussions about utensils while serving as Mr. Hayashi’s assistant. “I thought this must be the enjoyment of doing tea,” she said when I asked her to tell me what a society tea ceremony is like. Mr. Hayashi often speaks of this way of selecting utensils, comparing it to simply conforming to *iemoto*’s style, and says, “We must be creative when doing a tea ceremony.”

Two weeks later, I asked Ms. Suzuki how the tea ceremony had gone when I met her at the regular culture center tea class. “Mr. Sato had trouble figuring out where to drink from,” she said with a laugh, “but the green *an’nan* tea bowl got more attention than my bowl.” *An’nan*, an old term for Vietnam, refers to a style of pottery in Japanese arts and crafts

¹² The first dish of a *Kaiseki* meal is called *mukōzuke* because as it is placed on the far side of the serving tray for each guest (*mukō* means the far side or the other side).

¹³ This type of bowl is called *wari-zansho*, as it resembles to the shape of broken Japanese peppercorn (*sansho*).

terminology (although it was originally a general term for pottery made in Vietnam). Due to the poor quality of the pigment, designs drawn on the surface often blur. Though the designs are usually drawn in blue or red and green, the color of the design on Mr. Hayashi's *an'nan* bowl was bright emerald green. Therefore, it captured the professional ceramist's attention. Mr. Hayashi had not mentioned it much at the study group meeting before the tea ceremony, but at the monthly meeting after the ceremony he delightfully reported this episode when I asked how the ceremony had gone—proudly saying that the ceramist had been surprised at the *an'nan* bowl and had offered to write a note of authentication on the box containing it. Then Mr. Hayashi praised the ceramist, saying, "He is indeed a great ceramist, with an expert eye."

What Mr. Hayashi had created was not a sophisticated trap like a net that perfectly catches guests' attention. A tea ceremony, after all, is not a unilateral presentation of an assemblage of symbols by the host. The host's selection of utensils is informed by the factors of occasion, guests, and the available utensils. Yet, the impression of the tea ceremony was not predetermined by his preparation, but temporarily engendered by guests' acceptance of, and reaction to, it. As the example above shows, the host decides the theme of the tea ceremony according to the season, the date, or to events. Indeed, some utensils represent the theme directly as visual symbols¹⁴: the hanging scroll and the heap of beans. But what loosely binds all these things is not so much the theme but the host himself. In that tea ceremony, Mr. Hayashi did not use any utensils that represented the theme directly other than the painting and the beans. The fact that all items belong to, and were chosen by, him tells the guests that the things before them are there by the host's intention. Without such exposure, for example, the bowl is no more than a second-hand five-thousand yen glazed porcelain bowl with a red design. What the host did before, and the guests did during, the tea ceremony is—using Gell's term—the abduction of agency. In his sense, abduction means inference of social agency from indexical signs: inferring that somebody is setting fire from smoke (Gell 1998: 15). In this case, the bowl becomes an index of the host's agency (which is to entertain the guest) only when the guest's abduction comes across the host's intention at the point of the bowl, as a node, during the tea ceremony—regardless of which utensil the host has put more intention on. The impression of "tea" both to the host and the guests, which they have co-enacted, is the outcome of the function of the bowl induced by this convergence.

¹⁴ See Kato 1994 for a symbolic analysis of tea utensils used in a tea ceremony.

Being a Tea Ceremony Guest

As we saw in the last section, there are times when not everything goes as well as the host expects in a tea ceremony, because the host and the guests co-enact the event. In order for a tea ceremony to be properly enacted, not only the host but also the guests should promptly weave a mesh of intention. This section shows how Mr. Hayashi acts as a guest at a tea ceremony to show his dedication to the enactment, as a guest.

About three months after the tea ceremony mentioned above, Mr. Hayashi and I attended an *ōyose* at an old temple hosted by the professional ceramist and another tea connoisseur. This *ōyose* is held twice annually, and is organized by a local newspaper company as one of its cultural affairs. Participants must buy annual tickets, priced at 25,000 yen, from the company. Although anyone who buys a ticket can participate, because it consists of *koicha*, *usucha*, and *tenshin*, and also because of its cost, beginner participants are rare. As a matter of fact, Mr. Hayashi did not initially intend to participate as a guest, but rather to just drop in and say hello to the ceramist with a gift to show his gratitude for being invited to a tea ceremony by the ceramist a few months earlier. When I asked him to join the tea ceremony with me, he gladly accepted and added, “Well, I might be the first guest if I participate.” Although he said “might,” he sounded like he was certain that this would be the case—his anticipation stemming from his close relationship with tea connoisseurs in the city and with the newspaper company that sponsors many *ōyose*. Yet this does not mean that he already knew exactly what the tea ceremony would be like.

As soon as we arrived at the venue and entered the main building of the temple—the waiting space—he proceeded to a temporary *tokonoma* made of a platform and partitions and looked down at the platform. On it sat lids of wooden containers for the tea utensils to be used in *koicha* and *usucha*, with inscriptions of their names, and also a set of utensils for preparing ashes and charcoal in a portable stove (*furo*) on which to put an iron teakettle¹⁵. On the partition, there was a hanging scroll featuring a Japanese-style painting of a pine tree with the sun shining from behind. Mr. Hayashi looked at a list of utensils that we received at the reception and started explaining them to me as if he were teaching me how to be a proper first guest.

“He is using this painting in a tea ceremony for the first time,” Mr. Hayashi said with confidence. According to him, the painting was of a pine tree in the garden of the ceramist’s house. As the ceramist’s house is very famous among tea participants, and as it has existed for hundreds of years, other anonymous guests might recognize the scene, he said. Then, however, he added more exclusive information about the painting and the social relations it implied. For example, he knew the artist who made the painting and the relationship between the ceramist and the artist. “He (the ceramist) must have asked him (the artist) to draw his pine tree. I also know the artist well. I had better refer to the painting at the tea ceremony.”

¹⁵ The set of utensils includes charcoals in a basket, a pair of tongs, an ash scoop, iron or brass rings to lift up and move the iron teakettle, a feather duster, a kettle rest, and an ash box.

Then he compared the list and the lids carefully, and found that a tea bowl to be used for *koicha* was made by a descendant of the feudal lord of the *Kaga* Domain, which almost perfectly corresponds to contemporary Ishikawa Prefecture, with the help of the ceramist, and that another bowl had been made by a rather famous artist/craftsman friend of the ceramist. “I now have some idea about the theme of today’s tea ceremony,” said Mr. Hayashi. Then he explained with confidence that the theme would be the historical *Kaga* Domain and its traditional crafts, as the ceramist himself is a representative of these. He seemed to have decided what to refer to during the tea ceremony by looking at these lids and the painting, in preparation for possibly becoming the first guest.

Soon thereafter, Mr. Hayashi’s hunch proved correct; while we were waiting in the main building of the temple beside a huge Buddhist altar, a newspaper company employee approached Mr. Hayashi and asked him to be the first guest. Although there were about 30 people waiting, the man had walked straight up to Mr. Hayashi without a single glance to either side. Mr. Hayashi gladly accepted the offer. “See what I mean?” he said. “Nobody here can be the first guest except me.”

A few minutes later, an elderly kimono-clad man appeared and knelt on the floor with his legs folded beneath him. He greeted the guests and announced that the *koicha* was ready. All the guests then followed him to the room. Mr. Hayashi and I were almost at the end of the line, but when he entered the room and sat in the first seat, about five empty seats remained on his right side. Due to the guests’ general hesitation to occupy the upper seats, a young male assistant appeared from the host’s entrance and said, “Would you please move over to the upper seats?” However, nobody moved. At this time, I was still stuck in the entrance, standing. Unable to stand by any longer, Mr. Hayashi urged everyone to move over so that the upper seats would be filled and so that there would be room for us. Finally, the other guests smoothly moved over and I was able to sit in the middle of the line. It seemed like Mr. Hayashi had begun to rule the place before the appearance of the host. Soon, the ceramist appeared, and the *koicha* started.

“Thank you for the other day,” said the host to Mr. Hayashi. He did not elaborate on the meaning of “the other day,” but this short, vague, opening remark made it clear to everybody in the room that the two had a close relationship. They then greeted each other briefly in a casual manner, talking about the weather. “Now,” said the host, “let’s *sutāto* (start).” Because the host had said “start” in Japanese-inflected English, everyone laughed, and the somewhat tense atmosphere of *koicha*, which is generally considered to be more formal than *usucha*, became significantly relaxed. The host then returned to the kitchen, and some assistants brought sweets to the guests. An elderly woman emerged and sat in front of an iron teakettle next to the first guest and began to make thick tea in a perfect silence. After a while, the ceramist reappeared and sat beside the last guest. “Although *koicha* should be carried out in dim light without much talk, please allow me to speak because I’m such a (talkative) person.” This elicited another round of laughter from the guests—the first since the woman had started the *koicha* procedure. After a short interval, Mr. Hayashi again talked about the

weather and the chirps of birds from the garden. The two men made jokes about these between each other, and laughter again filled the room.

Seemingly, it was Mr. Hayashi's role to set a topic for conversation. As he had already decided what to say in the waiting space, he referred to the pine tree painting. "Your friend drew the painting in the waiting space, didn't he?" The host responded in the positive, and then Mr. Hayashi switched the topic, saying, "And the tea bowls were also made by your school friends, such as Mr. Kawahara." The host smiled and began to talk about his friend. "He is more like an artist than a flower arrangement expert," said the host, before touching on the eccentricity of the friend's flower arrangements that the host had seen in a museum and at the friend's house. Then the host briefly explained about the hanging scroll and an incense container in the *tokonoma*, and recommended everyone to look more closely at them after the tea ceremony.

The other guests were listening to their conversation while eating sweets. After the host referred to the plates for the sweets, the guests started inspecting them carefully and chatting about the plates in low voices. Their chatting became louder when bowls of *koicha* were served—one per group of three. I was in the middle of the fourth cluster, between two elderly women wearing kimono. The woman sitting on my right sipped the tea first, and then passed the bowl to me saying, "I put it down on the floor because it is big and heavy." She must have been from the *Urasenke* tea ceremony school, as its rules stipulate handing the tea bowl directly to the next person in the case of *koicha*. Therefore, I did the same to the person on my left side. When we had finished, the woman on my left said, "Don't you think this bowl is his (the ceramist's) work?" I was not sure, but the glaze looked similar to his iconic works. She passed the bowl to the woman on my right, to let her appreciate the bowl closely. The woman and I gazed at the bowl as experienced tea connoisseurs do. The woman on my left then exclaimed, "This was made by Mr. Kawahara!" She seemed to have heard this from another guest next to her. Upon hearing this, the woman on my right said in admiration, "He is indeed an artist, making such a daring tea bowl!" Her words implied that the bowl was too big and heavy for using as a tea bowl. Yet, she seemed to be content drinking tea from a bowl made by a famous artist. Everybody in the room was touching, examining, and chatting about the tea bowls from which they had drunk, until the host made a closing remark.

In this instance, I was able to participate in the tea ceremony and listen carefully to the conversation between the host and the guest. What enabled their co-enactment of the event were things, people, and conversation, all entangled in a social relationship. We can imagine that, because this tea ceremony was of the *ōyose* type, the host could not predict who would be the guests. This differs from the situation with Mr. Hayashi in his tea ceremony mentioned in the last section; he had known who would attend. Yet, the relationship between the host and Mr. Hayashi dictated that Mr. Hayashi would be the first guest, and this influenced the ways in which everybody perceived the utensils and the tea ceremony itself, and how they recognized these through conversations via things (material items).

What Mr. Hayashi did first was to prepare access to the medium of communication: utensils. At this point, he could not see the material objects themselves, only the lids of the containers and the list of utensils. According to Mr. Hayashi, distributing such a list is rare, except at *ōyose* ceremonies. Because these are the most open tea ceremonies, the first guest is not always a close friend of the host. Therefore, providing a list enables anonymous guests to obtain a sense of, or at least guess at, the host's intentions beforehand. Also we can imagine that, in such an occasion, the host would not choose anything to please a particular person. Thus, although Mr. Hayashi knew the host very well, he tried to read the social behind the material connecting the host and himself in order for the utensils to serve as the conversation openers during the tea ceremony.

Moreover, he decided what utensils to refer to in advance and switched the topic according to the host's reaction. He wove his mesh of intention in advance, and tried to find the right thread to connect with the host's mesh of intention. Mobilization of his knowledge, and his social relation with the host and the things, could be realized by preparation and by improvisatory practice of communication during the tea ceremony. The convergence of these consequently influenced the cognition of the tea bowl by guests, as shown above. A large and heavy vessel became an eccentric tea bowl made by a great artist. The *ōyose* example foregrounds the way that recognition of things and of a tea ceremony—a good tea bowl and a good tea ceremony—is generated by people, conversation, and material items as a contingent medium of communication.

Discussion

The aim of this paper has been to describe the generative moment in the enactment of a tea ceremony. Contrary to the arguments of previous anthropological, symbolic, analyses of tea ceremonies, an enactment of a ceremony is not perfectly prescribed, but rather temporarily engendered by communication between host and guests through conversation via things (material items) as a medium of their agency. A tea ceremony is not an accomplishment of a prescribed cosmic model with symbols; it is generated as a consequence of a contingent and transient convergence of meshes of intentions.

As mentioned in the previous section, what enables successful mutual entertainment in a tea ceremony are things, people, and conversation. In the two examples, these elements were successfully brought together and they facilitated the temporal and contingent generation of a good tea ceremony. The very moment the host's intention comes across the guest's intention at the point of a utensil, "the material 'index' (the visible, physical, 'thing') permits a particular cognitive operation" (Gell 1998:13) for both the host and the guests.

In both examples, the host and guest who were involved in direct conversation via things had already built close relationships through tea-related activities. Mr. Hayashi knew the guests very well as a member of the same community of tea connoisseurs, including the ceramist who hosted the tea ceremony in the second example. Therefore, Mr. Hayashi could

select utensils particularly for the guests expecting to catch their attention in order to open a conversation. On the other hand, in the second example, the ceramist must have had no idea who would be the first guest when selecting utensils. The tea ceremony might have possibly been a mere presentation of utensils by the host and remained a systematic-procedure-of-serving-and-drinking-tea if the first guest had been an anonymous, silent beginner. Thus, I can say that people—including both host and guests—affect the contingent generation of tea utensils and tea.

The category of material items (or, “things”) is another factor for this generation to be contingent and temporal. In the first example, utensils appeared for the guests as the indexes of the host’s intention to surprise and entertain them. At the same time, utensils appeared to the host, when he was selecting them, as the indexes of the guests who are waiting to be surprised and entertained. They can see each other through the utensils only when their intention comes across at the point of a utensil, which is also the point in time when a utensil is recognized as a *good* utensil.

The conversation between the host and the guest eventually enables the generation of a *good* tea ceremony. In the first example, the *an’nan* tea bowl functioned as an index of the host’s entertainment for the professional ceramist. The authentication of the bowl he offered to put in writing gave momentum to the generation of a future tea ceremony: it had the potential to enrich the conversation between the host and the guests in the event that the bowl appeared as an index again. In the second example, even the recognition of a bowl by other guests not directly involved in the conversation changed when a utensil became an index due to their conversation resulting from the social relationship between the host, the first guest, and the item itself.

Yet, because every single tea ceremony is nonrecurring temporary event, these utensils as indexes generated in the enactment of a tea ceremony do not exist forever. Instead, the repetition of tea ceremonies weaves out the social, relational world of tea: in this case, the local tea-world of Kanazawa. After a tea ceremony, utensils are returned to their wooden containers and stored in the host’s house until he/she intentionally uses them again, allowing them to once more become indexes, this time of another occasion and for other guests. The mesh of intensions will be renewed again and again, every time tea connoisseurs become hosts or guests, and each time they have fun, feel excited, or become disappointed with one another. In order for such activities to be conducted successfully, tea participants mobilize the social relations they develop through tea activities, embodied knowledge and history, and utensils. Even when all these elements are mobilized, the tea-like situation comes to fruition contingently and transiently at each tea ceremony at the convergence of meshes of intentions between the host and the guests.

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