THE ART OF LEARNING TEA: EMBODIED TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES IN THE INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE TEA INSTITUTE AT PENN STATE

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by
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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic case study investigates Japanese tea ceremony, or chanoyu, as it is practiced in the context of an American university club where students are taught both by certified tea masters in master-led lessons as well as by each other through peer practice. By resituating tea ceremony outside of Japan, it becomes an intercultural medium through which students are able to engage with Japanese cultural ideas that inform their understandings of their practice. One of the primary ways these understandings are transmitted is through the Japanese approach to practice, okeiko, which is reliant upon hierarchical structures that define the expectations and roles within student-teacher relationships. The qualities of okeiko can be seen in master-led lessons, and to a lesser extent in peer-led practice. Through these non-Western approaches to practice, students learn to engage in different ways of learning, including a focus on the embodied and sensory elements of tea ceremony. Through practicing the tea ceremony, students learn to discipline their bodies and develop their sensory perceptiveness. In addition to the cultural components of the ceremony, the focus on the body and sensory experiences allows chanoyu to become a relational practice, where participants attend to others’ needs and comfort through the tea ceremony. The embodiment involved in this tea practice and students’ deep concentration on accommodating others begin to influence and manifest in their everyday lives. Together, these qualities affect practitioners’ concept of tea ceremony as an art practice deeply connected with ordinary living, and in turn, this can help art educators reflect on conceptualizing art as a practice that is both embodied, relational, and a way of influencing everyday life.

Keywords: Japanese tea ceremony, okeiko pedagogy, culture in education, embodiment, living art practice
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PREFACE

Japanese tea ceremony is a highly experiential practice. To reflect this, I have arranged this thesis so that it mirrors the structure of the tea ceremony itself in terms of its organization. I begin each chapter or section with a vignette describing a portion of a tea ceremony as a way of connecting the processes of both tea ceremony and research. In these vignettes, I write evocatively (Kondo, 1990) so that readers of this work may better understand the centrality of the bodily and sensory experiences of tea ceremony. Throughout this work, I have envisioned my tea practice as part of my research, and as such, I frame my research here with the process of the tea ceremony.

Additionally, as with many works that deal with Japanese cultural practices, I make heavy usage of Japanese terms that are specific to tea ceremony. As explained in the preface to the Urasenke School of tea ceremony’s handbook (Sen, 1980), “Much in the same way that the international art of ballet uses French terminology, Tea at present relies upon Japanese. It is highly questionable whether ‘jujube-shaped container’ means anything more to the beginner than ‘natsume’” (p. 3). In using these Japanese terms, I follow the Hepburn romanization of Japanese, where macrons over vowels indicate the English equivalent of a long vowel. I also include Japanese characters with the first usage of each term as a reference for Japanese speakers and those familiar with sinographs. I intentionally refer to tea utensils by both Japanese and English names, in part to mimic the language used by informants and also to help these terms become more familiar for readers who do not speak Japanese or study tea.

As a final note before beginning, I wish to explain that though I refer to the Tea Institute at Penn State throughout this thesis, the Institute as I have described in this thesis
dissolved over the summer of 2018 and ceases to exist. However, the change has been primarily done in name only. The three tea ceremony clubs of which the Institute was comprised, the Gong Fu Cha (Traditional Chinese Tea Ceremony) Club, Chanoyu (Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony) Club, and Darye (Traditional Korean Tea Ceremony) Club, continue to meet and operate much in the way I have described here. The Chanoyu Club that I focus on continues to maintain strong relationships with the visiting tea masters. The Club continues to expand its practice and outreach activities.
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I am deeply indebted to the past and present members of the Tea Institute at Penn State, the Chanoyu Club, and the visiting tea sensei, without whose enthusiasm for tea and kind cooperation, this project would not have been possible. Much Respect. I also wish to acknowledge all my teachers in Japan, especially oshisho-san, Kineya Rokushigee, who first introduced me to this way of traditional arts teaching.

A special thank you to Bethany who in addition to participating in the study also allowed me to use some of her photos from tea practices. A massive thank you to my editor, Alexis Stratton for their thoroughness and patience with my many questions. I also wish to thank my other editors, Sarah Watson and my father, Sam Shoppell, especially for his Word wizardry. Thanks also to my advisor, Dr. Kimberly Powell, for guiding me through this process and to Dr. Wanda Knight for serving on my committee. Finally, to both of my parents for supporting me throughout this process.

Makoto ni arigatou gozaimashita.

Makoto ni arigatou gozaimashita.
Chapter 1
Entering the Tea Room – Introduction

If we were preparing to enter a traditional Japanese tea room, we would be outside of the teahouse, facing a 1-meter-square wooden sliding door. We would have arrived here after traversing the freshly washed and still glistening stepping stones set into the mossy pathways of a carefully tended, green garden. After sliding this door open, we would remove the woven straw sandals thoughtfully provided by our host and carefully crawl through the narrow nijiriguchi (閾口) opening and onto the woven tatami (畳) rush mats of the tea room. Inside, the room would be dimly lit by sunlight filtering in through tree leaves and washi (和紙; Japanese handmade paper)-covered windows. The small, stark room would be quiet and somber. However, this is not the tea room we are about to enter. Our tea room is not typical, and one may argue that it should not even be called a tea room at all.

Almost halfway across the world from Japan, on the campus of Penn State, I enter another tea room by descending into the empty basement hallway, bathed in fluorescent lighting. Continuing down the hallway, a wooden door plastered with newspaper clippings, posters, and stickers comes into view. A calligraphic rendition of 福, the Chinese character for good fortune, floats on a red square of paper on the upper left of the door. A large black poster for The 2017 Chinese Porcelain Exhibition is posted at eye level. Below these, clippings from the Collegian, Gazette, and other newspapers feature greyscale photos of young people drinking and brewing Chinese-style tea. The headlines read as follows: “Tea House Offers Authentic Chinese Flavor,” “Tea Institute at Penn State to Host Exotic Tasting Events,” and “Tea Club Seeks to Stir Up Success for Tea Specialist Exam.” A bright red umbrella pops against the white background of a poster for “Omotesenke Nodate.” Near the bottom of the door, “KEEP CALM AND DRINK TEA” is proclaimed in white letters on a navy background, the school colors of Penn State University. Next to this, a slightly peeling black and white flyer advertises a past event, “The Urasenke Context.” To the right of the door, a placard labels this room as “he Traditional Chin se Tea eremony C ub [sic].” Swiping my student ID in the card reader under this placard, I notice a black and white sticker just above the door handle with a photo of a Chinese tea set asking in small font, “Do You Gong Fu?”

Entering this room, there is a faint smell of straw. The floor has changed from the hallway’s grey tile to a wooden laminate. Taking off my shoes, I glance up at another placard above the metal shoe rack, this one of

1 The host of a tea ceremony often provides woven sandals for guests to change into at the garden gate and wear as they walk through the garden toward the teahouse. These sandals are removed before entering the tea room.
shiny black wood and glass etched with “The Tea Parker Tea House 青白茶館.” A glass display case immediately to the right showcases a number of different teacups, small clay teapots, lacquer wares, and other tea-related items. Through the glass walls of this display case, I can see the rest of the room, which has three large empty tables surrounded by chairs,

but this is not my destination. Turning to the left, another large wooden door has been left propped open. A single paper affixed to the door is labeled “Japanese Tea Room Rules,” followed by two Japanese characters 茶道 with a short, bulleted list of rules underneath. I recognize the characters as “chado” or “sadō,” or Japanese tea ceremony. Through this open door, the laminate flooring changes to a black, speckled tile. I can see the tea room, or more accurately, four and a half tatami mats arranged on the floor and enclosed by a square, wooden frame. There are no well-manicured gardens, no washi-covered windows, no narrow entrance, or
even walls here. Despite what it lacks, this arrangement of mats still serves as a space dedicated to gathering together to share tea.

Figure 2. The Chanoyu room.

This is the tea room of the Chanoyu (Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony) Club, which is one part of the Tea Institute at Penn State. I came to the Chanoyu Club excited to meet others interested in tea after having just returned to the U.S. from five years of teaching English in Shizuoka, one of Japan’s tea-producing capitals. After my first visit to the basement tea room, I realized that the “Tea Club” I had heard about was actually a conglomeration of three tea clubs under the umbrella name of The Tea Institute, each
dedicated to the education and preservation of Asian tea ceremony\(^2\). In addition to Japanese *Chanoyu* (茶の湯) Club, the two other club are the Chinese *Gong Fu Cha* (工夫茶) Club and Korean *Darye* (다례) Club\(^3\).

Though I was not particularly interested in tea ceremony itself initially, *chanoyu* was appealing to me as a way to continue engaging with the learning style of traditional Japanese art practices I had begun while still in Japan. As I practiced and learned more about the deeply holistic and embodied nature of Japanese tea ceremony, I came to recognize the *Chanoyu* Club as being situated in a unique position in which Japanese cultural traditions of arts pedagogy have been altered and adapted to an American setting. Like the tea room itself, the practice and learning that occurs in the club have been adjusted from the Japanese original to suit a new location, both physically and culturally, without fully losing the foundation of its cultural origins. The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which the cultural and embodied aspects of the Japanese traditional art of tea ceremony interact as they are interpreted, negotiated, and experienced in the American setting of the *Chanoyu* Club. In using the *Chanoyu* Club’s tea ceremony practice as an example, I hope to highlight the ways in which culture informs and interacts with embodied practices in a more general context for art education.

\(^2\) Scholars’ usage of articles with “tea ceremony” often varies in the literature, appearing both as “the tea ceremony” as well as “tea ceremony” without any articles (i.e., “the,” “an,” etc.). Within the *Chanoyu* Club, members tended to refer to “tea ceremony” without articles. While my usage in this thesis varies occasionally, in respect to my experiences, I tend to refer to *chanoyu* simply as “tea ceremony.”

\(^3\) I intentionally use capitalization (i.e. *Chanoyu, Gong Fu Cha*) to refer to the clubs and their educational programs, while using uncapitalized terms (i.e. *chanoyu, gong fu cha*) to refer to the general practice of the respective tea ceremonies.
A key concept I rely upon in understanding the pedagogy of chanoyu is in the formalized idea of the practice of okeiko (お稽古). Translated directly into English, “okeiko” simply means “practice,” but in Japanese, the term has a strong connection to practice specifically in the traditional arts. Okeiko-style practice is highly disciplined and demands reverence and respect for the teacher, which results in a unique, almost familial level of closeness between students and teachers. It is also characterized as following an embodied pedagogy that emphasizes careful observation and learning with the body. I originally became familiar with okeiko during my study of traditional arts while I was in Japan, and a desire to continue participating in an okeiko-style practice was a primary motivator for my involvement in chanoyu. Though members of the Chanoyu Club tend not to use the term “okeiko” to refer to their own lessons and practices, I use it in this study to refer to this Japanese cultural approach to teaching and learning that is the basis for tea ceremony practice in the Institute’s Chanoyu program.

Okeiko is notable for its emphasis on embodied learning through which the body and the senses are heavily utilized as part of the learning process. This is particularly the case for tea ceremony okeiko, which involves both the ritualistic preparation of tea through prescribed movements and the appreciation of the process of preparing and sharing tea. As a holistic practice, tea is appreciated not only through taste and smell but also through the other senses, incorporating the cultivation of knowledge and the appreciation of other arts, such as ceramics, calligraphy, flower arrangement, etc. By using the holistic and interdisciplinary nature of tea ceremony as an example, I hope to highlight the potential for embodied and relational practices in more generalized art pedagogy.
In this study, I look to scholars who discuss the role of the body, senses, and experience in education from both the East and West in order to better address the mixing of Japanese and Western cultural ideas that occurs in Chanoyu Club practices. I rely particularly on Sato’s (2004) discussion of the importance of the body in Japanese education and on Kondo’s (1990) discussion of bodily skill acquisition by Japanese artisans. From scholars in the West, I explore Dewey’s (1934; 1938) conception of experience in education and the arts as well as Merleau-Ponty’s notions of maximum grip and intentional arc (as discussed in Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1999; Joy & Sherry, 2003; Kan, 2011; Morris, 2014) in the acquisition and development of skills. Additionally, I look to art educators who speak to the importance of embodiment, specifically in Japanese arts practices, including Powell (2004; 2007; 2012) and Matsunobu’s (2007) discussions of the concept of kata (효; literally, “form” or “mold”), a prescribed, physical form used in the embodied transmission of Japanese artistic practice. I also utilize the work of scholars who discuss Zen influence on embodiment in Japanese arts practice in general (Chung, 2014) and tea ceremony specifically (Okakura, 1906/1964). Finally, I refer to authors who speak of the relational potential of embodied art practices (Springgay, 2008; 2010) and in those used tea ceremony specifically (Carriger, 2009; Mayuzumi, 2006; Surak, 2006).

This study was undertaken as an ethnographic case study. In order to best attend to my interest in embodiment and the experiential nature of learning tea ceremony in the Chanoyu Club, it was necessary that I directly engaged with this learning environment with the students and teachers I observed. I came to a greater understanding of participants’ knowledge by joining in the practice alongside them as a member of the
group. Sharing in the lesson experiences allowed me to cross-reference my own observations and experiences with those of my peers. I also emphasize thick description to draw connections between my methodological approach and theoretical orientation; this is in alignment with Kondo’s (1990) emphasis on writing evocatively to highlight experience and expand the conceptualization of theory as experience and evocation. Powell (2012) also underlined the importance of research approaches that “are responsive to embodied knowing, sensory engagement, liminal states and other qualities of experience” (p. 121). Considering the embodied and sensory nature of my research, I take the approach of writing evocatively further by writing metonymically, using the structure and experience of the tea ceremony itself to organize and frame my research. As such, I begin each chapter with a vignette of a portion of a tea ceremony, through which I attempt to unify research and art by drawing metaphorical connections between my practice in tea ceremony and my practices as a researcher.

My emphasis on evoking experience through writing reflects the significance of embodiment in Japanese okeiko-style arts pedagogy. Considering okeiko as a culturally significant approach to education, I discuss its role in the American recontextualization of Japanese tea ceremony. Specifically, I look at how students’ and teachers’ expectations of tea ceremony practice are negotiated through language usage, demonstration of respect, and the interpretation and adaptation of student-teacher interactions. I explore embodiment in okeiko pedagogy through participants’ experiences of disciplined bodily movement, interaction with materials, and the sensory experience of tea ceremony. Finally, I consider tea ceremony as a holistic art practice with relational potential, describing how participants come to establish better connections with themselves, each
other, and to their environments. By considering the holistic, relational aspects of tea ceremony, I also discuss the ways in which it comes to impact participants’ daily lives. Given its broadly holistic nature and relation with ordinary life, I also address whether participants conceive tea ceremony as an arts practice. Through this study, I demonstrate how a non-Western approach to art pedagogy can provide insights into learning in intercultural contexts and broaden art educators’ understandings of ways that embodiment is situated in cultural understanding. Furthermore, I hope that my examination of tea ceremony can contribute to expanding notions of what constitutes art practice to encourage educators to think about art in more participatory, experiential ways.

**Research Questions**

When I first began to see Chanoyu Club as a site for research, I had already been participating for a semester. As an art educator, I came to realize that Chanoyu Club, as a site where a Japanese art was practiced outside of Japan, provoked interesting questions about how cultural background and expectations have an impact on learning. In addition, the central focus on disciplined bodily movement and attention to the senses was a core component of chanoyu practice. As I reflected on my tea ceremony study, I became intrigued by okeiko’s ability to allow for creative expression, despite the prescribed and disciplined nature of the practice. Though tea ceremony seemed at times to be restrictive and regimented, it still felt like an art practice, and I struggled to make sense of the seeming conflict between discipline and creative expression. Through this study, I seek to explore the complexities of the interactions that occur among culture, bodily experience, and art through the practice of Japanese tea ceremony as carried out by mostly non-
Japanese students and instructors. The central question of my research is expressed as follows: How do culture, embodied experience, and conceptions of art practice interact in Japanese tea ceremony as it is taught and learned in the intercultural context of the Tea Institute at Penn State’s Chanoyu Club?

By looking specifically at a non-Western art pedagogy in my research, I attempt to contribute to a greater understanding of culturally diverse pedagogical approaches to artistic practice, which can be applied more generally toward other art practices that involve cultural or embodied aspects. Furthermore, I hope this examination of the holistic approach of tea ceremony might also encourage art educators to explore more embodied approaches to art pedagogy. Just as the Institute has created an intercultural learning environment by merging the core of traditional okeiko pedagogy with the needs of American university students, it is my hope that other art educators will be able to apply some of the concepts I discuss in this thesis to their own practices.
Chapter 2
Acclimating to Tea Room Geography – Navigating Between Local and Global

Kneeling on the cool black tile, I am seated on my heels with my legs tucked underneath me in seiza (正座). There is just enough room to fit my body between the wooden storage cabinet behind me and the edge of the narrow beam of the pale wooden frame that both marks where the walls of the tea room would be and contains the woven rush tatami mat floor of the tea room. In the small amount of space between my knees and this wooden plank, I place my small sensu (扇子) folding fan down in front of me, and behind that, I place both hands with fingers neatly together angled toward each other to create an open triangle shape on the black tile. As I bow deeply, lowering my nose toward the center of that triangle, I can smell the woody, hay-like scent of the tatami more strongly. Rising from the bow, I pick up my fan with my right hand and hold it in a fist. I use the knuckles of both fisted hands as leverage to lift my body over the wooden barrier and slide, still kneeling, up onto the tatami mats and through the invisible tea room doorway.

Seated here, I can briefly take in key locations of the tea room. The four and a half mats of tatami are arranged so that the four full-length mats circle the central, square half-mat. Plain black fabric heri (縫) cover the long edges of each mat, creating grid-like demarcations of the borders between mats. In front of me, on the imaginary wall of the far side of the tea room, there is a three-panel folding screen arranged to create the space of the tokonoma (床の間) alcove that protrudes outward from the room. A hanging scroll has been affixed from the top of the center panel of the screen. The scroll falls to cover nearly two thirds of the panel’s length.

Figure 3. Tea room before the ceremony begins.
Below this, a small flower arrangement sits in a ceramic vase resting on a lacquered bamboo mat. In the far corner of the central mat, there is a wooden ro (炉) box brazier that contains a round, cast-iron kettle that emits a gentle bubbling. In the diagonally opposite corner of the room from where I sit, a short two-panel folding screen, the furosaki byōbu (風炉先屏風), covers the base of the corner. At this moment, I am the only person in the room, but once the ceremony begins, I, as the first guest, will be seated across from the ro at the far end of the mat on which I am currently kneeling. The other guest will seat himself to my left, and the host, when she enters the room, will seat herself across the room from me on the opposite side of the wooden ro.

**Locating the Chanoyu Club and the Tea Institute**

“Tea room geography” was a phrase the Morgan-sensei, an instructor for the Urasenke School of tea, used while describing the layout of the tea room to new practitioners as she explained the ways in which the arrangement of the tatami mats that make up the room influences how one moves through it. (Though I discuss how the tatami mats impact movement in more detail in Chapter 6, several diagrams of the typical tea room layouts used at the Institute’s tea house can also be found in Appendix D.) Before one enters the tea room, and during the initial entrance process, it is important for guests to observe the layout of the room so that they can know where key features of the room such as the tokonoma and brazier are located. Since guests must visit the tokonoma and temae-datami (点前畳; the area of the tea room where the host sits) to observe some objects and utensils before being seated for tea, they have to be able to chart their movement through the tea room space to those points. As an embodied practice, an important part of tea ceremony is an awareness of one’s surroundings, which, in turn, has an impact on and directs one’s movements. As I frame my research in terms of tea ceremony metaphor, I wish to first provide a sense of the layout of my metaphorical tea room by explaining the structures of the Chanoyu Club’s tea practice. An understanding
of the club’s structures can help provide context for different elements of tea ceremony practice that I observe through this study. Additionally, as I locate the Chanoyu Club within the larger umbrella organization of the Tea Institute at Penn State and within the broader traditions of Japanese tea ceremony, I draw connections between the different levels of geographical significance, from the intimately local to the global.

The Tea Institute was founded with the aim “to teach and preserve all aspects of tea culture and science by serving as the foremost center of tea knowledge in the English-speaking world” (Tea Institute at Penn State, n.d.). Even as it introduces itself, the Tea Institute strives to locate itself on the global scale by referring to “the English-speaking world.” This student organization is actually a conglomeration of three individual clubs that focus on three major Asian tea ceremonies. The Institute was originally founded around the study of Chinese gong fu cha but was later expanded to include Japanese chanoyu and Korean darye as well. That multiple tea ceremonies are being studied and taught in the same environment helps members draw connections between aesthetic, philosophical, and practical commonalities between the traditions, as well as with their own external experiences and the surrounding American cultural backdrop of the clubs.

Members of each of these clubs can become full-fledged members of the Institute umbrella organization by undergoing a semester-long training in gong fu cha, consisting of weekly lectures on tea science, history, and culture, as well as participation in small peer-led groups known as lineages. During lineages, two senior Institute members instruct incoming New Brew members in developing practical skills such as brewing Chinese and Taiwanese teas using gong fu cha wares, developing their palates, and identifying tea types by sight, smell, and taste. At the end of each semester, New Brews
undergo an intensive, several-hour long Tea Specialist Exam involving both a written test and a practical brewing portion. Successful New Brews then become Institute members with access to more advanced tea wares, higher quality teas, and the ability to join weekly masterclass sessions to further develop their tea knowledge and brewing abilities. The intensive nature of the testing-in process and the focus on peer education in this program foster deep connections between members; lineages are often considered to be generations and are mapped out as branches of a family tree. Though the *Gong Fu Cha* program’s testing-in structure does not directly connect with the *Chanoyu* program, it is important to keep in mind because most *Chanoyu* Club members are also either New Brews or Institute members. As such, the experience of the *Gong Fu Cha* program and its reliance on peer education is constantly juxtaposed with *Chanoyu* Club’s instructor-centered approach to education.

The *Chanoyu* Club is the only place outside of Japan that offers lessons in two of the largest schools of the Japanese tea ceremony: the *Omotesenke* (表千家) and *Urasenke* (裏千家) traditions. These two schools along with the smaller *Mushanokōjisenke* (武者小路千家) tradition comprise the three major *sansenke* (三千家) traditions, which can be traced back to Sen no Rikyū (千利休), who is said to have perfected Japanese tea ceremony in the 16th century. The three major *sansenke* branches of tea were established by Rikyū’s three grandsons, between whom his estate was divided. Although there are other traditions besides these three, most contemporary practitioners of Japanese tea ceremony practice either *Urasenke* or *Omotesenke*, with *Urasenke* being the tradition that

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4 “Testing-in” is the verb used by club members to refer to the successful completion of the Tea Specialist Exam, which grants full membership in the Institute.
is most frequently practiced outside of Japan. Due to the wider international presence of the *Urasenke* tradition, this was the first school that was represented at the Tea Institute, in part due to the cooperation of instructors from a nearby *Urasenke* group in Philadelphia. After the *Urasenke* program was established, the club was later able to partner with a group of *Omotesenke* instructors located throughout the U.S. to arrange visits for instruction so that a broader scope of tea ceremony could be represented in the Institute.

Members of the *Chanoyu* Club learn about these traditions of Japanese tea ceremony through a combination of weekly club meetings, peer-led practices, and master-led lessons. During weekly club meetings, members practice preparing *matcha* (抹茶), the powdered green tea that is the focus of the ceremony, in a non-ceremonial context to further develop their skills. This whisking practice is followed by presentations by peer lecturers who introduce the cultural and historical contexts of tea ceremony, practical knowledge about *matcha*, and information about peripheral cultural arts and practices that contribute to the tea ceremony experience, such as kimono, traditional tea sweets, and flower arrangement. These weekly meetings supplement the hands-on practice students engage in via peer-led practices and master-led lessons, in which students choose to follow either the *Omotesenke* or *Urasenke* tradition. Members may attend the first master-led lesson of both schools, but thereafter, they must choose one school affiliation and cannot attend the other school’s practices or lessons. Though these traditions are functionally similar, the differences in each school’s approach to tea ceremony manifests in subtle aesthetic choices, such as the color of women’s silk *fukusa* (袱紗), a cloth used to symbolically purify tea utensils (the color for
men, purple, is consistent between schools); the color of the bamboo tea utensils used; or the amount of foam produced on the surface of prepared matcha. Several of these differences between schools are illustrated in the table below. Additionally, Urasenke is generally considered to be more internationally-minded with more teachers located outside of Japan and a wider availability of English-language curricular materials. A conscious effort to internationalize the Urasenke tradition by Grand Master Sen Soshitsu XV’s (千宗室十五代) “peace through a bowl of tea” campaign in the United States has been supported by publications, international travel, and the establishment of several official Urasenke branches outside of Japan (Sen & Naya, 2002).

Table 1

*Differences in Urasenke and Omotesenke Practice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Urasenke</strong></th>
<th><strong>Omotesenke</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Color of women’s fukusa</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Scarlet-orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo type used for tea scoop, tea whisk</td>
<td>White bamboo</td>
<td>Smoked or mottled bamboo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of surface foam on whisked matcha</td>
<td>Fully covered with foam</td>
<td>Foam around edges, leaving a clear lake in the center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of fukusa while folding</td>
<td>Twists corner of fukusa around hand</td>
<td>Snaps fukusa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gendered variation in host’s preparation actions</td>
<td>Less present</td>
<td>More present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International presence</td>
<td>Very international, some publications in English</td>
<td>Less international, publications in Japanese only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One important consideration in my study is the differences between the tea masters from each school. Because there are no Omotesenke instructors based in Pennsylvania, several different tea masters visit the Institute on a rotating schedule, often accompanied by an assistant. Almost all of the Omotesenke tea masters, including the
three who participated in my study, are ethnically Japanese women. On the other hand, the proximity of an *Urasenke* group based in nearby Philadelphia allows for consistent visits from the same American instructor, who comes unaccompanied by an assistant. Though I reference two *Urasenke* instructors in my discussion of observations, this is because my observations spanned the period of transition between two instructors. The previous tea master, Dr. Hanson, retired from working with the Institute and passed the position on to Morgan-sensei, one of his former students who is now teaching. I mention the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the instructors because this seems to have some impact on their approach to teaching. Japanese-taught *Omotesenke* lessons seem to be more silent and observation-based, while American-taught *Urasenke* lessons have a more conversational feeling. This difference was thrown into stark contrast the first time I attended an end-of-semester public demonstration by the *Urasenke* students, which was my first exposure to the *Urasenke* teachers. During this demonstration, Dr. Hanson was talking freely with the audience while explaining the host’s procedures, and he also helped to guide the students performing the demonstration. This was quite different from the *Omotesenke* demonstration, in which the only person speaking during the performance was the designated student who provided narration to help the audience contextualize the ceremony while the visiting tea master quietly watched the students’ performance. The cultural implications of the two schools will be discussed in more depth later, but it is important to keep in mind that students are aware of these differences and may choose their tea ceremony school based, in part, on these differences in terms of teaching style and atmosphere.
In the master-led lessons for both schools, students participate in formal *okeiko*-style practice led by a visiting tea master. Instructors visit for two consecutive days approximately once a month, for an average of three times a semester, yielding five days of lessons and one day for a public demonstration. (*Omotesenke* lessons have always been held on weekends, whereas the *Urasenke* lessons were previously held on weeknights, and now are also held on weekends.) During each day of the master-led lessons, two 2-hour sessions are held, one for advanced students in the morning and the other for beginners in the afternoon. In each session, the instructor works with a small group (typically around two to five students) to develop and refine the skills of participating in the ceremony as a guest and performing tea ceremony as the host.

These visiting tea masters are licensed as part of a hierarchical structure of teachers and students that is administered by each school’s headquarters in Kyoto, Japan. One of the largest differences between the *Gong Fu* and *Chanoyu* programs is the centrality of authority in these master-led lessons. While the education in the *Gong Fu Cha* Club is carried out almost entirely by peers, in the *Chanoyu* Club, peer education is only allowed for review of skills that have already been introduced by the tea master. Beginners must first be directly instructed by a sensei on a given skill before senior students can help them to practice it; senior members are not authorized to teach new skills. The information and skills introduced by visiting tea masters are further practiced and refined in weekly practices led by more senior and advanced members to help students at all levels practice skills learned from visiting instructors.

In this chapter, I have discussed the geography of the tea room from the most immediate level of the tea room layout to locating the *Chanoyu* Club both within the Tea
Institute and on the broader global scale of tea ceremony practice. Situating the *Chanoyu* Club within the overarching Tea Institute structures helps to show how tea students traverse the shared borders of multiple tea practices by contextualizing their experiences, knowledge, and skills in the study of one tea ceremony within those of another. Likewise, it is important to be mindful that students’ exposure to the cultural elements of multiple tea ceremonies in a variety of educational contexts and the juxtaposition of these practices can influence how they conceptualize their experience of studying Japanese tea ceremony. In this regard, tea ceremony geography becomes not only about locating oneself in a tea room or within a club’s organizational structure but also about the ways in which the tea room becomes a site where representations of regions and cultures come together at borders, much like those created in the tea room by the cloth-covered *heri* of the *tatami* mats, which comprise the foundation of the most intimate and local form of tea room geography. Just as a tea practitioner must establish their bearings upon entering a tea room, so too must the students who join these clubs locate and orient themselves on both the local and global scales as they determine where they intend to go on their tea journeys.
From my *seiza* position, seated with legs folded underneath me, I lift my heels and curl my toes under me, and then shift my weight back onto my feet to stand up in one swift movement. I look down to ensure that the overlapping panels of the skirt of my kimono are in order and begin walking toward the folding screen that represents the *tokonoma* alcove space with carefully measured steps—left, right, left, right. I place both hands against the tops of my thighs as I move with each careful step, with my right hand holding the small *sensu* folded fan and my left hand with fingers pressed neatly together. Crossing over the black cloth border between *tatami* mats, I leave the space of the mat I was on and step onto the mat in front of the *tokonoma*, where I kneel and reseat myself into

*Figure 4. The tokonoma* with scroll and flower arrangement.
Placing my fan in front of me, I bow deeply in respect to the calligrapher who has written the words on the interchangeable board held in place on the scroll by thin threads at each corner.

Coming up from the bow, I rest my fingertips lightly on the woven mat and contemplate the calligraphy. It is one we have used many times before: 清坐一味友 (seiza ichimi no tomo), which means “sitting calmly with friends of one heart.” Thinking about these words, I reflect on the time I am about to spend sitting mostly in silence with club members who have become friends through our practice together. I let my gaze drop to the flower arrangement in front of the scroll—a large tree peony bloom surrounded by sprigs of leaves on either side. Its red petals seem almost painted with splashes of white. The flamboyance of this single flower is offset by the rustic umber clay vase in which it rests. The vase, in turn, sits on an asymmetrical lacquered bamboo mat placed slightly off-center from the scroll. Looking back up to the scroll once more, I bow a final time then pick up my sensu in preparation for moving to the next location.

**Literature Review**

Both the scroll and the arrangement of flowers are carefully chosen by the host for each tea gathering to express the theme and tone of the ceremony that will be performed for the guests. Guests interpret the messages that are aesthetically expressed through the host’s careful selection of calligraphy and arrangement of flowers. Though the scroll conveys a literal message through the words that are inscribed, brushwork and the addition of images can also contribute to the scroll’s aesthetic meaning. Flowers, too, have seasonal associations and meanings that contribute to the thematic expressions of the host that are then interpreted by the guest.

Just as the guests contemplate the thematic message conveyed through these two decorative items before participating in a tea ceremony, I also use a review of the literature in my metaphorical tokonoma to establish the theme and conceptual framework of my research approach for this study. My review of the literature is conceptualized as a dialogue between East and West in recognition of the inter-influence between scholarship in both cultures. In this study, non-Japanese students who have been enculturated in
Western learning experiences come into contact with and learn to practice a Japanese tradition transmitted through culturally specific modes of embodied learning. Bringing together the traditions of the Western setting with the Eastern tradition of the cultural practice of the tea ceremony is an important way to reflect the conceptual background and context of participants’ experiences. I approach this by first discussing the historical context of the development of tea ceremony as well as Zen philosophy and aesthetics foundational to the practice. I then explore more contemporary thought regarding the intercultural practice of the modern tea ceremony, Japanese approaches to embodied pedagogy and holistic art practice, and Western ideas of the role of aesthetic experience in embodied learning. Finally, I discuss the relationality that is made possible through the embodied, holistic nature of tea ceremony as an art practice.

**Historical Contexts**

Since the initial transfer of Chinese tea-drinking rituals to Japan, *chanoyu* has always been, and remains today, a site of international and intercultural negotiation. Though a detailed historical account of the development of *chanoyu* is beyond the scope of this review, many scholars have discussed *chanoyu*’s origins from Zen Buddhist practice in China through its historical development into a Japanese cultural practice, providing context for how it came to envelop a broad range of spiritual, philosophical, moral, aesthetic, and artistic aspects (Avdulov, 2015; Ludwig, 1981).

Tea drinking became a component of meditation rituals in the ninth century in Buddhist monasteries in China. Tea was “cultivated not just as a medicine or as a social beverage or as the focus of aesthetic entertainment, but particularly for religious purposes: ritual offering, common ceremonial fellowship, even somehow appropriately
related to the experience of enlightenment” (Ludwig, 1981, p. 373). At this point, tea begins to take on a spiritual, aesthetic component for practitioners striving to achieve higher levels of experience on the road toward enlightenment. There is a saying that “Tea and Zen are one and the same flavor” (茶禅一味; chazen ichimi) (Hioki, 2013, p. 130). This illustrates the “religio-aesthetic” (Ludwig, 1974, 1981; Hioki, 2013) practices of Zen and the sensory experiences of the taste of tea. The closeness between Zen spiritual aesthetics and the sensory experiences associated with tea was one of the important factors that influenced the adoption of tea ceremony practice in Japan.

In Japan, one of the early figures in the development of a uniquely Japanese tea ceremony was Murata Jukō (村田珠光, 1422–1502), who strove to make “the preparation and drink[ing] of tea an expression of the Zen belief that every act of daily life is a potential act that can lead to enlightenment” (Urasenke Konnichian, n.d., para. 8). Murata was succeeded by his apprentice Takeno Jōō (武野紹鶴, 1502–1555), who continued to develop the wabi-cha (侘茶) style, which was also closely tied to the development of the wabi-sabi (侘寂) aesthetic associated with this style of tea. Wabi-cha represented a significant shift away from the lavish tea events hosted by nobles toward a simpler, more intimate style of tea held in the small, 4.5-mat tea rooms in teahouses that were reminiscent of mountain hermits’ grass huts. Instead of using the expensive and refined Chinese-imported karamono (唐物), in embracing the wabi-sabi aesthetic, wabi-cha utilized simple and crude wares that embodied the rustic, humble view of beauty as expressed through intentional imperfections, which included designs and forms that reflected the roughness and asymmetry often found in nature. Wabi-cha and wabi-sabi were also further developed by perhaps the most influential figure in chanoyu, Sen no
Rikyū (千利休, 1521–1591), who is considered to have developed and perfected the ceremony as it is practiced today.

Though non-Japanese practitioners of tea ceremony may be thought to be a contemporary phenomenon, even in Rikyū’s time, Jesuit missionaries were important figures in recording the early oral traditions of chanoyu. Their involvement with tea ceremony practice allowed them to gain access to Japanese society, create mutually beneficial connections, enrich their cultural understanding, and assist in their proselyting missions (Avdulov, 2015; Carriger, 2009; Hioki, 2013). Hioki (2013) argued that this confluence of differing religious beliefs in the tea room was possible due to the “radical inclusiveness of the Japanese tea ceremony, which welcomed anyone to share tea and enjoy the quiet, contemplative atmosphere in the rustic teahouse surrounded by beautiful woods” (p. 127). Though Hioki was specifically referring to the Jesuit missionaries, this radical inclusiveness can still be seen today in gatherings where Japanese and non-Japanese alike come together to share a bowl of tea.

Other instances of intercultural exchange via chanoyu include Okakura Kakuzo’s (1906/1964) The Book of Tea, originally written in English at the turn of the 20th century to explain the tradition for a Western audience. In describing Japanese tea practice, Okakura (1906/1964) pays particular attention to the sparseness of the tea room, describing it as a place of vacancy “consecrated to the worship of the imperfect” (p. 31). He speaks to the emptiness of the tea room as a space “left for each guest in imagination to complete the total effect in relation to himself” (p. 40). The aesthetic emphasis on empty space and silence in both the physical space for tea and the practice of preparing it allows participants to enter into and personally engage with the experience. John (2007)
also discussed how the aged and imperfect wabi-sabi aesthetic favored in tea invites the perceiver in to actively engage with the work through their sensory experiences: “We are forced to realize that it is a work in progress—not just a finished product for us to look at, but something that we can engage in ourselves. The features of wabi-sabi artwork often point to this process” (p. 87). In this way, the imperfections of wabi-sabi invite tea practitioners to become active participants in constructing meanings through their experiences. Indeed, according to Okakura (1906/1964), the aesthetic experience of the elements in the tea room, however minor, can have an important effect on the interpretation of tea ceremony as art:

In all circumstances serenity of mind should be maintained, and conversation should be so conducted as never to mar the harmony of the surroundings. The cut and color of dress, the poise of the body, and the manner of walking could all be made expressions of artistic personality. These were matters not to be lightly ignored, for until one has made himself beautiful he has no right to approach beauty. Thus the tea-master strove to be something more than the artist—art itself.

It was the Zen of aestheticism. (p. 61)

Again, we see connections drawn between the aesthetics of the Zen tradition and those of tea practice, wherein emphases on the qualities of serenity and harmony are key contributors to the realization of beauty in tea.

In the same way that the tea practice evokes Zen aesthetics, it also engages with the pedagogy associated with Zen practices, which focuses attention to the experience of sensorial phenomena such as sights, sounds, smell, and so on, in order to “realiz[e] one’s humanity and spirituality” (Chung, 2014, p. 14). Echoing Okakura’s (1906/1964)
emphasis on the sparseness of the tea room, Chung (2014) also described simplicity as an extraction of essence and noted how the emptiness incorporated around or in art in Zen practices allows space for the viewer to more meaningfully engage with the work or practice. Arts that are strongly associated with Zen often have names ending in -dō (道), which literally means “path,” but in the context of traditional arts, this is often translated as a “Way.” Chanoyu (茶の湯), which literally means “hot water for tea,” is another name for The Way of Tea, or 茶道 (read as sadō or chadō). As Elkinton (1995) explained, the “‘Ways’ of Zen Buddhism [are] arts acknowledged as a disciplined path toward Zen achievement” (p. 72).

The essentialized simplicity that both Okakura (1906/1964) and Chung (2014) refer to is also present in the pedagogy of these Zen Ways of art and, in particular, in chanoyu, which Elkinton (1995) described as a “celebration of the ordinary [grown] from deeply-held beliefs in Zen and . . . Buddhism regarding the essential Buddhahood of all things,” which allows for the “direct, non-hierarchical, non-differentiating enjoyment” of experience, “assessed as it stands, fully contexted, and without bias according to whether it is or is not pre-labeled ‘art’” (p. 356). In other words, “[t]he doing is the art . . . ladling water into a teabowl is the art form,” as Elkinton (1995, p. 364) stated, explaining how Japanese practice conceptualizes art into its most essential form: the experience and action of doing the art. Sen no Rikyū himself famously explained the Way of Tea as “nothing more than boiling water, making tea, and drinking it” (Hanson, 2017).

Combined with Okakura’s (1906/1964) statement of the tea master striving to become the art itself (p. 61), we can then understand that the ultimate goal of chanoyu is the achievement of the confluence of action, art, and artist.
Contemporary Perspectives

*Chanoyu* and the various sensory experiences associated with its practice make it an ideal way to encapsulate, explain, and demonstrate Japanese culture. Surak (2006) describes tea as a symbol of “cultural synthesis” (*sōgō bunka*; 総合文化) that “encompasses other examples of Japanese art or culture, such as pottery, calligraphy, or food preparation . . . attain[ing] a measure of primacy that makes it an archetypical example of these terms” (p. 835). A bowl of frothy green tea and the ritual of its preparation become a concrete example by which non-Japanese practitioners can approach, in some measure, a broader understanding of Japanese culture.

Because tea acts as a type of cultural synthesis, it can become a way of learning how to be Japanese (Mayuzumi, 2006; Rocha, 1999; Surak, 2006) as “practitioners attempt to recreate Japan as they recreate tea” (Surak, 2006, pp. 831–832). Though Surak speaks of ethnically Japanese practitioners using tea to connect with their heritage, non-Japanese tea students also recreate conceptions of Japan through their tea practice. Carriger (2009) gives much attention to the issue of the ethnicities and nationalities of tea practitioners, raising questions about the role of non-Japanese individuals in the cultural tradition and authenticity of the tea practice while also noting that the diversity of non-Japanese bodies contributes to the diversity of meaning that can be made in tea ceremony practice. It is also interesting to consider *Urasenke* Grand Master Sen Soshitsu XV’s straightforward answer to a similar question regarding the role of foreigners in tea: “the idea that the way of tea is just for Japanese and is incomprehensible to foreigners is no longer warrantable” (Sen & Naya, 2002, p. 14). In these questions and answers, we see direct links drawn between cultural involvement and the ethnically marked body.
Carriger (2009) further discussed the cultural relevance of the body during tea gatherings in which participants “share food, drink, scents and art objects, making their bodies the centerpiece of a unique, fleeting exchange that gains value from its disappearance, enabled by a centuries old performance tradition” (p. 152). In this way, some of the limits on or questions regarding cultural participation that are imposed by the ways that non-Japanese participants’ bodies are marked as other in this practice are minimized through an emphasis on shared experience, by which engagement and disciplined movements of the body allow it to participate in the cultural practice. Carriger further stated that, through bodily performance, “tea practices do not express a history or culture; they in fact create ideologically-charged versions of history and culture precisely through the appearance of immanence and ‘tradition’” (pp. 140–141). Like the gatherings Carriger described, many other scholars have pointed to the power of the tea ceremony to foster connection and unity within and among both the self and others, as well as the potential to experience healing through profound hospitality (Mayuzumi, 2006; Donnelly, 2007; Hanson, 2017).

This unity comes about through attention to both the mind and body, which can be described through the concept of kokoro (心). Sato (2004) defined kokoro as “the center of one’s entire being, the inseparable combination of our mental, physical, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual capacities” (p. 3). In the Japanese view, the holistic development of kokoro is the ultimate goal of education (Sato, 2004), which can be seen in both the Zen tradition and in contemporary school pedagogy. One of the ways this development of kokoro occurs is through the concept taiken (体験), which Sato (2004) defined as “whole body experience and understanding with one’s whole body” (p. 3).
Though Sato was describing Japanese school education, these concepts are also applicable to the teaching of chanoyu, which is taught entirely through a hands-on *taiken* approach that engages bodily movement and multiple senses to “cultivate sensory awareness” (p. 169).

The centrality of the body to learning in Japanese contexts can also be seen in several phrases introduced by Sato (2004), such as “*mi ni tsuku*” (身につく), “literally ‘to attach to one’s body’” (p. 3), and “*katachi de haeru*” (形で入る), or entering through the form (p. 19). Kondo (1990) also discussed “*mi ni tsukeru*” (身につける; *tsukeru* being a conjugated form of *tsuku*, as cited by Sato above) in her discussion of artisans “attaching the technique to their body” (p. 238), thus ensuring that “this physical knowledge can never be effaced” (p. 238). Sato (2004) brought attention to another such phrase, “*karada de oboeru*” (体で覚える; remembering with one’s body): “the point is to know something so well that it becomes automatic; one way to remember is with the mind but another more permanent way is with the body” (p. 203). In the context of tea, as *Urasenke* Grand Master Sen Soshitsu XV explained, “The only way to learn tea was through the movements of my own body and by accumulating experiences and storing them within my body” (Sen & Naya, 2002, p. 22).

One of the key ways of learning through the body in Japanese arts is conceptualized through the physical aesthetic form of *kata*, which Matsunobu (2007) referred to as “the philosophical principle” that underpins “the primacy of bodily form . . . evident in Japanese . . . artistry transmission” (p. 1107). As in *mi ni tsuku*, where knowledge becomes part of a learner or practitioner, “the creative goal of *kata* training is

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5 Sato romanizes this verb as *haeru*, however, in this thesis I use the romanization *hairu*.
to ‘fuse the individual to the form so that the individual becomes the form and the form becomes the individual’” (Yano, 2002, p. 26, as cited in Matsunobu, 2007, p. 1107). In her study of Japanese-American taiko (太鼓) drummers, Powell (2004) also referred to the “oneness” and linkage between player and drum via kata (p. 185). Both Powell (2004) and Matsunobu (2007) discussed the importance of discipline and repetition in practice to achieve the fusion between the form and the individual, which is an important goal in almost all traditional Japanese arts, especially those associated with the Zen tradition (Okakura, 1906/1964; Elkinton, 1995). This fusion becomes particularly relevant when expression is reliant upon physical form, as in tea ceremony.

While traditional Asian thought tends to view the body and mind as a harmonious whole (Chung, 2014; Matsunobu, 2007; Sato, 2004; Kondo, 1990), many authors (Chin, 2011; Kan, 2011; Morris, 2014; Powell, 2007; Shusterman, 2004; Wilcox, 2009; Elkinton, 1995) have spoken to the “Cartesian mind/body-like split” (Chin, 2011, p. 42) in traditional Western thought, by which the body, “relegate[d] . . . to technical, utilitarian functions [becomes] an invisible handmaiden to the mind’s bidding” (Powell, 2007, p. 1083). Despite the traditional mind-body dichotomy, however, embodiment and the role of the body in education have become a topic of interest in recent years as “[t]he mind-body fissure is being ‘re-fused’ by science as cognitive, social, and emotional learning are being united in the brain” (Chin, 2011, p. 42).

However, there has also been evidence in the West of thinkers proposing a more equal view of the mind and body with a focus on experiences in education; in particular, Dewey (1934, 1938) is one of the most prominent researchers whose legacy continues to have an impact on education in both the East and West. Multiple scholars have discussed
Merleau-Ponty’s conceptions of maximum grip and intentional arc (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1999; Joy & Sherry, 2003; Kan, 2011; Morris, 2014) that are also largely based in the bodily experience of the learner. Dewey (1934) and Shusterman’s (2004) work both speak to the significance of the body and sensory experience as a common denominator for all humans. Aesthetics, in the Deweyian (1934) sense of appreciation based on the sensory experience of an artifact or situation, also allow for direct experience that does not need to be mediated by language or culture. Much like the Zen tradition, for Dewey, senses and experience are the medium of art: “Colors are the painting; tones are the music” (p. 205). These sensory mediums become the mediators for experiencing art: Because of the directness of aesthetic experience, it has the unique ability to defy the capabilities of language by expressing the ineffable (Chin, 2011, p. 43). In a similar way, Kondo (1990) takes the position that experience itself can become theory through the potential for evocative writing to address the complexity and richness of experience. Doing so blurs the line between the empirical and theoretical and allows experience to become theory (p. 8). In following Kondo’s approach to evocative writing, I seek to recreate experience in all of its complexity, unifying the experience, art, and theory.

Much like the Japanese concepts of mi ni tsuk(ε)ru (Kondo, 1990; Sato, 2004) and karada de oboeru (Sato, 2004), Merleau-Ponty’s ideas (as cited in Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1999; Joy & Sherry, 2003; Kan, 2011; Morris, 2014) also focus on the connections between mind and body and the acquisition of skills by the body. Joy and Sherry (2003) described Merleau-Ponty’s view by pointing out the key role that the active perception of the mind has in bodily skill acquisition (p. 263). The concept of the intentional arc maintains that “the active body acquires skills, those skills are ‘stored,’ not as
representations in the mind, but as dispositions to respond to the solicitations of situations in the world” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1999, p. 103). Just as Matsunobu (2007) and Powell (2004) have described the importance of repetition in learning through *kata*, so, too, is repetition a critical element of Merleau-Ponty’s conception of maximum grip, whereby the skilled body approaches “optimal gestalt” by naturally refining the most effective way to carry out the action, often before the actor can think about what their body is doing (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1999, p. 103). In a similar way, Elkinton (1995) compared the bodily learning of instrumental music to *chanoyu*, describing learning through the body as “learning by gesture with the assumption that, over time a fine sound will follow” (p. 365). Here, Elkinton makes the connection between the gesture and the resultant aesthetic experience: The gesture and the result become one and the same. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of the body echoes Zen and Deweyian (1934) thought in directly connecting body, mind, experience, and skill: As described by Morris (2014), “one is one’s body. There is no ontological separation between the experiencing ‘I’ and the body as one lives it” (p. 111).

This unifying experience also manifests in tea ceremony: Several scholars have noted that participation in a tea ceremony can lead to a greater feeling of connectedness, whether to others (Carriger, 2009; Donnelly, 2007; Sakuae & Reid, 2011), oneself (Mayuzumi, 2006; Surak, 2006), or the practice itself and the cultural ideas it symbolizes (Advulov, 2015; Carriger, 2009; Sakuae & Reid, 2011; Sen & Naya, 2002). Embodied practice facilitates connections not only between one’s mind, body, and the practice being undertaken but also between people. Springgay (2008) described this as inter-embodiment, or “the construction of the body and the production of body knowledge . . .
not created within a single, autonomous subject, but rather [creating] body knowledge and bodies . . . in the intermingling and relationality between bodies” (p. 18). Relationality, Springgay (2008) stated, enables participants to “make sense of something and simultaneously make sense of themselves” as an emergent process of understanding the self and other (p. 22). This conception seems to overlap with the pedagogical approach in the Ways associated with Zen (Chung, 2014; Elkinton, 1995). Mayuzumi (2006) identified relationality with the tea ceremony’s ichigo ichie (一期一会) philosophy (p. 13), which “refers to the notion that each encounter is unique and exists in its own space and time . . . compel[ing] one to care deeply about every single encounter” (p. 10). From this deep caring, she described the idea of “interbeing” (p. 20), which refers not only to the host and the guest of a given ceremony but also to a deeper connection to the tea ceremony tradition, which serves as a transformative healing practice that makes the practitioner whole. In a similar way, Chung (2014) spoke of Eastern holistic approaches when describing the ways in which artists engaged in Zen practice often find themselves connected to something larger than themselves as individuals. Similarly, Dewey (1934) established that aesthetic experience itself can act as a medium for social interaction, which can then become the “life of a civilization” (p. 339), linking the aesthetic experience of art to human experience on the broadest scale.

With this literature review, I have painted the strokes that inform my research by discussing the history of chanoyu, exploring research regarding its contemporary practice, and examining the pedagogical concepts that describe the learning that takes place in the tea room. Zen philosophy and aesthetics as seen through such concepts as the humble sparseness of wabi-sabi and the deeply attentive ichigo ichie underline the tea
ceremony’s deeply experiential and aesthetic nature, which requires participants to focus on the qualities of the items, people, and atmosphere that they encounter through tea. Japanese tea ceremony has now become an international practice in which its diverse practitioners must navigate the cultural heritage of its origin, thus negotiating between the expectations of their own cultures and that of tea ceremony by engaging in acts of cultural understanding and adaptation. Japanese pedagogical concepts, such as the focus on the holistic self through kokoro and on experiential learning (taiken) by doing with the body through the form (kata), serve as a foundational mechanic through which practitioners strive to fuse artistic skill with themselves. Artistic practice as performed by the body thereby becomes part of the practitioner’s holistic self, reflecting the Asian understanding of the oneness of mind and body. Western philosophers have also have recognized the importance of the union of mind and body, as seen in Dewey’s (1934, 1938) emphasis on learning via aesthetic experience and Merleau-Ponty’s focus on acquiring skills and knowledge via the body. Kata, as a component of traditional Japanese arts, serves as a symbol of the fusion of mind and body as skills and knowledge are acquired through repeated bodily motions. The fusion of mind and body, as well as artist and art, also speaks to the relational potential of arts such as the tea ceremony. Through embodied practice, participants connect not just with the wholeness of their holistic selves, but also to others through the heightened understanding of a shared experience.

**Viewing the Kettle and Brazier**

Now standing in front of the tokonoma, I take two careful steps that turn my body toward the center of the room. At the corner of the square half-mat in the center of the room, my left foot leads, and I cover the diagonal in three steps—left, right, left—taking care to avoid the
wooden ro box brazier that contains the hot cast-iron kama (釜) on my right. As I move across the room, I can hear the bottom of my white split-toe tabi (足袋) socks brush against the fine grooves of the woven mats and the layers of my kimono skirts swish softly. At the far corner of the room, I turn to my right, stepping onto the next mat with my right foot. Taking another step and then bringing my feet together, I turn to kneel again in seiza to observe the ro and kettle.

As I did in front of the scroll, I place my fan on the mat in front of me and touch my fingertips to the tatami. A gentle, radiant heat accompanies the slight electric buzzing coming off of the coils of the brazier and the soft hissing of the muffled boiling water under the lid. Swaying slightly from left to right, taking in the craftsmanship of the kama, I can make out the slight image of leaves and plant tendrils etched into its rough, cast-iron surface. I look at the wood grain of the edges of the box and its bright copper-lined inside.

Figure 5. Kettle on the wooden box brazier.
As I observe the kama and ro, the second guest of the ceremony enters and moves to the tokonoma where he appreciates the scroll and flowers. He is dressed much more casually than I am, in track pants and a hoodie, with a keikogi (稽古着) practice vest tied over his clothes. This vest simulates the overlapping, v-shaped layers of a kimono collar where folded sheets of white paper kaishi (懷紙) napkins are tucked. As he continues to observe the scroll and flowers, I pick up my fan in my right hand and use the fist of my left to pivot on my ankles to the left so that I am now facing the furosaki byōbu. The low, two-panel folding screen is decorated with cloudy gatherings of flecks of gold leaf. Again, I place my fan and fingertips down in front of me to lean slightly forward and appreciate its design.

When looking at the tokonoma, brazier, and kama, the guest appreciates the beauty and craftsmanship of these items, which have been carefully selected and arranged by the host to convey the thematic focus of the ceremony that is about to begin. Though these items are beautiful, they also have important functional roles. The kettle is a critical tool that provides hot water, without which the tea cannot be made. Though the tea kettle provides the hot water, which is the foundation of the ceremony, tea cannot be made by tools alone. The active involvement of the host and guest are required for the completion
of the ceremony. Similarly, my tea ceremony metaphor cannot be completed without the involvement of participants. Just as the brazier and kettle contribute to the thematic message of the ceremony, they also draw attention to the absence of the host and increase one’s anticipation of their entrance into the tea room. In a similar way, the presence of my metaphorical kama acts as a continuation of my conceptual framework while also serving as an important tool by pointing to the gaps in the research.

**Gaps in Research**

Though there is already a substantial body of research and scholarship on embodiment in the general sense, this study seeks to contribute to the further development of an understanding of the less-attended-to contexts of embodiment. In particular, I focus on embodiment in the contexts of culture and arts pedagogy, neither of which have been attended to much in existing literature. Much of the literature discussing embodiment tends to focus on experience as a broadly human one, rather than interrogating how culture may inform the interpretation or understanding of embodied experience. I also consider that there is very little work in English, especially published contemporarily, that discusses Japanese pedagogical approaches (either in native or intercultural contexts). Though this topic remains narrowly covered in the literature, some scholars, including Singleton (1998), Kondo (1990), Powell (2004, 2012), and Matsunobu (2007, 2016), have notably contributed to this area of interest. In this study, by looking at the embodied pedagogy of a specific Japanese art practiced outside of Japan, I hope to contribute to the understanding of the nuances that this recontextualization brings.
Another consideration is the lack of scholarship on the role of embodiment in arts education. Powell (2007) pointed to the connection between the body and arts as follows: “[I]n the arts, the body is, and always has been, the place and space of reasoning, knowing, performing, and learning” (p. 1083). She noted, however, that “while [arts] disciplines have fairly robust or, at least, enduring theories and research pertaining to embodied ways of knowing, arts education disciplines contain relatively little research and theory relating to the body” and that “there is little attention paid to the ways in which the arts are embodied and thus little foundation for an educational theory based in corporeal and intercorporeal experience” (p. 1084). It is important and necessary to engage in more specific investigations of embodied learning experiences in arts education to broaden understandings of embodiment and to complement the ways in which embodiment is already established among and acknowledged by artists and other practitioners. Though the amount of information available in English is somewhat limited, Japanese approaches to learning, both generally and specific to the arts, tend to emphasize the importance of the body in the learning practice, serving as an excellent example of embodied practice in the arts. Finally, while there is a small body of English-language work that specifically discusses chanoyu, much of this work is focused on the historical aspects of tea ceremony or on describing the work as a cultural practice. In this study, I look at chanoyu practice from the view of art education, and in doing so, I hope to contribute to the understanding of non-Western approaches to arts pedagogy that center on embodied experience.

In this study, I look at the ways that both Japanese and non-Japanese participants understand their embodied experiences of chanoyu, providing insight into how they
perceive the relationship between culture and the body. Additionally, by looking at the practice of chanoyu in a specific, contemporary setting outside of Japan and contextualizing the cultural influences of okeiko in the educational process that occurs at the Tea Institute’s Chanoyu Club, I provide another way to conceptualize tea ceremony as a cultural and pedagogical practice. By focusing on the ways that tea ceremony is taught and learned, not just on how it is practiced, I contribute to the understanding of culture and embodiment within the context of art education.
Chapter 4
Greeting the Host, Carrying in Tea Utensils – Methodology

I turn from the tokonoma and begin retracing my steps to seat myself in seiza opposite to the ro with the tokonoma to my right. As I place my fan on the mat to my right, the second guest follows the same path to observe the kama and furosaki byōbu. In the quiet space, I notice the hum of the mini fridge and radiators in the room. The windows behind me are open slightly, letting in some of the cool air from outside as well as the pattering sounds of the light rain. Finished with his observation, the second guest picks up his fan, stands, and turns to follow the route to his spot on my left.

We sit silently, watching the host make last minute preparations at the wooden desk that marks the mizuya (水屋) kitchen space where wares are washed and prepared for the ceremony. (While hidden in a separate room in a traditional tea house, it is fully visible in the Chanoyu Club’s setup.) The host is also dressed in kimono with her hair coiled and clipped into a bun. Portions of the pale blue silk of her kimono skirt and sleeves are adorned with subtle embroidered flower arrangements within hexagonal frames. Her obi (帯) sash is pearlescent white with large floral designs of the same color. It is secured with a pink woven obi jime (帯締め) cord and a green and pink obi age (帯揚げ) scarf peeking over the top of the obi. A triangle of silk cloth dyed a brilliant scarlet-orange hangs tucked into the upper edge if the obi toward her left side. This is the fukusa, the purifying cloth that is the symbol of the host.

Figure 7. Bethany stands in kimono by the mizuya during pre-lesson preparations.
The host enters the tea room via a half-mat of *tatami* appended to the opposite corner of the tea room from where I sit. It is worn and has begun warping upward at the edges. She carries a square, black lacquered tray with both hands as her feet, clad in white *tabi*, step carefully across the mats. She kneels, placing the tray neatly in front of me, and we bow to each other silently. A small pile of colorful, pressed sugar sweets sits on the tray. I pick up the tray with both hands and move it to the right as the host stands and returns to the *mizuya*.

There, she picks up a cylindrical ceramic vessel glazed with shiny black, holding it at the base with both hands, fingers held together. This is the *mizusashi* (水差), which is filled with cool water. Kneeling on the warped half *tatami* mat, she balances the vessel carefully on the slight incline and then bows deeply to begin the ritual. The other guest and I bow simultaneously with our fans in front of us. Rising from our bows, we place our fans behind ourselves while the host stands and enters the room. She turns to walk toward the wooden brazier and kneels to place the *mizusashi* in the center of the mat bounded by the low folding screen. Once placed, the host stands, turning in a graceful three-point turn, and returns to the *mizuya*.

![Figure 8. Mizusashi, lidded container for cool water.](image)

At the *mizuya*, she collects the next utensils to bring into the tea room. In her left hand, she picks up a reddish-brown *chawan* (茶碗; tea bowl) with dark slashes burned into the unglazed surface, and in her right, she carries a small red *natsume* (秈) tea caddy. The cylindrical bamboo handle of the *chasen* (茶筅) tea whisk can be seen resting on the lip of the bowl, and a curved bamboo *chashaku* (茶杓) tea scoop is balanced across
the chawan’s mouth. She holds the bowl and caddy front of her with slightly raised, rounded arms, each item secured between her thumb and her gently curving fingers, which are pressed together in each hand. She again walks the same few steps to the ro and kneels, fluidly placing both vessels in front of the mizusashi in a triangular configuration. Gracefully withdrawing both hands at the same time, she again stands and returns to the mizuya.

With the final item, a stout, wide-rimmed bowl, held low at her side in her left hand, she enters the tea room again. This grey, lipped bowl with horizontal brown, brushstroke-like strips is the kensui (建水), which is used to collect waste water. A long-handled bamboo ladle, the hishaku (柄杓), is carefully balanced across the kensui’s mouth. While standing at the entrance, she reaches with her right hand to stabilize the ladle before entering the room. Holding her right hand to the top of her upper thigh, she walks carefully toward the ro, where she kneels and settles into seiza. She places the kensui on the mat by her side so that its perceived dirtiness is obscured from our view by her folded legs.

![Figure 9. Arrangement of mizusashi, chawan, and natsume for ro brazier with obscured kensui and hishaku during peer practice.](image)

She lifts the ladle from the vessel with her left hand and reaches across her body with her right hand, brushing aside the drape of her left sleeve. She picks up a small, cylindrical section of bamboo, the futa-oki (蓋置) lid rest, which had been sitting inside the kensui. Resting the hishaku again on the rim of the kensui, she brings the futa-oki forward, placing it on her raised left palm. Using the knuckles of her right fist, she pivots her body to the right so that her body is aligned with the corner of
the wooden ro. With her right hand, she places the futa-oki to the right of
the ro on the central tatami mat.

Picking up the ladle again with her left hand and grasping the
bottom of the handle together with her right hand, she angles the ladle so
that the ladle’s empty cup faces her. She pauses to reflect into the empty
cup, as if looking into a small mirror. With both hands, she turns the ladle
handle so that it is held horizontally in front of her. Shifting her grip to her
right hand, she rests the ladle’s cup on the futa-oki, leaving the handle to
rest on the tatami parallel to her body. Placing her hands on the mat in
front of her, she bows deeply, saying softly but clearly, “Ippuku
sashiagemasu (I will make some tea for you).”

Figure 10. The author holds the hishaku during an on-stage tea ceremony demonstration.
Tools of Inquiry

The host enters the tea room, bringing in and carefully arranging the utensils she will use to make tea. Great importance is placed on the selection and aesthetic quality of the utensils used in the ceremony because not only are they used as functional tools to prepare tea, but they also create aesthetic experiences and evoke meaning for participants. Once the host has brought all of the tea utensils into the room and prepared both herself and her utensils for making tea, she bows formally to the guests, signaling the formal beginning of the ceremony while also stating her intention for what she is about to do. In a similar way, in this chapter, I bring in and display the metaphorical utensils I have used in my inquiry as I describe my methodology and indicate how the qualities of these research procedures and approaches serve my intention to answer my research questions. Using tea ceremony as an analogy for my research process, I also address how these methods contribute to the aesthetic quality of the evocative writing utilized throughout my thesis.

My inquiry in this project necessitates that I have both a working understanding of Japanese tea ceremony in practice and that I develop an understanding of Japanese tea ceremony specifically as it is constructed and interpreted by participants in the environment of the *Chanoyu* Club and Tea Institute. Embodied learning via the body is the only way to learn Japanese tea ceremony (Sen, 1980, p. 1; Sen & Naya, 2002, p. 22), so it is critical that I also learned and engaged firsthand with the people, materials, and spaces involved in the practices and performances at the Tea Institute. Physically handling utensils and following the prescribed movements of the ceremony to develop my own skills and knowledge of the practice were important in helping me fully
understand their significance in the context of my study. Without also participating in this highly experiential way of learning, I would not have been able to fully understand or account for many of the phenomena I observed. It is for this reason that I have followed an ethnographic case study approach.

By using ethnographic approaches in my research and joining in the practice alongside the participants, I was able to come to a greater understanding of the experiences of embodiment inherent in the tea ceremony; moreover, I was able to gain participants’ trust, which had an impact on the quality and quantity of information that participants shared with me (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007; Kawulich, 2005; Glesne 2011). By sharing in the lesson and practice experiences of the group, I gained insight into how my non-Japanese peers interpreted learning experiences that were situated in a cultural practice that is not their own. Participation and observation in both the master-led and peer-led practices as well as in the casual gatherings of club members allowed me to “[gather] whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry” (Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

Taking an ethnographic stance additionally allows me to verify my understanding by checking and cross-referencing my own observations and experiences with those of other group members while also contextualizing what other members tell me about their experiences (Kawulich, 2005). Most importantly, an ethnographic approach through participantobservation has allowed me to develop a holistic understanding (Kawulich, 2005) of the teaching and learning that happens while studying tea ceremony.

The selection of the Chanoyu Club at the Tea Institute provides a tightly bounded site, suitable to case study research. I primarily present my work as an intrinsic case
(Stake, 1995) that affords me insight into the teaching and learning that happens within this specific setting. However, there is also the potential to consider this research as an instrumental case (Stake, 1995), through which one can better understand *okeiko* pedagogy and how the embodied experience of the tea ceremony is artistically conceptualized in order to apply the knowledge of this practice to other situations.

Because the scheduled club meetings and practices are necessarily limited in frequency and scope, this results in a relatively small amount of data, which is often the case for research following the case study approach. Stake (1995) commented that in these studies with small datasets, researchers are held more responsible for careful interpretation. This, however, marries well with the focus on details and the verification of member experience that is inherent to ethnographic approaches. By making use of core elements of ethnography, such as thick description and a focus on insider interpretations, within the context of a bounded case study, I strive to produce what Stake (1995) defined as a “good case study, [which] is patient, reflective, [and] willing to see another view” (p. 12).

Both ethnographic studies and the constructivist case study, as Stake (1995) described, place emphasis on insider interpretation and the rich details of observations presented through thick description, which are often presented in a narrative form to allow readers to make their own interpretations and generalizations (p. 102). I use this quality to draw connections between my methodological approach and my theoretical orientation in alignment with Kondo (1990), who stated:

To begin evocatively highlights the complexity and richness of experience. And to examine that complexity and richness in its specificity leads toward a strategy that expands notions of what can count as theory, where experience and evocation
can become theory, where the binary between “empirical” and “theoretical” is displaced and loses its force. (p. 8)

This evocative approach is critical to address both the embodied nature of the experience of practice (Powell, 2007) as well as the fusion of form to person in the artist’s striving to become the art (Matsunobu, 2007; Sato, 2004; Kondo, 1990; Okakura, 1906/1964).

Eisner (2008) also referred to the power of evocation through the “deliteralization” of knowledge, which helps us see other, multiple forms of knowledge. Evocative approaches are particularly well suited to this ethnographic case study by helping to address the embodied ways of knowing present in tea ceremony practice. Richardson (2011) also discussed evocative forms in ethnographic research approaches, particularly in autoethnographic writing, of which he notes the impossibility of separating ethnography from the self. The fusion of the ethnographic process and the self is similar to the goal of artistic practice through kata (Powell, 2004; Matsunobu, 2007), by which artists who engage in embodied practice become inseparable from their art. By framing my research through the metonym of the tea ceremony itself, I intentionally make heavy use of vignettes of a tea ceremony to both account for the sensory experience of chanoyu as well as to conceptualize my research as art practice. Evocative writing (Kondo, 1990; Eisner, 2008; Richardson, 2011) in such vignettes is an important part of calling forth the experiential elements of learning and practice in a way that conveys the experience to readers. By taking an evocative approach to ethnographic case study, my work is better suited to address the needs of my inquiry to account for the experiential nature of embodied knowing and the sensory qualities of artistic experience.
Bowing Together

As the host bows, stating her intention to begin preparing tea, the guest beside me and I place our hands on the mat in front of us to bow deeply to her in wordless response. Though the only words exchanged are a set phrase in a language that is native to none of us, unity and mutual respect is expressed through our synchronized movements. The bow is held for the length of an exhale of breath. As we slowly return to our upright positions, I can begin to feel the first warm prickles in my feet as they begin to go numb.

![Figure 11. Two guests bow together to the host in a master-led lesson.](image)

Through the synchronized movement of deeply bowing together, both the host and guests of a tea ceremony can feel a sense of community in the experience they are about to undertake. In a similar way, through my practice with the *Chanoyu* Club and research at this site, I have gotten to know the participants in this study quite well and have developed a sense of community in this small group as they have helped me in exploring both their experiences of learning tea as well as my own growth as a tea practitioner and researcher. In line with this metaphor of bowing together, I will
introduce my participants with whom I have developed a sense of mutual respect through our many shared experiences.

Participants

Participants of this study were chosen by their involvement as students or teachers in the *Chanoyu* Club and Tea Institute. All but one of my informants were already involved in some respect with the *Chanoyu* Club when I asked them to participate in my research. Unsurprisingly, most participants are fellow students of tea ceremony: Of the 32 people involved in this study (I include myself in this number), 21 were tea students and eight were visiting tea masters or masters’ assistants. The remaining three participants were not students of Japanese tea ceremony but were involved in other aspects of the Tea Institute. Most participants became involved with the club because they were students at the university: 15 were undergraduates, three were graduate students, and three were adults who worked as staff at the university. That almost all tea students were also undergraduate or graduate students at the University is an important consideration to keep in mind because their student identity necessarily limited their ability to participate to the time frame in which they could complete their degrees, and as such, most informants only had a few years of tea experience. The most experienced student, Bethany, who had approximately six years of practice, originally joined the club as an undergraduate student but remained a member as an alum who also worked as part of the university staff. Most other students had between one to three years of tea study.

In considering the distribution of participants among the tea ceremony schools, tea students were fairly evenly divided among them, with each school having 10 students. (One of the 21 students involved in the club was not affiliated with a tea ceremony
school.) Within each school, most participants were undergraduates; however, each school also had at least one graduate student and one adult student as well. Because the *Omotesenke* program involves rotating sensei who bring assistant teachers with them, there was significantly more representation of the *Omotesenke* tradition among teacher informants (with six participants) when compared to *Urasenke* (which had two participants). Additionally, the *Omotesenke* teachers were all ethnically Japanese women, whereas the *Urasenke* teachers were White Americans (one man and one woman).

Additional information on the demographics of my informants can be found in Appendix B. It is also important for me to note that the participants in this study are not a complete representation of the entire membership of the *Chanoyu* program since I was not able to attend every meeting or practice.

Most participants were involved in the research process via their participation in the tea ceremony lessons and club meetings. Members became involved when they consented to observation during *Chanoyu* Club activities, gave interviews, or participated in other methods, such as hangouts. Almost half of the informants (17) also sat for interviews with me about their experiences. I continue my discussion of data collection and analysis in the next section.

**Folding the Fukusa**

The host picks up and moves the *chawan* then the *natsume* in front of herself. With her left hand, she reaches for the *fukusa*, the brilliant scarlet-orange silk cloth used for cleansing the utensils. It hangs in a folded triangular shape tucked into the top edge of her wide *obi* sash. Folding the bottom edge of the *fukusa* upward and onto itself, she slowly pulls the entire cloth upward, releasing the narrow, pointed flaps from her *obi*. Taking these points in both hands, she holds the cloth in front of her, so that it forms a downward-pointing triangle. She brings the two points together slightly to create some slack and then draws the cloth taut with a soft snap.
Dropping the left corner, she lets the *fukusa* hang vertically from her right hand. Grasping the cloth between the thumb and fingers of her left hand, she folds the layers of the hanging cloth into thirds, creating a scarlet column. With her right hand still holding the upper tapered corner of the cloth, she folds the cloth horizontally so that the upper and lower corners meet, covering her left thumb, which is grasping the midpoint. The fingers on her right hand then tuck the excess fabric neatly between her left palm and the upper layers of the cloth to create a neat square.

*Figure 12.* The author folds the *fukusa* during a demonstration with Bethany as the host’s assistant.

This square is secured in her left hand between her still-covered thumb and her palm, with the opposite edge held between the thumb and fingers of her right hand. Bringing her hands together so that the backs of
her fingers meet, she folds the cloth in half again while simultaneously sliding her left thumb out of the loop and transferring the cloth to her right hand. She now holds the *fukusa* as a narrowed bundle of silk in her right hand with a single plump edge facing outward.

Folding the *fukusa* is seen as one of the fundamental skills of the tea ceremony because the folding process prepares the host and guest mentally and physically for the symbolic cleansing of the tea utensils. As such, the *fukusa* is one of the more significant items used in the tea ceremony, both as a symbol of the host and as a purification device. (I discuss the *fukusa*’s role in purification further later in this chapter.) *Fukusa* folding was often brought up by *Chanoyu* Club members as something they struggled to master. The action of folding the *fukusa* is repeated multiple times throughout the ceremony, and for participants, achieving comfortable fluidity in the process often comes down to repeating the motions multiple times to drill it into their muscle memory. In a similar way, the procedures that I have followed in data collection have been repeated throughout my research process. Like students who gained confidence with *fukusa* folding through focused repetition, I also found myself more comfortable with my methods as I relied on them again and again throughout my inquiry. Notably, just as the *fukusa* cloth and its folding mark the host, my data collection procedures and their physical evidence (notes, audio recorder, etc.) take the place of my *fukusa* and its folding and mark me as a researcher throughout the course of my fieldwork and inquiry.

**Procedures**

In my research, I collected data primarily by four methods: participant observation, ethnographic interview, hangout session, and material analysis. Through these approaches, I have been able to participate, observe, and interrogate members’ understandings of their experiences related to tea ceremony. These multiple data
collection methods also inform each other by providing information and data that support and check information from other methods. For example, asking participants questions about my observations allowed me to gain insight into how individuals interpreted specific events that happened during lessons, which, in turn, informed my understanding of the events.

In the field, I did participant-observation primarily during master-led lessons and peer-led practices, though I also observed two club meetings. While club meetings are a time for students of both the Urasenke and Omotesenke schools to come together, the formal master-led lessons and peer-led practices are segregated by tradition. As a student in the Omotesenke tradition, I had more access to the Omotesenke events and was able to attend them more frequently. I observed seven master-led lessons and two peer-led practices for Omotesenke. In comparison, I observed three Urasenke master-led lessons, though I was not able to attend any of their peer-led practices. To fill this gap, I instead asked Urasenke informants about their practice experiences in interviews. I also observed two end-of-semester public demonstrations, one from each school. In total, I observed on 14 separate occasions over the course of three semesters.

In participant-observation, I typically took the stance of acting in more participatory roles, as I believe it is important to fully engage with the experiential, embodied nature of this style of learning. Specifically, as a student of the Omotesenke tradition, I was primarily an active participant in those lessons and practices; however, when engaging with Urasenke events, I usually took on a more observational role, as Chanoyu members are only allowed to practice with one of the schools. In both cases, I produced field notes on my experience in lessons, but the degree and detail of these notes
are negatively correlated with the level of my participation in the event. Though I occasionally took notes during Omotesenke events, I found that this sometimes was disruptive to my practice and interrupted the flow of the practice for others. In many practices, I intentionally did not take notes so that I could focus more intently on the experience at hand. In these cases, I wrote notes afterward, either from memory or with the help of an audio or video recording. In Urasenke practices, because I was not an active participant, I was able to take more detailed notes in addition to taking more photographs and video, which I used to focus my observations later. In both cases, I focused on the actions and motions being carried out as part of the ceremony as well as teacher-student interactions, including teachers’ explanations of the purpose or meaning behind the cultural elements of the ceremony.

During some of these observations, I sometimes made audio or video recordings to supplement my written notes. In Omotesenke observations, I often used audio instead of video due to restrictions on what instructors allowed me to record. Omotesenke instructors tended to be more cautious about some of their involvement with my research since video recording (and, to a lesser degree, photography) is frowned upon by the school hierarchy because it may result in disseminating information without proper authorization or instruction. Omotesenke instructors also stressed that the information they shared with me only represented their own understandings and should not be considered representative of the Omotesenke school as an entity. While most Omotesenke teachers agreed that taking video would be sharing too much, individual instructors had varied feelings about photography, and some allowed me to take photos during lessons. With the permission of the instructor, I was able to take some video of Urasenke lessons.
Both photos and video helped to supplement the information I recorded in my notes, especially when attempting to capture the sensory elements of the event.

Interviews were conducted as informal events with semi-structured questions asked as part of casual conversations (Glesne, 2011; Kawulich, 2005; Hammersly & Atkinson, 2007). During interviews, I kept in mind my relationship with the participants, particularly when interviewing sensei. I also considered the interview setting and procedures as ways to make informants comfortable and build rapport (Glesne, 2011). In interviews, I referenced a question list while also utilizing informant answers to formulate new questions as themes emerged throughout the progression of our conversations. Most interviews were conducted as individual, one-on-one conversations between the informant and me in different spaces of the tea house. Three of these interviews were conducted as joint interviews, in which I interviewed two participants at once, which was helpful in seeing how informants reacted to each other’s interpretations. Several interviews also involved drinking tea while talking.

Of the 17 interviews conducted, five were with visiting tea masters or assistants and 10 were with active tea students. The remaining two were with informants who were not regularly involved in the Institute. In recognition that my membership in the Institute and Chanoyu Club prevented me from taking a truly etic perspective, I relied on these two non-member informants to help balance my outlook. In interviews with students, I spoke with informants who had varying degrees of involvement in and history with the club. Senior members who had several years of experience and held leadership positions in the club were helpful in understanding the history of the organization and how it has evolved through the years. Members who had been involved for about the same length of
time as I had helped me to see other interpretations of events that I also experienced. New members who had only been involved in the club for a semester provided an understanding of how students begin adapting to the culture and practices of the club. This helped me to get a glimpse of how the length of involvement can have an impact on participants’ understandings of what and how they learn. During interviews, I recorded the audio, which I later used to write transcriptions.

Though I rely most heavily on participant-observation and interview data, I also collected information through hangouts, which were recordings (both video and audio) made during two casual gatherings of Tea Institute and Chanoyu members. Since these hangouts were highly unstructured gatherings, I found that they were helpful in getting a sense of generalized group dynamics as well as understanding how the Chanoyu Club is contextualized within the Tea Institute organization. The free-flowing nature of this gathering allowed information to emerge naturally while also giving me the opportunity to ask questions to draw out more specific information. As with both participant-observation and interviews, I used the recordings made in the hangouts to write up transcribed field notes, which were later used for analysis in conjunction with other data.

Finally, I made material analyses of the items and utensils used throughout the tea ceremony. In doing this, I spent time observing the materials and writing notes about their use, associated sensory experiences, and any symbolic meanings an item had. I also used photography to document these items, in part to help capture some of the visual elements that would be difficult to describe in words. These notes contributed to my understanding of the interactions that occur between people and materials in the tea ceremony and the ways that items can influence one’s movement or experience.
Data Analysis

In the data collection methods I used, the similarity of the resultant data (written documents of field notes or transcriptions) meant that I used similar methods of analysis. Preparing transcriptions and field notes was the first step in my analysis, which included writing in-process memos (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) that assisted in developing my interpretations and analyses of relevant and emergent themes. From these memos, I expanded my analysis by drawing connections between events, statements, and emergent themes to account for the sum of my fieldwork. From these documents, I utilized both open coding to look intuitively for emergent themes and focused coding to identify incidents and quotes that would address my initial research questions (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). This resulted in thematically determined data that helped to refine my focus for concurrent participant observation and interview question development. Coding also contributed to the findings I present here.

Additionally, as I prepare this document, I find that the process of writing in evocative ways itself serves as an analytical tool as I attempt to convey multiple sensory details through my writing and, in turn, consider the meaning embedded in these experiences and the ways that these meanings inform the educational and aesthetic experience of tea ceremony practice. The evocative writing style that I make use of and the metonymic framing of my presentation also serve to draw connections between the processes of art practice and research practice.

Cleansing the Utensils

Holding the folded fukusa just over her right hip, the host raises the natsume and then brings the fukusa forward to brush two carefully curved strokes along the edge of the lid. She places the purified tea caddy down on the midpoint of an imaginary diagonal line between the mizusashi and
layers softly spring open. Lifting the topmost corner, she begins folding the fukusa again, this time holding it as a square while she reaches to pick up the curved chashaku tea scoop.

The dark, mottled bamboo of the scoop makes a stark line of contrast against the brilliant scarlet and is quickly enveloped by the cloth as the host closes her hand on both edges. She cleanses the scoop by wiping it up and down carefully three times, drawing the cloth away on
the final stroke, and she then carefully balances the cleansed *chashaku* on the *natsume* lid. Lifting the *chashen* whisk from the tea bowl, she places it tines-up on the invisible line extending between the *natsume* and *ro* corner. She gently places the still-folded *fukusa* on the mat by her right knee.

The host grasps the *hishaku*’s thin bamboo handle with her right hand and raises it vertically over her left knee. With both hands on the handle, she pauses to reflect into the empty cup of the ladle as she did before. Her left hand holds the ladle in place while her now free right hand picks up the folded *fukusa*. Placing it on the *kama* lid as a buffer against its hot surface, she grasps the round handle through layers of cloth. As she pulls the lid toward herself, it slides open with metallic friction, releasing a waft of steam from the simmering water. With the folded *fukusa* protecting her from the steam’s heat, she places the lid on the bamboo *fiuta-oki*.

The host reaches across her body, under the still upheld *hishaku*, and around her draped sleeve to place the *fukusa* behind the obscured *kensui*. Hidden from my view by the box of the *ro*, the host pinches the small, folded, damp linen *chakin* (* chá*), which is resting in the bottom of the *chawan*, and places it on top of the kettle lid. Transferring the *hishaku* gracefully to her right hand, she draws a cupful of hot water and lets it tumble musically into the tea bowl. She rests the now empty ladle cup-down on the lip of the *kama*’s gently steaming mouth, guiding the handle to rest on the wooden frame of the *ro*.

![Figure 15. Matsuda-sensei draws water from the kama with the hishaku.](image)

The host picks up the *chashen* and draws it in two semi-circles against the top and bottom curves of the bowl. She raises the *chashen* while
holding it horizontally and rotating it in to inspect the tines for any damage. Repeating this three more times, she then briskly whisks the hot water. The thin bamboo tines softly scratch against the unglazed ceramic and stir up sounds of soft liquid movement. The host returns the whisk in line with the natsume and ro’s corner. She picks up the chawan with both hands, tilting the bowl in a circle so that she can feel the heat of the hot water radiating through the walls of the bowl.

Taking the bowl in her left hand, she empties the water into the obscured kensui. In a fluid movement, she picks up the chakin from its perch on the kettle lid and places it in the chawan, at the same time turning and partially unfolding the cloth so that it drapes over the rim of the bowl, half inside, half outside. She pinches the cloth with her right hand, and with three quick turns, she rotates the bowl until it is wiped clean. At the end of this circuit, she pulls the cloth away from the bowl and smoothly flips it over, placing it in the center of the bowl. She wipes away the excess moisture in three strokes. Pinching the center of this cloth in a bowtie-like shape, she removes the chakin from the bowl and places it again atop the kama lid before putting the empty chawan down in front of her.

Figure 16. Inspecting the bamboo tines while learning how to clean the chasen.
Sei (清), or purity, is one of four qualities essential to the practice of the Japanese tea ceremony expressed in the four-character compound 和敬清寂 (wa-kei-sei-jaku; harmony, respect, purity, tranquility). At this point in the ceremony, purity becomes a physical part of the practice by the host’s cleansing of the utensils in front of the guests. Of course, these utensils have already been carefully cleaned beforehand in the mizuya, but cleanliness is so important that it is demonstrated again in front of the guests. The cleansing that happens here is not just physical. As the fukusa physically wipes the natsume and chashaku, the action simultaneously reminds the host and guest to purify themselves as they prepare to share tea and attend fully to the present moment. The snapping of the fukusa during its folding, called the chiri-uchi (塵打ち), or knocking off of dust, is performed not only in a physical sense but also in a spiritual sense. When the participants in a tea ceremony hear this snapping, they are reminded to knock the metaphorical dust of the world off of themselves and give their attention to the ritual at hand. Just as the utensils are cleansed in the ceremony, I must also strive toward keeping my research methods pure by considering the ethical implications of my work and my positionality as a researcher. By attending to ethical concerns throughout my research project, I have ensured that I was able to focus more fully on my fieldwork and the implications that have been revealed through my inquiry.

Ethics and Positionality

Throughout this research, I concerned myself with reciprocity and respect. In recognizing and respecting the ways club members and instructors have contributed to and supported my work, I wanted to be sure that I was giving back to them in turn. A principal way I am doing this is by contributing this work to the Institute and working to
support the goal of developing research efforts to further tea knowledge (Tea Institute at Penn State, n.d.). I hope that not only will my work contribute to the understanding of the tea ceremony as a holistic art practice for the Institute but also that my research efforts can inspire other members to pursue research related to tea ceremonies.

Throughout my involvement with the club, as the only current member who has significant and sustained experience living in Japan, I have tried whenever possible and appropriate to share my experiences and understandings of Japan to help better contextualize Japanese tea ceremony as one part of broader Japanese culture. This has manifested in lecturing on topics like *sencha* (*煎茶*; a type of Japanese green tea) and kimono. I have also taught a small group of *Chanoyu* members how to wear kimono, sometimes lending pieces from my own collection. Furthermore, over the past year, I took a leadership position within the club, which is one way I have served the organization. While this position has helped me gain some insight into how the club is run, it has also impacted my positionality as a researcher, which I account for below.

In considering rapport, I was fortunate that prior to beginning my fieldwork, I already had developed significant rapport with club members as a member of both the *Chanoyu* Club and having tested in to full Institute membership. However, developing rapport with visiting tea masters was not always easy because of the very limited time they were present, particularly with *Omotesenke* instructors who sometimes only visited once per semester. However, having rapport with club members and leaders was particularly helpful in remedying this issue, as I was able to ask leaders to assist in introducing my research request to visiting instructors ahead of their visits. This helped
instructors have ample time to consider their participation without interrupting or detracting from the flow of lessons.

I was especially concerned about instructors’ comfort with my research as I quickly realized several Omotesenke tea masters were not completely comfortable with the idea of me recording lessons or publishing research. Especially in the Omotesenke tradition, the structures of the school hierarchy closely guard the knowledge given in lessons and restrict authorization of who may disseminate this information. Fortunately, once I explained that my research would focus on the pedagogical aspects of the practice rather than the mechanics of the tea ceremony itself, the sensei were kind enough to allow me to collect data. Some forms of data collection, however (particularly video recording), were still restricted. Another limitation that had an impact on my fieldwork was a club rule about not participating in the other schools’ lessons. This requirement is mostly in place to help students focus on the particulars of their own school, since subtle differences in technique may easily become confusing if one were to attempt to study in both schools. Therefore, my data collection with Urasenke was limited to a more observational standpoint.

Both of these ethical concerns also affected how I positioned myself while doing research in the field. In the context of the Chanoyu Club and Institute, I often felt like I held a somewhat liminal identity as both emic and etic. This is, in part, because in addition to my research activities, my extended experience in Japan and my age (I was significantly older than most other members) marked me as other in the space. At the same time, I also shared many similar experiences with club members, such as attending practices together and going through a semester as a New Brew before passing the Tea
Specialist Exam. As I spent more time in the Club and Institute’s space, though, and particularly after I assumed a leadership position, I felt that liminality shift to a more emic standpoint.

My experiences in Japan, in particular, have created areas of subjectivities for me when I have assumed that other members share my understanding of tea culture, okeiko pedagogy, or general Japanese culture. Being aware of this particular subjectivity has led me to attend carefully to what informants tell me and to interrogate my assumptions. Another subjectivity I became aware of was my own anxieties around the idea of authenticity, which sometimes led me to doubt or internally question non-Japanese participants’ interpretations or to focus on the perceived inauthenticity of practice as it happens in the Chanoyu Club. I have attempted to address this by embracing the supposed inauthenticity of practice at this site as a feature that demonstrates the unique situation of what occurs when one cultural tradition is relocated to a new cultural environment, as in Surak (2006), who specifically discussed how tea practitioners struggle with meeting conceptualizations of authenticity outside of Japan. Paying attention to points that I initially felt skeptical or critical of have led me to see more clearly the site as it actually is.

Credibility and Validity

Recognizing and confronting some of my initial subjective reactions have helped me better interpret both my observations and my informants’ experiences in their study of chanoyu. In this process, I have attempted to account for my own subjectivities through the autoethnographic components of my work and through engaging in member checking techniques to verify the accurate representation of participants’ interpretations and
experiences (Kawulich, 2005). To ensure the credibility and validity of my data, I look to ways that the various data I have collected inform interpretations of each other. Participant-observation helped to create clarifying interview questions, while hangouts brought about new areas to focus on in subsequent observation and interviews. The data I have collected serve to cross-reference each other and help to ensure that experiences are not misinterpreted or misrepresented.

It was also pointed out to me by one of the Omotesenke students that both Urasenke and Omotesenke branches of the Chanoyu Club share the same environment. That lessons and practices occur within the same spaces and have the same selection of utensils available also helps to minimize situational differences that could account for varied practice between the two schools. Because both the environment and the utensils remain the same, it becomes easier to focus on the students and instructors in each of these practices within the larger contexts of the Chanoyu Club and the Tea Institute.

In this chapter, I have discussed my methodology by describing my ethnographic approach, introducing my participants, explaining my procedures for fieldwork and analysis, and addressing ethical concerns of my research. Throughout, I have also used metonymic vignettes in an effort to draw connections between my inquiry and the tea ceremony. My focus on ethnographic methods and evocative writing both contribute to attending to and representing the embodied, aesthetic experience that is at the heart of tea ceremony practice.
Chapter 5
Savoring the Sweets – Blending Cultural Elements with Okeiko Pedagogy

I reach for the tray of sweets I previously had moved to the side. With two hands, I place the tray on the central half-mat, in front of the space between my neighbor and myself. I bow to him, saying “Osaki ni (お先に; Please excuse me for going before you)” as he bows back to me in silent acknowledgment. Placing the tray in front of me once more, I bow again, this time to the host.

Figure 17. A semi-circular sweets tray with two piles of pressed sugar sweets.

“Choudai itashimasu (頂戴致します; Please allow me to have some sweets),” I say to the host. I take the small bundle of folded kaishi napkins from the layers of my kimono collar and peel the bottommost sheet away from the pack and upward to reverse the fold and expose the inner side of the paper. Placing the small stack of folded papers on the mat, I reinforce the fold by drawing my index finger along the slightly rough paper. I select one of the sweets while trying not to disturb the pile and place it on my kaishi, and then place the tray closer to my neighbor so that he can take his own sweet.

I pick up the kaishi and look at the sweet, thinking that it’s so pretty that it’s a shame to eat it. As soon as I put the sweet in my mouth, the fine sugar begins melting into my tongue, and I can feel the decorative shape dissolving. While I continue watching the host’s preparations, I fold up the single used sheet. With my right hand, I drop the folded sheet into my kimono sleeve, letting the small paper fall into the sleeve to be
disposed of later. I pick up the remaining stack of kaishi and slide them back into the layers of my collar.

![Figure 18. Pressed sugar sweets on stack of folded kaishi.](image)

In the tea ceremony, sweets are eaten before drinking tea so that the lingering sweetness can temper the bitterness of the tea. Traditional tea sweets are created in a way that they not only taste good but are also visually appealing, often utilizing shapes or colors of flowers, animals, or other items that are evocative of the current season. Seasonal ingredients also help bring a sense of the surrounding nature into the tea room. In this way, sweets also contribute to the multifaced aesthetic experience of chanoyu. Just as sweets make the bitter tea more palatable, students’ interest in Japanese culture or language help to make some of the more stringent aspects of the highly disciplined tea practice more accessible for non-Japanese students. The transition from the lingering sweetness blending into the bitterness of the tea resembles a Chanoyu Club member’s transition from the Western university environment and the disciplined tea room. As sweets in the tea ceremony make reference to the natural world surrounding the tea room,
cultural and linguistic interests help students to contextualize *chanoyu* within broader cultural contexts, including those of the West and Japan. Much like the multisensory aspects of sweets, cultural elements observed at the Tea Institute played multiple roles in students’ learning, including providing a point of entry and transition into practice, blending to create the unique, localized culture of the *Chanoyu* Club, and establishing connections between tea practice and broader cultural concepts.

**Culture as a Point of Entry and Transition**

As mentioned above, an interest in the cultural elements of Japanese tea ceremony is a primary motivator for new members to join the *Chanoyu* Club. Two members spoke at length about the ways that interest and involvement with Japanese culture have impacted their tea study. Lohit, an *Omotesenke* student who joined one semester after I did, suggested that “maybe [students are] not interested in the tea ceremony itself, [but] they come in through other” elements involved in the ceremony. I, myself, was less interested in tea ceremony itself and was instead looking for an opportunity to continue being involved in Japanese cultural and learning experiences after my return to the U.S. Similarly, Lohit discussed how his interests connect with his own tea practice:

I think that part about tea being [the] apotheosis of all the Japanese fine arts, that really impacted me because I could link a bunch of my other interests . . . like Japanese history, *ikebana* (花; flower arrangement), *taiko* (Japanese drumming). A lot of them you could link—maybe not *taiko*—but you could link in some way to *chanoyu*. So I think that kind of drew me into *chanoyu* a little bit more, too.
What Lohit describes here reflects the view of chanoyu as cultural synthesis (Surak, 2006, p. 835), in which the understanding of culture is informed by and expressed through holistic practice as a unification of other traditions. Lohit also emphasized that while practitioners of other tea ceremonies (e.g., Chinese or Korean) can draw connections with other interests, chanoyu is particularly well suited to drawing connections because it is comprised of such a broad swath of elements beyond the porcelain of its wares. For example, elements such as craftsmanship and calligraphy are important in chanoyu but are often not as relevant to other tea ceremony practices or don’t appear at all.

Alec, an Urasenke student and one of the newest club members, spoke at length about his interest in Japanese culture, but he also held an interest in Western-style tea. Recognizing the connections between Japanese culture and tea, he commented that practicing chanoyu “is a good way to bridge a new interest in Japanese culture and a pre-existing interest in tea.” Though Alec joined the club in the middle of the previous semester, his passion and dedication to tea quickly led him to become one of the club’s leaders. When I asked him to talk about how he made such a quick jump from new member to club leader, he explained that his relationships with other members and club leaders were crucial:

People like you and Bethany and Courtney were all very open and kind and willing to teach, and I love to learn, and because of that willingness to teach and accept new members—because the first time I came here, everyone just wanted to talk to me. You can go to any other club here and that probably wouldn’t happen. That was very unique and that turned me on to the whole thing. Not only that, but
you were all willing to teach me—and even independently—about Japanese culture, a little language, and about tea. So it was a good support group, I thought there’s no way I don’t wanna enjoy this as long as I can.

In this way, Alec explained how he was able to develop deep social connections with others through mutually shared interests in Japanese culture and language, which supported the development of his study and involvement with chanoyu.

Alec was also one of the five club members (along with senior members Bethany, Courtney, Dakota, and myself) who was able to visit Japan during the May 2018 to learn more about chanoyu. Upon returning from this trip, he described an “aggressive spiral down this road of wanting to learn about tea a little bit to wanting to learn Japanese, to wanting to live in Japan, [which] has been accompanied by more of an interest in tea,” which is illustrative of the deep connections between culture, language, and art, as tea study inspires cultural and language study, which in turn spurs further tea study, creating a feedback loop. Ultimately, however, for Alec, although he said he has “increasingly come to appreciate the aspects of [tea ceremony] that are independent of where it comes from, such as the fact that you can just relax, it’s a time to throw away the watch and not worry about it,” he still felt that he wouldn’t feel compelled to continue studying if it was associated with another country and that his practice was “anchored in [his] interest in the Japanese culture.” The strong connection that Chanoyu members described between their practice of tea ceremony and interest in culture emphasizes the importance of considering the cultural elements of an art practice, particularly when it has been resituated in a different cultural environment, as is the case with chanoyu.
Cultural Translation Between Japan and the U.S.

Though most students come to the club with a pre-existing interest in Japanese culture, there are still ways that Japanese cultural practices are negotiated and translated through practice in this American setting. Many Chanoyu Club members view Omotesenke as stricter, in part because it is primarily taught by Japanese instructors, whereas Urasenke, having been taught by Americans, does not retain the same impression. Several of my informants also spoke about the authenticity of the practice as it is carried out in club activities, often comparing the club’s activities against an ideal of chanoyu as practiced in Japan. Surak (2006) and de Rocha (1999) discussed similar intercultural interactions in Japanese tea ceremony as practiced outside of Japan, which can create a kind of rigidity in conforming to the Japanese standards in order to maintain a sense of authenticity and, thus, validity. Additionally, I present two examples of how a Japanese practice has been Americanized and how American mentalities are encouraged to adapt to a more Japanese mindset.

Urasenke, Omotesenke, and Zen learning. When students begin studying with the Chanoyu Club, the first choice they must make is choosing which school they will join. Students are allowed to participate in one lesson of each school before making their final decision and committing to one school over the other. A student may choose one school over another for a variety of reasons, but one of the most important is, as several participants mentioned, the conception of the cultural elements of each school as they are taught at the Tea Institute, including perceived authenticity, strictness, pedagogical approach, and language usage.
These considerations were significant as well in my own choice of school. I chose the Omotesenke school because I wanted to learn from Japanese instructors not only to continue my involvement with okeiko-style learning but also so that I could practice my Japanese with native speakers. Since I was striving, in part, to recreate the art training experience I had in Japan, I also felt that studying under Japanese instructors would be a more authentic experience than studying under American instructors. Dakota, another club member who joined shortly after I did, similarly chose to study Omotesenke so that he could practice Japanese and study under Japanese teachers. Other students, such as Urasenke students Nahks and Rosemary, a married couple who work as staff at the university, made their choice primarily based on scheduling rather than cultural elements. The Urasenke lessons, which at the time were held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, were a better match for their schedules. Before making their choice, however, they participated in introductory lessons for both schools. Rosemary commented that she felt a little intimidated by the Omotesenke lesson compared to Urasenke, so that may also have contributed to their decision.

The idea that Omotesenke lessons are stricter or more formal was echoed by several other participants I spoke to. I believe this is, in part, because of the differences in pedagogy which are influenced by the cultural backgrounds of the teachers. Among Institute members, Omotesenke lessons are considered to take a more “Zen learning” approach as compared to Urasenke. “Zen learning” is a phrase used in the Institute to describe a traditional, Eastern approach to learning that occurs purely through a student’s observation of a teacher. In “Zen learning,” as defined by the Institute, the teacher performs the task they are teaching without explaining what, why, or how they are doing.
the task; the student does not ask any questions, but instead comes to their own understanding through observing and copying the teacher. Courtney, a senior *Urasenke* student who was also heavily involved in Chinese and Korean traditions, described Korean tea ceremony as “the most Zen of all the ceremonies. It’s like Zen learning, no words are spoken.” Though this absolute silence is not the case with either of the two Japanese tea ceremonies, her explanation helped to cement what “Zen learning” means in the context of Institute understanding.

*Omotesenke* instructors utilized less direct explanation in their teaching, instead expecting students to learn in more intuitive and inferential ways. In comparison, both *Urasenke* instructors actively encouraged students to ask questions. While *Omotesenke* instructors do not explicitly discourage question-asking, the atmosphere created by their pedagogical approaches result in comparatively less question-asking by students. This is probably one aspect that contributes to *Omotesenke* being seen as a type of “Zen learning.” While I agree that traditional Eastern approaches to pedagogy place less emphasis on detailed explanation and more emphasis on observation and repetition, the Institute’s conception of “Zen learning” may be a more exaggerated concept of what actually happens in such learning situations, some of which I describe later. Phill, a former *Urasenke* student who now focuses primarily on *gong fu cha*, contributed another definition of “Zen learning” by explaining that it is “usually practice-based and requires a clarity of mind to advance in, as you better yourself along with the skill.” Phill’s description seems to more accurately describe the learning that happens in both the *Urasenke* and *Omotesenke* schools. This view of Zen-influenced pedagogy aligns with the holistic approach of the Zen Ways (*-dō*) (Chung, 2014; Elkinton, 1995), which focus
on the direct connection between art practice and self-improvement. Furthermore, the multiple ways that “Zen learning” is both perceived and carried out in the Chanoyu Club demonstrates that pedagogy is both informed by and interpreted through cultural understanding.

**Philly style: Americanizing Japan.** During a Saturday morning peer-led practice of the *koicha* (濃茶; thick tea) ceremony, Dakota, Kendall, Bethany, and I were all seated as guests for Lohit’s *temae* (点前; tea-preparing procedure). We four guests had just finished sharing a single bowl of the rich, green tea prepared to have an especially thick, paint-like consistency. Even though most of the tea had been drunk, the walls of the black *raku* (楽)-fired bowl were still covered with a thin layer of tea. Lohit as the host took the bowl to drink his portion. Though it is not typical for the host to join the guests, they occasionally do, particularly when the gathering is more casual, such as our practice was. Since Lohit knew he wanted to have some tea, he had prepared enough to be able to join us. Having finished the bowl, he began filling the bowl again with a ladleful of hot water from the *kama*. When he began to reach for the *chasen*, Bethany stopped him, saying, “*Cho-chotto matte ne* (ちょ、ちょっと待ってね; Hehey, wait a sec).”

“I’m gonna make some—” he started.

“—Philly style?” I interjected.

“Yeah.”

“Go for it.”

“—No, no, no,” Bethany interjected. “Oh, you’re going to drink that? Oh, okay.” I recognized here that Bethany was expecting Lohit to pour out the residual tea and water
mixture without using the whisk at all, as is the standard procedure at this point in the ceremony. “Philly style!” I reiterated.

“There’s actually—I would feel very terrible about [wasting] this amount of *matcha,*” Lohit said reflecting on the tea that would be wasted if he had followed procedure and poured it out. He had prepared an unusually large amount of *matcha,* 15 scoops of powdered tea for five people to share a bowl—about twice as much as usual. As he began whisking, I said, “I know! I always feel really sad.” The bamboo tines scraped gently against the glazed ceramic of the bowl as Lohit whipped up some thin tea from the residual thick tea left in the bowl.

“Yes, I always feel . . . bad about that. Because there’s always enough to make *usucha* (*薄茶; thin tea*) left,” Bethany agreed.

“Definitely. Plus, it’s so much easier to clean the bowl,” Lohit said while raising the bowl to drink.

“Philly style” originated in the tea group from which our *Urasenke* instructors visit. Normally, the excess of thick *koicha* left on the walls and basin of the *chawan* after guests finished drinking would be rinsed with water and discarded. However, this excess is often just enough to prepare an additional bowl of thin *usucha,* which has come to be known as “Philly style.” Made during practices, it is typically either offered to the instructor or drunk by the host. Though Philly style was originally an *Urasenke* practice in the *Chanoyu* Club, some senior *Omotesenke* students observed this practice when they assisted with *Urasenke* master-led lessons. *Omotesenke* students have since begun to incorporate it in casual *koicha* practices and non-ceremonial *matcha* preparation as well. As the most senior member, Bethany’s response to Lohit’s break from standard
procedure is somewhat indicative of her liminal position as a pseudo-teacher as well as a peer. In the pseudo-teacher role, her response represents a desire to follow the rules, but once she understands Lohit’s intentions, she agrees with his approach. The tension between adhering to set traditions and engaging in experimentation illustrated by this example is part of a larger dynamic in which adhering to cultural rules is part of creating and maintaining a sense of authenticity, which I will discuss further in the next section.

Though this practice was introduced to the Institute through Urasenke master-led lessons, it would not be something that Omotesenke students would dare to do with our instructors because it feels like a violation of the rules or expectations for such a formal procedure as koicha. Outside of the contexts in which Philly style would be deemed inappropriate, such as formal lessons or an actual tea gathering, however, it shows a way of playfully breaking the rules while also not wasting tea. Since situations in which this playful rule-breaking occurs tend to be primarily in American or non-Japanese environments, Philly style, post-koicha thin tea can be seen as an indication of cultural fusion that shows that, for American practitioners in the Chanoyu Club, the Japanese rules are not so closely held as to never be experimented with. Such fusion shows one way in which the Japanese practice has evolved because of its recontextualization in an American setting. Considering the tea ceremony’s restrictive, structured approach to learning, the development and adaptation of practices like Philly style tea, which arise at the point of intercultural convergence, are indicative of the ways that intercultural interactions can encourage creative approaches to art practice.

**Authenticity and expectations.** Acutely aware of the foreign origin of the practice, several students were concerned that not following the rules or doing things the
“right” way would have been disrespectful to the tradition of tea ceremony or to the broader Japanese culture from which it originates. By trying to create the most authentic practice possible, students attempted to “recreate Japan [or at least their interpretation of it] as they recreate tea” (Surak, 2006, pp. 831–832). Alec was one of the students who was most vocal about his desire to do things “the right way,” perhaps because he was still so new to the practice. However, it can be difficult to say what exactly “the right way” is when the practice as it is carried out in a different cultural environment necessitates that certain adjustments or exceptions be made. In the case of tea ceremony, accommodations sometimes may be made to suit the abilities and interests of students of non-Japanese backgrounds, while other accommodations are made due to the difficulty of obtaining items that are hard to find outside of Japan, such as specialized tea wares and fresh, seasonally appropriate tea sweets. I will later discuss some of these exceptions and adjustments in the tea practice at the Institute, but it is important to keep in mind that many students have some ideal vision of what authentic tea practice should look like and strive to work toward that goal.

Another way that authenticity is signaled at the Institute was brought to my attention by Dakota, who said of the visiting tea instructors, “They are masters. And they are all recognized masters. And rightfully so.” When I first joined the club, it was actually more common to refer to the formal lessons as “instructor-led lessons,” rather than “master-led lessons,” a term that was introduced within the past year as part of a marketing strategy to draw new members. When we directly address or refer to the masters, we append the honorific “-sensei” to the end of their name for both Japanese and non-Japanese instructors. “Sensei” (先生) is commonly translated as “teacher,” but it also
can mean “master.” That we intentionally choose to refer to these teachers as “tea masters” in English is one way of mirroring the Japanese honorific, but it is also important to consider the way it denotes authenticity and validates the practice.

Lohit also touched on the importance of the formality that master-led practice brings. “When masters are there, you can kind of get a taste of what *chanoyu* was like in the past,” Lohit said—which, to him, was not Westernized or casual as our practice often can be. “*Chanoyu* used to be this really formal, aristocratic thing,” he continued. “It wasn’t just a casual tea thing to chat over. It used to be a really formal performance art, so I think that during master-led lessons and during exhibitions you can get a little bit of that feeling.” Lohit also referred to a formal *chaji* (茶事; intimate tea gathering) that Kitazawa-sensei, one of our Omotesenke instructors, had told us about hosting in Daitoku-ji (大德寺; a temple complex in Kyoto associated with tea ceremony). Lohit used this example to describe the significant role that the environment plays in contributing to this feeling of aristocracy or a performance art: “When you’re in such a hallowed environment, that type of really formal, noble type of feeling would be there.”

The idea that the level of formality of the practice could be an indicator of authenticity is something that several other participants echoed, particularly as they strove to create an idealized Japanese practice. Morgan-sensei, our current Urasenke teacher, who has done most of her tea study in the U.S., spoke about the way that Americans “have that sensitivity to the fact that [they]’re learning an art that is not [their] own culture.” This can lead to situations in which non-Japanese tea students are “almost over-Japanese-ing themselves because they want to fit in and be Japanese and they don’t want to Americanize,” which has the potential to create “competition to see who can be
the most Japanese.” This statement was reflective of her own group, which includes more Japanese members, but it also seemed to be applicable to the non-Japanese students of the Chanoyu Club who occasionally displayed competitive attitudes towards practice, such as seeing who can sit in seiza longest before giving up and moving into a more comfortable seated position. The sensitivity toward authentic cultural practice and the desire to perform interpreted Japanese-ness that Morgan-sensei mentioned is likely why so many members discussed valuing authenticity or formality. In chanoyu practice outside of Japan, authenticity becomes a marker of validity as one way of justifying the involvement of non-Japanese participants in a culturally Japanese tradition. Such authenticity also serves to validate the Chanoyu Club’s activities as contributing to the Tea Institute’s mission “to teach and preserve” tea ceremony (Tea Institute at Penn State, n.d.), thus necessitating efforts to preserve formality in the ceremony and its teaching.

**Humility: Japanizing America.** Toward the end of a beginners’ lesson for the Urasenke students, Morgan-sensei was helping Alec and Geoff, both beginner Urasenke students, run through a full ryakubon usucha temae (薄茶点前; thin tea prepared on a round, walled tray). Alec, as host, had finished preparing the tea, and Geoff, having received the tea as a guest, had just begun to drink it.

“Should I . . . look at him, or . . . ?” Alec asked Morgan-sensei.

“No, no, that’s okay. Actually, you’re not supposed to look at them.”

“Ah. That’s surprising—”

“I mean, it’s not like it’s forbidden, but it’s like you don’t want to give the guest the impression that you want to know if the tea was good, like you’re watching them,”
Morgan-sensei said, leaning forward in imitation of an anxious host. “How is it? How is he reacting to it?”

“So, is being the host supposed to be a humbling thing?” Alec clarified.

“Yes, definitely.”

“I see,” Alec said, turning to face forward, lowering his head slightly, and fixing his eyes on the tray on which he had just prepared the tea.

By asking an initial question about what he should be doing, Alec came to a greater understanding of the cultural expectations of a good host. As a beginner, this was the first time Alec was introduced to the importance of a host’s humility. However, many of the advanced students and teachers echoed that humility was an important part of the considerations they take when in the role of the host. In this way, the American and non-Japanese students of tea are introduced to Japanese cultural ideas and ways of being. Minimizing the ego and focusing on others is an important part of practicing tea ceremony well. Focus on others and minimizing the ego are both discussed in more depth later in the context of both okeiko pedagogy and the connections between bodily movement and mind. Alec and the other students who discussed humility learned to adapt this mindset through repeated practice. In this example, Alec’s change in posture after the discussion of the humble mindset of the host is indicative of an attempt to physically embody the cultural idea. Thus, art practice can be seen as a way that practitioners come to greater cross-cultural awareness and understanding by performing and embodying different cultural ideas.
Language Usage

In the practice that occurs in the Tea Institute, the mixture of language that is used is another indication of the confluence of cultures that occurs there. One of the primary ways this can be seen is by tea masters’ usage of Japanese in lessons. This, in turn, has led to a kind of linguistic codeswitching that occurs in Omotesenke peer-led practices. (Language mixing may also occur in Urasenke peer-led practices, but I was unable to observe any.) In both master- and peer-led practices, considerations are also made for the majority of students who do not speak Japanese (either at all or at a rudimentary level) so that they can understand the Japanese-language components of teaching.

Between the two schools, Japanese is used much more heavily in the Omotesenke lessons because the visiting tea masters are Japanese. Omotesenke instructor Mihori-sensei explained that using Japanese is important because “in English, you really cannot teach 100% the tea ceremony,” referring to the way that meaning can be lost if one attempts to completely translate the language of the ceremony. Though Morgan-sensei primarily teaches in English, she agreed with this sentiment, explaining that as a practical concern, students will inevitably do tea with Japanese people. Knowing the appropriate Japanese vocabulary and phrases can allow them to do tea with anyone regardless of their mother tongue. Omotesenke instructor Hara-sensei also pointed out that Japanese instructors may use Japanese in their teaching because they may not always feel comfortable or confident in being able to explain the meanings in English to their students. Though Japanese teachers do make use of Japanese, they tend to limit their heavy usage of the language to advanced students when they are sure that most students understand enough Japanese for the lesson; beginner lessons are conducted primarily in
English, except when teachers address an individual whom they know can understand Japanese. More frequently, however, teachers use a combined Japanese–English mix during lessons. During one lesson of Mihori-sensei’s lessons on koicha, she told Lohit, who was acting as host, “mae ni (前に), put down,” so that he would place the cha-ire (茶入れ; tea container) down in front of himself. Though she mixed Japanese with the English, Lohit understood enough and followed her direction.

This kind of mixed language usage also permeates peer-led practices, particularly among the advanced Omotesenke students. During one Saturday morning koicha practice, Bethany and I were helping to guide Dakota (as first guest) and Lohit (as host) through part of the ceremony in which the first guest asks the host for information about the tea that is being served and utensils selected for the ceremony. This conversation is essentially scripted in actual practice, so it is not too difficult for students to remember the speech patterns in Japanese. However, since students were comfortable with language and the casual practice environment, linguistic play was relatively common. During this practice, Lohit shouted, “DARE DA (誰だ; WHO IS IT)!” in place of the standard “Otsume wa (お請めは; Who prepared the tea)?” and also changed the standard polite verb “de gozaimasu (でございます)” for the archaic “de gozaru (でございます)” associated with samurai-speak in period anime and drama. This type of linguistic play would not happen in master-led contexts, especially because Omotesenke instructors are native speakers. In this case, although Japanese was a foreign language for all participants and was used in non-standard ways, everyone understood the jokes that were made.

However, not all club members speak Japanese to this level. In master-led lessons, in particular, the sensei make efforts to ensure that what they are saying is
understood by all the students. Even when Omotesenke teachers give instruction in Japanese, they almost always are simultaneously demonstrating the actions for students. Demonstrating while talking not only serves to minimize issues related to language usage but also, as I discuss later, is a component of embodied teaching and learning. However, as the Urasenke handbook (Sen, 1980, p. 3) describes, tea students also naturally come to develop understandings of tea-associated Japanese words and phrases through repetition and continued exposure in lessons.

While recognizing the importance of knowing Japanese in the tea ceremony, Morgan-sensei cautioned that presuming Americans cannot handle using Japanese and, thus, should only be taught in English limits their potential. To help her students to develop genuine rather than memorized meanings, she uses several approaches. When she teaches, she introduces the Japanese phrase first then explains the English equivalent and gives context whenever possible. In one advanced Urasenke lesson, when Courtney bowed before entering the tea room saying the host’s greeting, “ippuku sashiagemasu,” Morgan explained that “ippuku” (服) is “like a dose of medicine,” explaining it as a remnant of tea’s origin in Chinese medicine. During beginner lessons, she also frequently broke down longer Japanese phrases and explained its meaning. These efforts were appreciated by students, who recognized the importance of using Japanese in the ceremony. For Alec, even as a beginner, using English in place of Japanese would result in a loss of meaning. He also shared that ultimately, using Japanese “to conduct the ceremony, that’s paying the due respect to their culture for producing the art of tea, the way of tea.”
“One Word: Respect”

Respect is a critical element that underpins almost all aspects of studying tea ceremony. After a visiting Taiwanese tea master described Japanese tea ceremony as “one word: respect,” the word (often shouted) became a running joke in the Institute, both because of his delivery and because it was ultimately true. Students of the Chanoyu Club learn to engage with this cultural imperative of respect as an element of embodied practice. Respect is not just something one recognizes but also something one does and expresses through physical actions.

When I spoke to Geoff, who comes from an Indonesian background, the importance of respect in Asian culture was one thing that he found attractive about chanoyu. “During the ceremony, nobody talks and everybody observes each other and appreciates the moment, that moment, in the tea room,” Geoff said. He indirectly referenced the concept of ichigo ichie, linking that focus on the moment to a demonstration of respect. Similarly, as a host, he strongly valued the humility and respect necessary of the position: “It’s about serving other people first, then serv[ing] yourself. . . . That, in itself, is beautiful to me. It’s just like, respecting other people.” By identifying the beauty of the host’s humility, he also identified respect as an aesthetic component. For Geoff, “the main and most interesting part” about chanoyu is that it teaches you to how to be humble.

As previously mentioned, Alec is another student who recognized the importance of humility. When discussing his upcoming responsibilities as a future student leader in the Urasenke school, he reflected on the interesting position he is in since he is not yet an advanced student. “It would be kind of unethical for me to teach ryakubon to people
when I myself am very far from mastering it, or even,” he laughed, “even doing it fluidly.” Here he is demonstrating respect for the tradition as well as teachers’ and more advanced peers’ experience by recognizing that he is not yet in a position to be teaching. This respect for the tradition, he explained, comes from his sense of the deep meaning underlying the practice: “I do believe that there’s deep meaning for why we do these things, and there’s an importance and respect that needs to be maintained for it.”

Not only is respect something that is demonstrated by action, but it is also something that is recognized in the aesthetics of the ceremony and materials used to perform it. Courtney, who was studying architecture, was particularly keen to comment on how the aesthetics of tea ceremony can be tied to respect:

All of that aesthetic design which has been passed down over centuries, I think is incredible, that they’ve had that much effort and that much time to refine it into something so simple yet so detailed that if you look at it from an outside perspective, it’s all very simple, but if you really analyze it, there’s so much thought per square inch, it’s insane.

As students continue studying and coming to greater understandings of the meanings and aesthetics of chanoyu’s intricacies, they similarly come to have greater respect for the traditions that have carried the tea ceremony through the centuries to the present day. Alec spoke to this when he discussed how one’s recognition and understanding of the tea ceremony grow with practice:

The ceremony’s been around for like, what, 400 years now? 400, 500 years? I trust that . . . the Sen household, who’s carried this down, have optimized it to the
most it can be. So I trust that there is beauty there I can’t see, and I want to get more out of it.

Alec drew connections between the respect he has for the tradition and the aesthetic nature of tea ceremony, while also being self-aware that he is not yet able to fully appreciate the ceremony. Courtney, on the other hand, as a more advanced student, had already begun to get some idea of the intricacies of the ceremony that are not obvious to outsiders and commented on how the amount of time that has been spent in developing the process of the tea ceremony and the physical items associated with it is a demonstration of respect. The “thought per square inch” Courtney references about the ceremony reflects both in the respect demonstrated by craftsmen that make wares and other items used in the ceremony and the respect that this careful thought and craftsmanship commands from practitioners.

Exceptions of the Club Situation

Another cultural element to consider is how transferring this Japanese practice into an American university club setting alters expectations and rules. Lohit brought this to my attention when he told me, “Chanoyu is such a formal learning experience that—a lot of what [the Institute is] able to do is unique even in the chanoyu world.” In considering the uniqueness of chanoyu practice at the Tea Institute, two primary patterns arise. The first is the ways in which students’ mistakes are not addressed as severely as they may be in a more traditional setting. The other how the relatively infrequent pacing of master-led lessons impacts how much and how fast Institute students are able to learn.

Lohit spoke about how “being a student can be a root cause of so many things that we do. We’re cut a lot of slack.” He gave the example of how, through a discussion with
a Japanese-American who had grown up in a tea family, he realized that his tendency to choosing tea utensils that look similar to each other is actually something that would never be accepted in other situations. “A lot of our mistakes and our shortcomings . . . [are] kind of glossed over because of our situation. I think being a [university] student and studying chanoyu at a university [is] really different from studying anywhere else.”

Another shortcoming of the club system is the infrequency of master-led lessons, which only occur once a month during the traditional academic year (August to May), whereas tea students typically tend to study on a weekly or biweekly basis. The less frequent master-led lessons “come with that downside of skipping a lot of your mistakes,” Lohit pointed out. Due to his interest in flower arranging, Lohit was often tasked with obtaining flowers and arranging them for master-led lessons. During one spring lesson for Urasenke students, he chose to use sakura (桜; cherry blossoms) and was later gently told by Morgan-sensei that cherry blossoms are not a traditionally appropriate tea flower. Reflecting on this incident, Lohit said, “If I was going at a normal pace, I probably would’ve picked that up sometime.” Here, he pointed out that the pacing of the lessons is another cause for how our practice is somewhat of an anomaly, which also impacts the ability of students to absorb knowledge at a more consistent pace.

Because we do not get to learn from the sensei more regularly, the information we get is packed into more intense bursts at longer intervals. However, as Lohit noted, this is not necessarily a bad thing:

When you’re going fast, it keeps interest. If I had to go that slow, I don’t think I could’ve kept up with chanoyu for so long because it gets kind of boring just
doing the same thing over and over. But going fast kind of keeps a lot of student interest here.

As Lohit also pointed out, the reduced frequency of direct instruction from the sensei meant that they made great efforts to introduce new material every time, which also helped to maintain interest and increase a sense of accomplishment in the breadth of materials students were exposed to. Compared to “taking private lessons,” he said, “to get to the point to be able to do koicha pretty okay, which I think we’re at, I think it would take a lot longer—I think it would take them maybe two or three years.” Instead, it took one year for Lohit and myself to begin studying koicha. Though this approach benefits students wanting a fast-paced exposure to a wider variety of procedures, it also sacrifices depth of knowledge.

Several other students and even the instructors also mentioned a desire for a change in the pacing of lessons because of the way it impacted learning. Rosemary pointed out that “because there are large gaps in between lessons, it’s harder to get things in your muscle memory, you start to forget things before the next lessons.” Hara-sensei reflected that teaching infrequently, particularly with Omotesenke’s rotating roster of instructors, means that she often has to start over in teaching students before they can progress. This also makes designing and implementing a syllabus for material to be covered in the program difficult.

Rosemary also commented on the frequency with which new material is introduced. “I’ve also noticed a tendency of the teachers to assume that we’re bored and we want to learn something new,” she said. However, for her this could be a drawback because, as she noted, “I wanted to finish what we’re doing, I don’t have it down yet.”
Interestingly, though Alec also wished for more frequent lessons, he was the only student who felt that the lessons actually moved too slowly: “Relative to what’s considered ‘success’ in chanoyu, it seems like we’re getting almost nowhere.” The discrepancy between Alec’s comments and those of Lohit and Rosemary may stem from Alec’s position as a beginner still working on getting the basics down. As advanced students, Lohit and Rosemary are able to try new and different techniques more frequently and readily. Though this frequency issue is not likely to change any time soon, it is one of the important elements that makes study at the Institute unique from other situations.

Just like the sweets in the tea ceremony, the cultural elements of tea ceremony described above are important in establishing a transitional space between American university life and the Japanese tea room. Sweets not only help ease the transition from sweet to bitter but also create a new taste born from the fusion of the original flavors, just as blended culture in the Tea Institute can be seen through practices like Philly style tea. The practice of tea ceremony, as an art steeped in cultural ideas, helps students to consider different educational approaches, such as the intuitive and embodied style of “Zen learning.” Considering pedagogical approaches that are founded in different cultural understandings challenges art educators to broaden their conceptions of the relationships between art, culture, and holistic practice. In the next section, I continue to discuss the cultural elements of learning and teaching that occur in the tea room through okeiko pedagogy, which provides the foundation for many of the holistic elements of chanoyu.

**Preparing a Bowl of Tea**

The host lifts the *chashaku* from the *natsume* with her right hand and the tea caddy with her left. Holding the end of the tea scoop delicately with her pinky and ring fingers, she uses her three other free fingers to lift the lid off of the *natsume* to expose the brilliant green powder it contains.
She places the lid on the tatami and lowers the natsume so that it is angled over the edge of the chawan. Using the chashaku, she gently places two scoops of the matcha powder into the center of the bowl and then drags the tip of the curved scoop to create a zig-zagging river through the tiny mountain of green powder.

Two dull rings sound, the second softer than the first, as she taps the bamboo chashaku on the edge of the tea bowl to remove the excess tea. Shifting her grip on the lightweight bamboo scoop from her index finger and thumb to her pinky and ring fingers, she picks up and replaces the natsume lid while still holding the scoop. She returns it to the invisible diagonal and balances the delicate chashaku on the lid of the natsume.

![Figure 19. Scooping matcha from the natsume into the tea bowl during practice.](image)

The host reaches forward to pick up the lid of the mizusashi. The unglazed portions of the lid and inner lip produce a grainy ceramic noise as the lid is removed. The host slowly swings her right arm wide to keep her long sleeve clear of utensils as she brings the lid toward herself. She transfers it to her left hand then reaches forward to carefully balance the lid vertically against the container. A quiet ceramic clink sounds as the surfaces meet. She again takes the hishaku, draws a cup of hot water, and lets half of the water trickle into the chawan. I can imagine the bright green tea powder scattering against the inner surfaces of the bowl as the hot water hits it. The host returns the water reserved in the ladle back to the kama and then rests the hishaku on the mouth’s edge.

Picking up the chasen, she begins whisking the tea in short zigzag strokes. The liquid makes swishing noises as the whisk tines scratch softly against the rough ceramic. I begin to notice a hint of the dusky floral tea fragrance in the air. As she finishes whisking, the host draws a last circle
around the bowl and withdraws the whisk along with her left hand, which had been stabilizing the bowl during the whisking. She picks up the bowl

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 20. Whisking matcha casually outside of a ceremonial context.*

and places it by her right knee. Then, placing her right hand in a fist on the *tatami,* she pivots her body toward us. The thought crosses my mind that her feet must be hurting since I realize I can no longer feel mine, and I attempt to wiggle my toes to get some of the feeling back. Picking up the bowl, she turns it twice so that the side of the bowl she has designated as the front faces us. She places it just off from the side of the *kama* lid by the corner of the *ro.*

I place my fists down on the *tatami* in front of me and pull the rest of my body forward, sliding across the mat. As my weight comes briefly off my feet, they tingle dully. Repeating this two more times, I am able to reach forward and grasp the warm bowl with my right hand. Stabilizing it on my open left palm, I place it on the mat in front of me and scoot backward, each time picking up the *chawan,* raising it slightly with both hands, then placing it down again. Back in my seat, the tea bowl is directly ahead of me on the far side of the *tatami*’s black border. I take a moment to realign the skirts of my kimono which have gotten slightly disheveled from the friction of sliding backward over the woven mats. I prepare myself to take in the tea.
Just as powdered tea and hot water are mixed in the tea bowl, so, too, do cultural meanings and practices mix in the Institute. The warm, frothy beverage that results from the mixture of powdered tea and water is like the learning that happens in the *Chanoyu* Club’s tea room. In both cases, a new substance is created that benefits from taking qualities from each of its original constituent parts. In this section, I discuss *okeiko* pedagogy as the procedure that provides structure to the unique, embodied learning that is created by combining American learning expectations and experiences with Japanese ones. First, I address the participants’ understandings of the key features that constitute *okeiko*. Then, I consider the ways in which culture and respect impact how *okeiko* pedagogy is translated and negotiated in the master-led lessons. Finally, I conclude by looking at how peer-led practice works in conjunction with and support of the teaching and learning that happens in master-led lessons.
What Is “Okeiko”?

Understanding okeiko from the perspectives of both teachers and students, particularly as it occurs in this club learning site, was one of the primary goals of this research. Though “okeiko” is not a term students typically use to refer to lessons at the Institute, it is part of the formal aisatsu (挨拶; greeting) at the beginning of lessons. Many students understand that “okeiko” literally means “lesson”; however, when students say, “Okeiko onegaishimasu (お願いします; Please allow me to have a lesson),” at the beginning of each lesson, what is it, exactly, that they are asking for?

Many participants spoke of the importance of community in okeiko, often describing the relationship between teacher and student as almost familial. Bethany described it as like a parent to child, while Morgan-sensei described it as “more like creating a family learning environment . . . in terms of people who have a special bond learning together and helping each other, that idea of yoroshiku (ようしく; desire to work together in mutual respect), that idea of working together is hard to convey but it’s so important.” Similarly, Courtney described it as “an agreement between students and a teacher to continue the living art of Japanese tea ceremony, to continue the tradition of passing it down and for the teacher to give the students knowledge and for the students to absorb it.” Lohit described the relationship between teacher and student as very close but formalized and ritualized. Rosemary found the feedback of a teacher to be critical to the point that she would not consider solo practice to be okeiko. From these base-level explanations of okeiko, it is clear that the unique student–teacher relationship plays a critical role in the transmission of the art practice.
Respect was another fundamental quality of *okeiko*. Bethany described the “sense of respect that goes into the space” as not limited to respect for the human participants, but also as extending to respect for objects and the space itself. The importance of cleaning and preparing the tea room, which often takes around an hour both before and after lessons, is one way that students demonstrated respect for their practice space. Both Courtney and Alec, focused on the human element of respect. As Courtney explained, “You have a direct mentor and they are teaching you in that moment. And in that time, you are respecting them, they are respecting you.” She also noted that “it feels more of like a personal obligation, like ‘I am doing this to help spread tea ceremony and to teach you about it.’” Alec focused on the humility of asking the teacher for lessons: “You have to kind of humble yourself and come before the sensei and ask for the lesson, even if it’s ceremonial and, in Morgan-sensei’s case, we’re always sure she will instruct us.” Like both Courtney and Morgan-sensei, Alec also described an agreement between teacher and student: “[B]y doing this practice and humbling yourself for the sensei and then asking for that instruction, and her saying ‘yes’ and continuing, that’s the agreement.”

Since *okeiko* almost always occurs in a group setting for tea, students often come away learning different things, though they experience the same lesson. Kitazawa-sensei emphasized the responsibility of the learner in *okeiko*:

*Okeiko* depends on you. Even if you go to the same *okeiko* with the same teacher teaching the same subject, students get different things out of it if they’re advanced or beginner. If you just go and don’t think about it, you won’t get anything out of it.
In this view, students hold the responsibility to actively engage and get everything they can from the lesson. Geoff also spoke about how students may come away with different knowledge from the same okeiko, commenting on learning as part of a group. He said that when learning as a group (something he identified as a broadly Asian trend) rather than individually, students are able to observe and learn from not only the teacher but also each other. During one lesson, though he was a guest, he carefully watched the teachers’ instructions to Alec, who was a host. Similarly, Geoff noticed that Alec also observed the instruction that the tea master gave Geoff about guest procedures. In this way, chanoyu students are focused not only on what they are doing as individuals but are expected to pay attention to the lessons that the group as a whole is receiving in order to gain a full understanding of the interactions that occur throughout the tea ceremony.

Several students also identified okeiko’s strong links to developing artistic skill. As before, Phill connected “Zen learning” with okeiko pedagogy, which is “usually practice-based and requires a clarity of mind to advance in, as you better yourself along with the skill.” For him, learning in okeiko is intently focused on skill building:

[Chanoyu] is something that requires a great deal of skill and devotion, and it’s kind of a means of disciplining the student. And I think this is kind of the first segment of okeiko, the kind of tradition, or laws, or really strict curriculum. . . . That you learn the basics, fold the fukusa . . . And it’s extremely strict. And this is, I’d say, the boring phase that, unless you’re really focused on technical perfection, is usually dry for most people. And then I think what you get is a slow exploration beyond this once you learn the basic skills, you can start expressing yourself.
Phill’s comments draw connect the development of skills with the development of self in describing how disciplined focus on technical performance can lead to expressive ability. Similarly, Lohit described okeiko as “formalized experiential learning” and called it a “tea lab,” drawing attention to the experiential nature of learning. Nahks and other students commented on repetition as critical to building skill, which okeiko also relies on.

In addition, okeiko is a practice in mindfulness in which time has intentionally been set aside for focused learning. This was a quality that stood out to Alec and Nahks, in particular. Alec pointed out the importance of the threshold, the aisatsu, which marks the transition into okeiko:

There is a point in time, an actual threshold that’s verbalized . . . that says we’re now, taking the watch off, we’re now not looking at our phone for the time, this is now, we’re entering chanoyu zone, and we’re going to focus on everything that’s meaningful to chanoyu.

As he described, this threshold is marked by not only setting aside phones but also physically removing watches, which are not permitted in the tea room to avoid thinking about the passage of time. He described this threshold as something that is not ambiguous and that is known and expected, which helps students settle into the appropriate learning mindset. Nahks also commented on the importance of entering the appropriate mindset:

Bringing your mind to the right place in order to engage and . . . set aside ego . . . You’re just reminding yourself what brought you there, what collectively everyone in attendance is there for, and I suppose it’s a way to concentrate and be most open to taking in the obvious and the subtle lessons that are going on.
Notably, this is important because focusing allows tea students to be open to receive not only the obvious lessons but also the subtle ones. These subtle lessons, such as those Geoff and Kitazawa-sensei described, are only able to be recognized and considered during this focused mindset.

Matsuda-sensei, one of the Omotesenke assistants, described okeiko as a way to get guidance on practice, which she linked to the concept of *kata*, as Matsunobu (2007) and Powell (2004) discussed in their studies on Japanese cultural learning. Matsuda-sensei explained that “okeiko is kata” in that students learn the prescribed forms of *temae* (procedure) through okeiko, which allows them to build foundational skills, and as Phill described, allows students to develop their own variations as they increase their proficiency.

**Okeiko Pedagogy Adapted**

Though I have already touched on several of the key aspects of okeiko pedagogy, in this section, I look at specific elements of okeiko that have an impact on the tea ceremony practiced by the Chanoyu Club. In particular, I explore the culturally different practices and concepts of *aisatsu* greetings, hierarchical structures, the emphasis on observation, student–teacher relationships, and purity as they are understood and navigated by my informants.

**Aisatsu.** At the beginning of an advanced Urasenke lesson, Courtney knelt on the corner of the larger square of *tatami* mats, placed a *sensu* on the *tatami* in front of herself, and bowed deeply toward Morgan-sensei. “Sensei, *chitosebonryaku no okeiko wo onegai itashimasu* (先生、千歳盆略のお稽古をお願いいたします; Teacher, please allow me to have a lesson on the chitose-style tray preparation),” Courtney said. Morgan-sensei
returned her bow in acknowledgment of the request. Courtney then explained to Alec, “This is the symbolic beginning of lessons.”

She then started to coach Alec through his own *aisatsu* to Morgan-sensei by feeding him a line which he repeated to Morgan-sensei: “*Sensei, kyaku no okeiko wo onegai itashimasu* (先生、客のお稽古お願いいたします; Teacher, please allow me to have a lesson on being a guest).” Courtney then bowed to Alec and said, “*Yoroshiku onegai itashimasu* (よろしくお願いいたします; I ask for your favor and cooperation in this lesson).” Alec returned the bow and repeated the same phrase to Courtney.

![Courtney, Morgan-sensei, and Alec bow to each other during *aisatsu*.](image)

*Figure 22. Courtney, Morgan-sensei, and Alec bow to each other during *aisatsu*.*

As a formal statement of one’s intention to work together at the beginning of the lesson, *aisatsu* establishes a cooperative learning atmosphere. Notably, students are not just asking the teacher for the lesson but also recognizing the importance of asking for their peers’ cooperation as well. *Aisatsu* reappears again at the end of lessons when students thank the teacher for the instruction and thank each other for working together.
As in the previous example, the practice of *aisatsu* is firmly embedded in and consistent with the *Urasenke* practice at the Tea Institute. However, *Omotesenke aisatsu* is often inconsistent. *Omotesenke* student Lohit discussed this discrepancy:

> [E]ven when we do *aisatsu* in *Omotesenke*, it’s not super formal, where it’s just, like, [at the end of a lesson], “Okeiko arigatou gozaimasu (お稽古ありがとうございます; Thank you for the lesson).” It’s not that formal, and even then, it sometimes feels a little hurried, like, ‘Oh, yeah, we have to do *aisatsu*. . . . But watching *Urasenke*, it’s really different. Because they say it really formally . . . almost like a mantra. And also they say thank you to the guests, and the guests say thank you to each other.

*Aisatsu* is one case where there seems to be a flipping of the typical dynamic within the Institute of *Omotesenke* being considered more formal than *Urasenke*. The inconsistency of *aisatsu*’s implementation in *Omotesenke* may perhaps be traced to the larger number of visiting teachers. Though several *Omotesenke* instructors have asked students to do *aisatsu* more regularly, the differing *Omotesenke* tea masters have varying expectations about *aisatsu*, and as such, there is less consistency compared to having a single, consistent *Urasenke* instructor who establishes more uniform expectations for *aisatsu*.

As a strongly Japanese-coded practice, *aisatsu* occupies an interesting space for non-Japanese practitioners. As Alec pointed out, humbling oneself to ask a teacher for a lesson is not something that is a natural approach for Americans. Morgan-sensei also discussed the non-Western nuance of *aisatsu* as a way of demonstrating respect. Even as a teacher, Morgan-sensei, from her American perspective, felt some ambivalence about *aisatsu*. “As a teacher, I don’t really feel like I need students to ask me for a lesson,” she
said, and because of this she typically does not make beginners do *aisatsu*. However, she also said she feels a responsibility to acclimate students to the practice so that if they go on to study elsewhere, they know what to do. As such, her advanced students do *aisatsu* formally at the beginnings and ends of their lessons. Her overall feeling remained, though, that “if it was up to [her], [she] would never make a student do *aisatsu*.” The hierarchy that is created by students deferentially asking teachers for lessons is something that is not always easy for Westerners to deal with, but Morgan-sensei recognized the cultural importance of *aisatsu* in the context of *chanoyu* as a Japanese cultural practice, and so she ensures that her students are competent in the practice.

Morgan-sensei also pointed out that because *aisatsu* is not a Western approach to beginning lessons, it can also help people get into the tea mindset: “It gets people thinking about a different way of studying, and it can become a mental cue that we’re entering a different environment” in which teachers can tell you what you need to do. Powell (2012) described how opening practices with this kind of “liminal experience” facilitates “participants mov[ing] from one way of being into another, marked by cultural gestures” (p. 117). Similarly, Morgan-sensei described *aisatsu* as helpful in “[getting] you into that mindset of the hierarchy of the tea room,” which doesn’t come naturally to Westerners but is important to understand in tea and in Japanese culture more generally. Because formally asking teachers and peers to participate in a lesson is outside of the normal educational procedure for most *Chanoyu* members, it acts as a signal for students to enter a new mindset, which helps them acclimate to a different cultural approach to relating to others and to establishing hierarchies between students and teachers.
Hierarchy. Understanding and respecting the hierarchical structures of tea study is important for tea students, even if hierarchy is not heavily embedded in students’ own culture. This hierarchy is built into the structures that control progression through tea study via a licensure system that allows students to learn tea procedures and, eventually, to become certified as teachers and masters. When a student has progressed to a point of sufficient proficiency, they are bestowed with a chamei (茶名; tea name), formally recognizing them as a member of the familial lineage of tea ceremony under which they practice. Many students spoke about how this hierarchy gives legitimacy to tea ceremony knowledge and practice. These structures also impact teachers’ control of the tea room, as well as who is authorized to help students during lessons.

Strictly speaking, tea students are meant to obtain licenses that permit them to learn specified temae procedures that are determined by licenses held. Though a detailed explanation of this system is beyond the scope of this thesis, the mechanic is very similar to the colored belts that indicate rank in karate, where practitioners progress through a series of ranks before achieving master-level status. At the time of writing, only one student at the Tea Institute, Courtney, has registered for a beginner’s license since neither branch of our club is formally registered as a tea group by the headquarters of our respective schools. (Though we are not formally registered, special arrangements have been made with the schools’ headquarters to allow our instructors’ visits.)

Hara-sensei explained that the licensing structures often impact practitioners’ transitions from student to teacher once they have reached an appropriately advanced status:
Most people’s somehow unconscious goal is to become a teacher because it’s a license system. License is, from the beginning, a kind of nyūmon (入門; entry level) . . . then at some certain point, it says shihan (師範). Shihan is a teacher’s license. . . . Of course, some people, even though they get the teacher’s license, they don’t use it. However, I believe more than half of practitioners, whenever she or he gets [a] teaching license, they [begin] teaching.

Though the licensure system operates similarly in other Japanese traditional arts, Harasensei mentioned that for tea ceremony specifically, obtaining the shihan license is not the only obstacle to teaching. Being able to teach also requires access to tea utensils and an adequate practice space, so many people have a teaching license but do not use it. Another consideration for practitioners in their transition from student to teacher is continuing the legacy of their teachers. Both Mihori-sensei and Matsuda-sensei talked about how assisting senior teachers and continuing their legacies were factors they considered when deciding to teach. Though the students who study at the Tea Institute are very far from achieving the level of teacher, this dynamic of progression from student to teacher and of continuing legacies also works on a smaller scale. Bethany, as the most senior student, often assisted Omotesenke tea masters during lessons as almost a pseudo-teacher. Additionally, Alec cited senior members, such as Bethany, Courtney, and myself, as one of the reasons he chose to become a student leader of the Club.

Another aspect of the hierarchical structures of tea ceremony is chamei, which practitioners earn at the same time they receive their license to become a full teacher. Morgan-sensei described tea names as a marker that “you can now function as a tea person without your teacher.” For students, knowing that visiting instructors’ years of
effort result in *chamei* means they can be certain of the accuracy and authenticity of the knowledge they learn in lessons. Courtney described the certified expertise of the teachers that work with the Institute by saying, “I can’t really imagine learning Japanese tea ceremony from someone who isn’t as experienced in it as our senseis have been.”

Lohit also described the way that hierarchical structures validate information about *chanoyu*, especially compared to the dissemination of *gong fu cha* knowledge in the Institute. He described some of the *gong fu cha* information as “citation needed,” explaining that while he trusts the information from advanced *gong fu cha* students because he knows them, “if I didn’t know them, I’d be like, ‘This sounds like completely bullshit, like you’re totally just making this up. Right, like the fact that this clay [of a teapot] can change the taste [of tea]? I don’t believe that.’” *Gong fu cha*, as it is practiced in the Institute after testing in, is largely self-directed, especially compared to the formalized *Chanoyu* program. Lohit became increasingly drawn to *chanoyu* because the hierarchical structures of instruction provided more direction for study validated by official sources or practitioners with *chamei*. As Lohit explained, “*Chanoyu*, since it’s very formalized and hierarchical, it’s very—all the information sources are reputable. You can easily tell who’s BSing on a blog and who actually has their *chamei* and knows what they’re talking about.”

In addition to direction and verification, the hierarchical structure of tea study was also something appealing for Courtney:

It’s very formalized and really unique and rare. You can’t just study it anywhere. It has to be under a specified teacher. You have to get licenses to continue studying. It has hundreds of years of tradition, like, that sort of rigor and intensity,
I think is a really attractive aspect of Japanese tea ceremony over other ceremonies. The traditional licensure that accompanies the tea ceremony provides not only “rigor and intensity” to tea study but also marks it as a unique practice, in part because of the restrictions imposed by its hierarchical system. The rareness created by these restrictions was appealing to many students who highlighted that the limited opportunity to study under highly trained masters makes the Chanoyu program at the Tea Institute something unique and attractive for students.

Hierarchical structures also have a strong influence on the interactions between teachers and students as well as between teachers and their assistants as tea masters maintain authority in the tea room and delegate teaching tasks. (Here, I focus on Omotesenke instructors because Urasenke instructors are not accompanied by assistants.) Bethany explained that Japanese teachers tend to have more of an air of authority than laid-back American instructors. To illustrate her point, she told me a story about a lesson in which an assistant began helping a student in the guest role during a lesson while the tea master was focusing on the student practicing as host. The instructor, however, had been keeping an eye on both the host and guests and reminded the assistant that she was overstepping her bounds by helping the student without being delegated the task. Bethany explained that “because the sensei is in charge, she is in charge of watching everything, and if she doesn’t correct the student for one thing, that means she didn’t think it was necessary.”

Nahks, who is also a student of the Japanese martial art aikidō (合気道) described a story that was similar to Bethany’s: In one of his practices, he attempted to lead a
partner in a training exercise and was stopped by his instructor, who told him, “Let me be the one to point out these kinds of things, not you.” This was an embarrassing memory, but it is one that has translated into his tea practice since he now reflects first about whether to make suggestions or give advice to others. In the tea room, I also have had experiences in which I have attempted to help other students only to be reminded that I am not a teacher and should instead allow the sensei to correct or not correct students based on her authority, experience, and judgment. Deferring to the sensei is one way of showing respect, as Mihori-sensei explained with a common saying: 「三歩下がって師の影踏まず」 (sanpo sagatte, shi no kage fumazu), meaning one should always walk three steps behind the master so that they would never step on her shadow.

However, this does not mean that students are never asked to help. In one practice, Kitazawa-sensei was instructing Lohit with a new temae for a specially shaped tea bowl. Because of this new utensil and the specialized technique associated with it, Kitazawa-sensei had to focus more than usual on teaching the host the procedure. To ensure the guests were also getting proper instruction, she called Bethany over to help them perform the actions correctly. The primary difference in this situation and the two previous anecdotes is that the instructor specifically initiated and directed the assistance.

Additionally, because Bethany was the most advanced and most senior member, she often acted as an additional assistant for instructors, highlighting her identity as both student and pseudo-teacher. Her liminal position can be contextualized in the broader tea hierarchy, in which the ultimate goal is to turn students into teachers via progression through the licensure system and the obtaining of the shihan license. Though Bethany had not received any licenses yet, the way she was often asked to help less experienced
members reveals how the hierarchical structures can begin training students to step into teaching roles.

**Observation and question-asking.** In *okeiko*, observation is one of the primary methods for students to learn the tea ceremony. Hara-sensei explained that one can “always learn something new by watching someone else’s *temae,*” even if it is a basic *temae.* Watching how someone performs can help to inform and develop one’s own technique, whether by recognizing what others do skillfully or by paying attention to the sensei’s corrections of another’s motions. In lessons, both instructors and students have emphasized to beginner students the importance of watching experienced students gain familiarity with actions so that they can perform by copying what they have observed.

In a beginner *Omotesenke* lesson, Savanna was about to begin drinking tea as the first guest when Mihori-sensei suggested to two new students, Kendall and Brittany, “You better watch her. You’ll drink the same way.” Later in the same lesson, Bethany addressed the beginners who were observing a *temae* practice, “So, everyone who is watching, please pay attention. Please remember because you’re doing this next.” In both situations, students were reminded to actively observe so that they would be prepared when they needed to perform the action themselves. In *Urasenke,* too, observation was important as beginners seated in a circle on the tatami would pass the cast-iron *tetsubin* (鉄瓶) kettle from one person to the next and watch each person as they practiced pouring water from the kettle into the *chawan.*

Furthermore, I found that this emphasis on observation influenced the degree to which students felt free to ask questions during lessons. However, in the Institute, this seemed to have a greater impact in *Omotesenke* lessons compared to *Urasenke* lessons.
As a participant in master-led lessons, I was significantly less likely to ask questions; instead, when unsure of the next action, I was more likely to work through my point of hesitation and make a best guess, knowing that inevitably, the instructor would stop me when I made a mistake and make me do it again correctly. In describing this feeling during one interview, I told a participant that in lessons, I’m “more likely to just do it. . . . I have to rely on myself.” This self-reliance in learning requires more focus, not only when I am actively practicing but also when I am observing others’ practice. I found that focusing intently with the understanding that I must rely first on myself (as opposed to asking the instructor) helped me retain more information. Since my observations were so focused, it became more of an embodied practice. Indeed, some students also mimicked the movements that they were observing others do as a way of reinforcing the sequences.

Bethany also described a similar feeling about studying with Omotesenke teachers: “Since you can’t stop the instructor and be like, ‘Wait, please explain this in detail and why and the reasoning’—you can’t really do that, so it forces you to really focus on what sensei is doing.” Recognizing that it can be difficult to ask questions during lessons, Bethany has adapted to relying on close observation to resolve questions before they needed to be asked. Mihori-sensei also explained this from the perspective of what teachers expect in the traditional sense: “Observe what the teacher teaches. Never ask a question. Totally different from here and Japan. Just observe what the teacher teaches. Never ask, ‘Why this one?’” Though Mihori-sensei recognized the tendency of non-Japanese students to ask questions, she emphasized the contrast in the traditional Japanese mindset. Rosemary, an Urasenke student, also recognized the juxtaposition between the absolute authority that Japanese instructors can expect and Americans’
tendency to question things: “It’s an interesting conflict between this Japanese ideal of, the teacher’s word is final, you do not question the teacher, and having Americans walk in here and be all like, ‘But why?’” Rosemary framed it as a “conflict” between ideals, but during actual lessons, teachers actually did answer questions that students asked and adjusted their expectations, recognizing American students’ tendency to ask questions. Especially since most teachers have been working with tea groups or have their own private tea rooms where they instruct both Japanese and non-Japanese students, they have come to have a good grasp on how to reach a middle point between both expectations.

Kitazawa-sensei also described the importance of observing or copying the instructor while also explaining, to some extent, why explanations are not always present:

Most of Japanese okeiko is starting from copying the style from the teacher without any explanation, so some people—or non-Japanese—students always have a question or wonder, but most of the instructors cannot tell, or cannot explain, because it’s the style of Japanese lesson. Kitazawa-sensei seems to imply that one reason instructors may not be able to explain or answer questions may be, in part, because the information is ineffably embodied. Since so much of the knowledge of the tea ceremony is obtained through direct experience, it becomes difficult to put into words, and students must learn to adapt to more embodied methods of learning by relying less on words and more on their bodies.

Hara-sensei also addressed this lack of explanation by the teacher by saying that not talking in the tea room is “basic etiquette”: According to Hara-sensei, silence is important because “[w]e can concentrate. Because we have to watch how teishu (亭主, the host) makes tea.” In other words, as a way of respecting the host, it is best to watch
silently. Of course, silence will necessarily be interrupted when teachers need to make a correction or a student asks a question about the procedure they are practicing. However, understanding the importance of quiet focus for all participants in the tea room can encourage students to refrain from asking questions until later or unless it is directly relevant to the practice at hand.

Though I primarily discussed the perspective of the Omotesenke teachers, who have a stronger leaning toward culturally Japanese expectations in their lessons due to their cultural backgrounds. However, the American Urasenke instructors have taken a slightly different approach and are much more open to and encouraging of questions during their lessons. Morgan-sensei told me directly that she makes an active effort to encourage students to ask questions during her lessons. Nahks mentioned that both Morgan-sensei and Dr. Hanson, the instructor prior to Morgan-sensei, have always set the tone of being open to questions, “provided you’re not interrupting something or it’s one of those points in the ceremony when you really should be observant and quiet.” Nahks commented that he generally tries to wait to ask questions to avoid interruptions. Phill also commented that Western students are used to more Western approaches of direct reasoning and justification, so this is likely why more question-asking and explanation tended to happen in the Urasenke lessons compared to the Omotesenke lessons.

**Student–teacher relationships.** Students’ relationships with their teachers are also an important part of okeiko. Students study tea in small, intimate groups that typically range from two to five students per lesson. Because of the small group sizes, students are able to receive “individual, personal attention from the sensei,” according to Alec. Small class sizes also contributed to the family-like atmosphere that informants
described as being a key element of *okeiko* practice. Thus, the infrequency of master-led lessons was made up for, in part, by the intimacy of the lessons. As I discuss in this section, student–teacher relationships are central to the tea ceremony practice, as they are closely linked with students’ development of skills and their understanding of *chanoyu*.

One concept that guides student–teacher relationships is the Japanese philosophical concept of *shu-ha-ri* (守破離), which describes the progression of building proficiency in Japanese arts. Kitazawa-sensei used this concept to describe not only students’ development of skills but also the progression of the student–teacher relationship. She described the three components of this idea as follows:

The first *shu* (守; “protect” or “obey”) is like students learn from a teacher, then *ha* (破) means “broken,” like they learn the basic, and now it’s time to break their basic. It’s based on the basic. . . . Then the last part *ri* (離; separate), they are going away.

Kitazawa-sensei described that “*shu* is the center of the circle, and students can go out and come back in as they practice, but the foundation is always there.” As Kitazawa-sensei described, I have found it helpful to visualize the relationship of the three components of *shu-ha-ri* as concentric circles to illustrate the ever-present foundation and the progression and revisiting of earlier levels throughout a student’s tea journey. I include a diagram illustrating this relationship in Figure 2.3.

Just as students move away from and then periodically return to the fundamental level of *shu-ha-ri* through their development, the student–teacher relationship is centered on the foundational presence of the teacher and the skills that they teach. As students begin to break away from strictly following the rules they initially were taught, so, too,
do students evolve in their relationships with teachers as they become more independent learners. The peak of this in tea is when a student receives their *chamei*, which, as Morgan-sensei said, symbolizes that someone is able to act as an independent tea person. Taken in the context of *shu-ha-ri*, *chamei* allows access to the final *ri* ring, where a practitioner can begin acting independently from their teacher.

However, even when one has become a fully realized tea person, returning to the foundation remains important. Hara-sensei told me that even the *Iemoto* (家元; grandmaster) practices the most basic procedure on a daily basis. Alec also picked up on this concept saying that “you always have to return to the most basic *temae* in practice.” The emphasis on returning to the basic procedures “reminds you of where you came from and of all the hard work you did.” He also pointed out that this is a way of practicing humility since “as you get to more advanced and maybe more elegant *temae*, you don’t forget the more hospitable and more homely kind of *temae* that you started with.”

Similarly, the teacher is at the foundation of the transmission of the tea ceremony. When practitioners receive permission to use the family name associated with their tea school as
a part of their *chamei*, they become permanently and deeply linked to the foundation of their practice by sharing a name with its originator and all of the other tea masters of the past, present, and future of the lineage. In this way, though the goal of art practice is transcendent, fully creative (*ri*) practice, the *shu-ha-ri* model emphasizes and validates the beginning (*shu*) and intermediate (*ha*) steps by encouraging frequent return to more basic skills and learning focuses. This approach fosters a humble beginner’s mindset where practitioners are constantly learning regardless proficiency level. Even the visiting tea masters often spoke about how they are still actively studying and have much to learn.

Understandably, for many students at the Institute, most of whom are in the beginnings of their tea journeys, there is a strong emphasis on mastering fundamental skills as emblematic of the *shu* stage of development. Some of the advanced students, however, have begun to challenge these foundational rules. Dakota was one of the students who spoke about “being sneaky and getting away with stuff” during lessons, such as attempting to add subtle flourishes to his movements and thus beginning to experiment with the *ha* portion of *shu-ha-ri*. Experimentation with rules is a part of building upon the fundamentals. Kitazawa-sensei connected this to the breadth of one’s foundation: “If you really, really learn the foundation, you can have more opportunity or more freedom, but if your foundation is narrow, your freedom is going to be narrow.”

Another aspect of student–teacher relationships is how students dealt with corrections from instructors and the tension this sometimes created. Often corrections were welcomed by students as a way to ensure their progress, but occasionally, it could be a source of frustration. I was surprised by how many students said that getting
corrected by instructors is their preferred method of instruction. According to Nahks, setting aside the ego and recognizing mistakes as an opportunity for learning is key:

Depending on the state of mind that you’re in as a student, you may react well or poorly to criticism or having something pointed out, you might be embarrassed or something like that, but if you kind of set aside that ego, then everything is viewed as a potential learning experience or something. It’s teachable moments, it’s not about you, like you messed up, or I messed up or something, it’s hey, here’s a thing, pay attention to this, it’s for everybody’s benefit.

Rosemary succinctly summarized this by emphasizing that “the teacher is not only speaking to you. You are the vehicle for the lessons.” As both Nahks and Rosemary pointed out, considering the correction in the context of a group lesson and how others may benefit from a mistake is one way that students mitigated frustrations about receiving criticism.

Alec also spoke about the importance of accepting corrections saying that “if you don’t want to be corrected, and you’re too proud to receive that, then I don’t think you should have any place studying chanoyu.” He also spoke about how, in order to embrace the humility that is important for performing the tea ceremony, “you have to, at the very least, be able to take harsh corrections from a sensei who’s been doing this their whole life, and I think that’s perfectly acceptable.” This is not to say that sensei typically correct students in harsh ways; however, it is possible that a teacher’s correction could be (mis)interpreted as harsh. One such occasion happened at the end of an Urasenke practice in which Alec was practicing as host while Morgan-sensei sat nearby, guiding him
through the process. Alec had already made tea and was in the process of cleaning up the tea bowl and other utensils.

“Right hand picks up the bowl. And pour the water out,” Morgan narrated as Alec performed the actions accordingly, transferring the bowl to his left hand and pouring the rinse water into the kensui. As the last drops slowly fell into the bowl, Alec extended his index finger and gently tapped the side of the bowl to encourage the water to come out.

“Don’t tap—” Morgan-sensei said.

“—Oh!—” Alec responded.

“—Don’t tap. Rikyū hates it when you tap. I’ll tell you about that in a minute,” Morgan-sensei said and then returned to instructing him to finish the ceremony. “Bring the bowl around to the front of your body and then . . . pick up the chakin, put it in the bowl, put the bowl on the tray, put chasen in the bowl, then pick up the chashaku and fukusa with the same hand.”

Morgan-sensei later explained that tapping the bowl is one of the things Sen no Rikyū reportedly disliked. This incident was significant enough that Alec recounted it to me in an interview; however, he seemed to have interpreted it in a much different way than I did. He concluded his version of the story with, “Yeah, so she really snapped at me, but I will never make that mistake again.” Alec characterized Morgan-sensei’s correction as “snapping” at him, though I did not interpret her tone or words in that way. Regardless of the interpretation of her tone, however, the correction was ultimately successful in making sure that Alec would avoid an inappropriate gesture in the tea room.

In Omotesenke, Dakota also told me a story of feeling frustrated while being corrected by a teacher who was trying to correct his movement while raising the chasen
to inspect its tines during cleaning. “No other sensei has said any of this, and I can’t look at it properly the way you’re telling me! I don’t know what you mean, lady!” he laughed while telling me. The frustration Dakota experienced seems to be twofold. First, with the Omotesenke lessons being taught by multiple different teachers, there are sometimes subtleties that certain teachers emphasize more than others, so until this practice, he likely did not realize there was anything wrong with his arm movement. Additionally, he had difficulty understanding what the correct movement and how to correct his movement to satisfy the teacher. Dakota dealt with this by just trying to do the best he could without arguing and adjusting to what he thought the sensei wanted: “I’m usually like distinctly, ‘Tell me what you want to move where,’ even though I know I can’t say that to the senseis, I’ll just try the best I can.”

I also had an experience similar to Dakota’s, in which I felt frustrated with a teacher’s correction of my placement of the natsume in the latter part of the ceremony. I felt myself getting frustrated but, like Dakota, instead of expressing that frustration, I tried to interpret what the sensei was telling me in order to correct it. I was able to place the natsume correctly after a few tries, but I still had some lingering frustration because I struggled with the criticism. As I continued in the ceremony, I began the part where I hold the hishaku in front of myself with both hands and look into the empty cup as if it were a mirror. Recalling that this is a part of the ceremony where the host reflects on and purifies their kokoro and intentions, I focused on the intention of this pose to allow my frustration to dissipate and complete the temae with a clear mindset. As this example shows, students can use engagement with the movements and philosophy of the ceremony as a way of ensuring that things like frustration or other stressors do not get in
the way of their practice or their relationships with others in the tea room. In this way, students are able to make use of the holistic nature of the tea ceremony by engaging with the embodied concepts in motions in order to control their mindsets.

**Purity through cleanliness.** One final element of *okeiko* that was adapted into practice in the *Chanoyu* Club is the importance of cleanliness as a way of ensuring purity. Kitazawa-sensei put particular emphasis on the importance of cleanliness and purity:

> When you open the teacher’s house for the tea class, class has already started. So teachers have to purify, they have to invite the guests in a different world. So that’s what I’m trying to do. They’re coming to tea class, they’re trying to find something different from their everyday life. So they come here and forget about their stress or anxieties, [and] they can just concentrate on learning the ceremony.

I can say that tea class is not only learning a procedure for making tea, but [also a way of] life.

Cleaning and preparing the tea room is an important component of tea study because it sets the mood for students to get into the tea mindset as soon as they open the door. Tea rooms and the rest of the tea instructor’s house should be kept clean because that cleanliness is a physical manifestation of the ideal of purity or *sei* from *wa-kei-sei-jaku*. The focus on cleanliness places an emphasis on the role of the environment in tea practice and how the state of the tea room can have an impact on the mindset of tea practitioners.

Traditionally, lessons are held at a teacher’s house or other property, and as such, the teacher is responsible for maintaining a clean environment and atmosphere that is conducive to tea. However, since all teachers visit the Institute to hold lessons, it
becomes the students’ responsibility to do this cleaning and preparation. In the past, this was not always easy for students to carry out, as Bethany told me. She said that when teachers arrived, they would ask, “Did you clean the room?” When they first taught us how to clean the room, we would spend an hour. *This* is how you clean it, this is what you’re going to do, go do it.” While describing a lesson in which Kitazawa-sensei made students clean up the entire tea club space beyond the room that was being used for *chanoyu* lessons, Bethany also explained, “In concrete, practical terms, [it’s important to apply] what you do in *chanoyu* to everyday life. It’s not good to do *chanoyu* in [the Chanoyu Room] and come out here and have everything be a mess.” Through cleaning, Bethany drew connections between the mindsets and behavior of *chanoyu* and the ways that they begin to be applied and utilized outside of the tea room. As one of the holistic arts in the Zen tradition, practitioners strive to fuse art practice with their daily lives.

Through my practice of *chanoyu*, cleanliness was one habit that I noticed taking hold in my life outside of lessons, especially when I took to frequently emptying the drying racks of the Chinese tea wares and doing other small cleaning tasks when I was in tea house. Kitazawa-sensei teaches that “purifying is most important for tea ceremony.” “I must purify myself, my house, same as the tea room,” she said. In this way, preparing for the tea ceremony becomes part of the art practice, just as the actions of art practice also become fused to the artist (Matsunobu, 2007; Powell, 2004; Okakura, 1906/1964). Considering the preparation for tea ceremony as equally important to the actual performance expands the bounds of what can be conceptualized as art.
Peer-Led Practices

Thus far, I have primarily been speaking of *okeiko* as it appears in master-led lessons. Now, I will briefly discuss the ways in which this tradition is further adapted in a peer environment. Many members, like Geoff, Lohit, Nahks, and Rosemary all discussed how the more casual peer environment lent itself to freer discussion and less restraint in terms of questioning. Geoff described feeling more freedom to say things like, “Uh, I don’t think we did it that way before.” He said that when he shares what he remembers to be correct, the group can discuss what they remember individually and collectively while also referencing one of the *temae* handbooks in the club’s library. This lighter, more social atmosphere also allows students to have more fun, which helps to strengthen the social bonds between club members.

Peer-led practices offer a form of mediated respite where students can still engage in practice to develop skills without having to necessarily engage with the entirety of the cultural trappings of formal *okeiko* as it occurs in master-led lessons. As Morgan-sensei said at one point:

[You drop] some people into a very strict Japanese teaching situation, and they thrive. Some people, you drop them suddenly into a very strict Japanese teaching situation, and they’re like, “Oh my god, what just happened? Get me out of here.”

Though the master-led lessons at the Institute are probably not exactly what Morgan-sensei would refer to as “very strict Japanese teaching situation[s],” it is important to consider that the learning environment may be different enough that the club’s provision of peer-led practices can help in mediating the transition into a more Japanese-style learning environment when tea masters visit.
This chapter discussed many of the elements of *okeiko* pedagogy as it occurs in the context of the Tea Institute, which, like the process of whisking together hot water and *matcha* to make tea, is the product of mediations and negotiations between the Japanese origins of the practice, the American environment, and non-Japanese students. The tea ceremony of the *Chanoyu* Club is neither completely Japanese nor entirely Americanized. Instead, students and teachers have chosen to embrace some elements of *okeiko*, such as the authority of hierarchical structures, and to push back against others to varying degrees, like *Omotosenke* students’ inconsistent practice of *aisatsu* or Morgan-sensei’s ambivalence toward it. *Okeiko* also provides the foundation for student–teacher relationships through the progression of *shu-ha-ri* and strengthens the link between practice and the environment through its emphasis on maintaining a purified, clean space. Peer-led practices provide an example of the ways that students have begun to internalize some elements of *okeiko*, as it is implemented in less formal ways by students outside of the purview of the tea master. Thus, much like the mixing and drinking of the *matcha* during the tea ceremony, the Institute’s blended cultural approach to *okeiko* creates a holistic and embodied practice that engages the body and all of its senses.
Chapter 6
Taking a Bowl of Tea – Teaching and Learning Through Embodied, Sensory Experience

Just as I did with the tray of sweets, I place the tea bowl between myself and my neighbor and bow, saying “Osaki ni.” He bows in return. Taking the bowl with my right hand and stabilizing it briefly with my left, I place it in front of me, bowing again to the host and saying, “Otemae choudai itashimasu (お点前頂戴致します; Please allow me to have some of the tea you’ve prepared).” She bows slightly in acknowledgment but does not make eye contact with me. I pick the bowl up with both hands, my right hand cupping the side and left supporting the bottom, and raise it while bowing my head slightly in thanks. In two small movements, I rotate the front of the bowl away from me, thus avoiding drinking directly from the front of the bowl, which is a demonstration of humility.

The warmth radiating from the rustic, unglazed surface is comforting and relaxing. The edges of the bowl surround my vision, and the green frothy liquid is all I can see as I drink. Resting between sips, I appreciate the bitter, vegetal flavor. I notice that while I was drinking, the fukusa in its triangular form has reappeared tucked back into the left side of the host’s obi. On the final sip, I make a short audible slurp to drink the remaining foamy residue sliding down the tilted ceramic surface of the bowl’s inside. This sip also alerts the others in the tea room that I have finished drinking.

Figure 24. Drinking tea together during a lesson.
The simple act of drinking tea in the Japanese tea ceremony is one that engages all the senses of the body. As I drink the tea, I appreciate not only the immediate sensory qualities of the tea but also the sincere intention of the host as demonstrated through her disciplined and refined movements. By drinking the tea and physically taking it into my body, so, too, do I receive the meaning and intention communicated by the host through her preparation of the tea. In the same way, much of the meanings and intentions of chanoyu are experienced directly by the body, unmediated by words. The embodied experience of drinking tea becomes a metaphor for the embodied practice of studying the tea ceremony. Concepts of karada de oboeru (Sato, 2004), in which knowledge is gained with and through the body, as well as mi ni tsuk(er)u (Kondo, 1990; Sato, 2004), in which skills are attached to and ultimately become one with the body, describe the embodied learning and teaching that happens in the tea room.

The Role of the Body

When considering the role of the body in learning tea ceremony, I consider both the body’s capabilities for movement as well as its ability to feel, sense, and experience. In this section, I discuss the discipline of bodily movement in the tea ceremony and how this contributes to learning and teaching with the body. Through focused sensory interaction with aesthetic elements of materials and other sensory experiences in the tea room, the senses are slowly broadened and honed over time, which contribute to participants gaining richer experiences and greater understanding of tea ceremony.

Discipline and Bodily Movement

Learning to study tea ceremony is, as Urasenke instructor Dr. Hanson once said, “following rules and being bound.” Through these rules, one comes to realize that
“discipline promotes freedom,” as Dr. Hanson noted. Two of the most important elements of training the body to follow the rules of tea ceremony are repetition and sitting in seiza. Considered from the perspective of art education, this emphasis on the restriction of movement through discipline and repetition may seem to be antithetical to creative expression. However, as I describe, these restrictive elements instead allow participants to engage with creativity within the discipline of the rules.

**Training the body through repetition.** Repetition is something that some beginner students struggle to fully engage with, often succumbing to boredom and quitting. It is not uncommon for new faces to join a single master-led lesson and never come back again, which may be, in part, because the repetitive nature of building skills can make new students feel that they are not making progress quickly enough. Being aware of this, I was surprised to find that several students, including Alec, Dakota, and Geoff, told me that they actively enjoyed learning through repetition, which may be why they have enjoyed and continued with practicing tea ceremony. Geoff explained to me that he repeatedly practiced folding the fukusa whenever possible, even outside of lessons. He felt that learning through repetition was the best way to achieve his goal of carrying out the task naturally and fluidly. For Geoff, the ideal situation was folding the fukusa without looking at his hands because he was confident in trusting that his body could accomplish the task without having to actively think about the complex motions.

In a lesson with beginner students, Morgan-sensei told them, “[D]on’t worry about memorizing. It’s about training your body how to move. The standard way to learn is by muscle memory—putting it into your body.” By telling students to put the movements “into [their] bod[ies],” she is essentially restating in English the ideas
conveyed by *mi ni tsuk(er)u* (Kondo, 1990; Sato, 2004), *karada de oboeru* (Sato, 2004), and *katachi de hairu* (Kondo, 1990). In an interview, Morgan-sensei also drew connections between the idea of *kata* and tea ceremony practice. “In a way, tea ceremony is all *kata* almost because you’re learning this very strict form. Even though the form is *temae.*” The term *kata* is not usually used by teachers during lessons; however, it shares key elements of *kata*, which Powell (2012) identified as “repetition, imitation, and slow motions so that the form is imprinted upon the body” (p. 118). Morgan-sensei explained that the forms in *temae* “teach you how to move and the sequence and how to think about how you’re handling things and how to think about your relationship to other things in the room.” In this way, following the prescribed forms of *temae* with the body expands students’ awareness and understanding of relationships in the tea room. Echoing Dr. Hanson, Morgan-sensei continued that “once you’ve internalized [the forms], you realize how much freedom there is within the forms for there to be expression.” Though there is room for variation and individuality in these internalized forms, she mentioned that “the forms [express] themselves through you” and not the other way around, cautioning that “if you start from a place of trying to be an individual in tea ceremony, you’ll never learn tea ceremony. You’ll only learn how to be more of an individual.” This point is perhaps one of the most challenging for tea students; this minimizing of the ego and radical acceptance of the form transforms the body of the tea ceremony practitioner into the medium through which aesthetic expression is achieved in complete union of art and artist. Achieving this level of union is only possible through concentrated repetition to the point where the boundary of art and natural movement is completely effaced.
Phill also discussed the importance of dedication to repetition, comparing it at one point to meditation, a sentiment several other participants echoed. As he said, “If you just sacrifice yourself to the repetition and you just force yourself to fully get into that zone of it, it becomes something that is incredibly spiritual in nature but simultaneously improves your skill drastically.” Like Morgan-sensei, he emphasized a submission to and trust in the repetition, which ultimately becomes the foundation of skill development. Nahks also speaks of embracing repetition in practice: “[I]t may look at first like you’re doing the same thing over and over and over, but when some things become,” he pauses, “a little more reflexive . . . some things take on a more natural flow, [and] then your mental resources are more freed up to start paying attention to more subtle details.” The ability to attend to more subtle details can allow participants to identify poor habits, such as bad posture, and make sense of the logic behind the movements.

Rosemary also pointed out another way that engaging with repetition can reveal underlying meanings: “[I]t’s not just about what you’re doing and in which order, but in identifying the logic behind the order and starting to move intuitively and with the breath.” Moving naturally and intuitively is linked here with moving “with the breath,” a way of linking movement to the automatic bodily process of breathing. Elkinton (1995) also commented on the breath as the foundation for rhythm in chanoyu that “[integrates] gestures so that each follows the other” (p. 335). In discussing the Omotesenke Iemoto’s daily practice of the most basic temae, Hara-sensei said, “If you practice every day, every movement becomes more natural and smooth.” Though the simple temae are not challenging, the repetition of these most basic forms are able to help make movements
more intuitive and fluid, and the skills and bodily knowledge can then be applied toward more advanced techniques.

**Sitting in seiza.** Tea ceremony occurs almost entirely while both guest and host are seated in the *seiza* position, in which they sit on their knees with their legs folded underneath them. This position can quickly become uncomfortable when blood flow to the feet and legs becomes constricted. This is especially the case for practitioners who are not accustomed to this position, including those who have not grown up in Japan, where sitting in *seiza* is still a relatively common practice (although it has been growing less common). Given the discomfort associated with the position, what is its function in the tea ceremony?

Morgan-sensei explained that sitting in *seiza* is the foundation of the movements of the tea ceremony. “You’re missing something vital if you’re not sitting in *seiza,*” she said. Alec also explained that “you have so much mobility around you when you sit in *seiza*. It’s true what they say about it being the center.” Sitting on one’s legs creates a solid foundation that allows for turning from side to side and leaning forward or backward without fear of losing one’s balance. Sitting in *seiza* also dramatically impacts posture, Kitazawa-sensei pointed out, since it trains the muscles, especially in the abdomen and lower back, to provide better support and better posture. Morgan-sensei and many of the instructors encourage their students to at least try to sit in *seiza* during lessons, but they are also vigilant in advising students not to sit any longer than is comfortable.

Even Geoff, who struggled with sitting comfortably in *seiza* throughout his semester of study, recognized that it was important. “If your sensei is doing *seiza*, then
the best thing to experience the full learning process is by doing that,” he said. He referenced how tea movements feel much different when carried out seated in non-*seiza* positions. Even other positions of floor-sitting, such as sitting cross-legged, do not provide the balance or range of movement necessary for *chanoyu*. It is, for example, quite difficult to bow properly when sitting cross-legged. However, Geoff mentioned that there is a time limit during which one can comfortably maintain *seiza* and that he changes to other positions when he cannot tolerate sitting in *seiza* any longer.

During one *Urasenke* beginner lesson, Geoff, Alec, Maria, Jared, and Morgan-sensei were seated in a circle on the *tatami* mats. Morgan-sensei was guiding them through the *ryakubon usucha temae* in making tea for the first time. However, just before they were ready to pour the hot water onto the tea that they had already placed in their respective *chawan*, Morgan-sensei noticed the *tetsubin* kettle was running low on water.

“So just relax. If you’re on your knees, feel free to get off your knees. I’ll be right back,” she said, while standing, kettle in hand. Almost as soon as she stepped off the mats, the students immediately changed position, some sliding to the side in a kind of side-saddle position to remove pressure from their legs while others sat cross-legged. Geoff kneeled so that he was upright from his knees upward. Because they were practicing the role of the host, *seiza* position was one way of demonstrating respect for both their imaginary guests and for the teacher in the context of the lesson. However, as soon as that mindset was broken by Morgan-sensei temporarily leaving the tea room and giving them express permission to move, their positions changed. When she returned with the full *tetsubin*, all students immediately returned to *seiza* position. In this anecdote,
the relationship between bodily position and mindset is made visible as students move into and out of *seiza*.

*Seiza* is also an important factor of student focus. Courtney commented that “for the people who can manage to do it for a bit and don’t immediately feeling pain, it’s kind of, at least to me, it’s like a focusing thing.” Morgan-sensei also discussed *seiza*’s ability to contribute to or detract from focus: “*Seiza* is very constrictive, but that can help to focus your mind. It can help get you into that mindset of doing tea, but when it becomes painful, it becomes the opposite—it becomes almost an obstacle.” Her words here are a very accurate description of my own experience with *seiza*; I typically find that it is helpful in focusing my mind because my body is also focused on the position. However, there are some days where I cannot seem to settle into the position, and the pins and needles and heat of reduced blood flow attracts more of my attention than the content of the lesson at hand. Dakota correlated the discomfort of the position to a renewed attention to his posture and also saw *seiza* as an embodied form of discipline that reminded him to keep paying attention. Thus, students’ bodily experiences of *seiza* underline the linkage between the body and mind in the practice of the tea ceremony.

Geoff discussed how his surroundings play a key role in differentiating whether *seiza* helps him focus. In more “pure” situations, such as master-led lessons and formal demonstrations, he said *seiza* caused him fewer problems because he was so focused on his performance. However, *seiza* was more difficult for him in casual peer environments in which he was less intensely focused. Alec also mentioned occasions when the discomfort of *seiza* broke his focus: “Sometimes [my feet]’ll go numb and hurt to the point when I have to stop listening to Morgan-sensei a little bit to put my knuckles on the
tatami and lift my legs up a bit.” However, he also mentioned that “part of the instruction is also getting used to things. Just like getting used to a temae, well, you have to get used to seiza, too.”

In part because it is such an obstacle for students to acclimate to, seiza also becomes a kind of accomplishment as students realize they are able to hold the position more comfortably for longer periods of time. “People feel accomplished when they can start sitting seiza for long periods,” Morgan-sensei noted. This was something that I noticed particularly with Alec and Geoff as they reflected on their adjustment to the position over their first semester of study. Alec commented on how much he had gotten used to seiza:

It’s hurting a lot less now and . . . I expect it to go numb, I know when the feeling will come back, it’s like you get used to it a little bit. . . . Like you said to me when I first started, you’ll get better over time. . . . I think sitting in an awkward position that might hurt at first is well worth the . . . grace and control over your own body that it brings to the ceremony.

Particularly in his last comment, the “grace and control” that seiza allows practitioners to execute in their movements is both a reason for why the position is so central to the tea ceremony and also almost a reward for students who stick with it. Both Courtney and Nahks also mentioned a growing comfort in their bodies’ abilities to adjust to seiza. However, Nahks mentioned that one aspect that still causes him some self-consciousness is when he, as the host, needs to wait to regain sensation in his legs instead of being able to stand and smoothly exit the tea room after his temae. This moment at the end of a host’s temae is a point of struggle for many students, and teachers are often sympathetic
to this. On several occasions, students have stumbled on numb feet as they attempted to stand, and teachers have reached out a hand to help the unsteady student. During her first \textit{temae}, Savanna struggled at this point, kneeling while waiting for her feet to return to normal. Kitazawa-sensei suggested that she find secret places in the \textit{temae}, such as directly after serving tea when guests are more focused on the tea, where she can discreetly relax her legs in order to be able to stand smoothly when the time came. Rosemary commented that this point can also be troublesome for her because the \textit{Urasenke} teachers often allow students to skip the portion where they return the utensils to the \textit{mizuya} after the \textit{temae} due to their numb feet. “We tend to skimp on that ending section,” she said. “I’m actually kind of not confident that I could celebrate tea in a public context because I don’t know if I’d be able to get up gracefully at the end.” Though tea masters’ sympathy for their students’ troubles is usually helpful, this example shows that sympathy can sometimes create a weak point in the student’s ability to complete \textit{temae} successfully. However, other actions teachers take to show sympathy toward struggling students, such as the words of commiseration Mihori-sensei once shared (“It’s torture, right?”) and Morgan-sensei’s affirmations and inclusion of breaks for students to stand and stretch (“Alright. Good job! Stretch! Stretch! Get your blood back in your legs!”) help to ensure that students feel supported in their struggle and that their bodies better acclimate to the position.

\textbf{Flow of Learning with the Body}

Tea ceremony practice requires bodily engagement to learn. Hara-sensei described tea as something “you have to feel [with] your body.” Similarly, Courtney summed up \textit{chanoyu} by saying that “[m]ost of tea ceremony is learning how to use your
body correctly. To get the physical movements down is to get the basics down. A lot of it is muscle memory at this point.” Repetition, as discussed previously, is one way to establish this muscle memory, but there are other ways that students learn with their bodies.

Several students mentioned that they also consider the efficiency and logic of movement in chanoyu as one way to help develop their muscle memory and fluidity of motion. Chanoyu, Lohit said, “is distilled down to the most efficient [movements]. And that makes it a lot easier to learn.” He continued explaining that if he does get stuck on what the next movement is, “more often than not, the right answer is what seems simplest.” Every movement has a practical reason behind it. This simplicity is by design, as Kitazawa-sensei explained: “[K]ata is whatever you have to do naturally, like water running. It looks very complicated, but it’s very functional.” According to her, everything has a meaning, and the temae is “the most simple, faster, and most beautiful way.” The simplicity and practicality of these movements help to make them easier for the body to learn and remember. Hara-sensei also spoke of the smooth, naturalness of movement: “[F]rom the bottom of the heart, that movement comes from inside the body, so in that case, that movement becomes like water, natural and smooth.” Interestingly, while both she and Kitazawa-sensei noted that movement should be smooth like water, Hara-sensei made the distinction of connecting the source of this motion to the heart, which reinforces Sato’s (2004) emphasis on kokoro as the heart of learning in Japanese contexts. Connecting kokoro to physical movement emphasizes the emotional and spiritual elements of the holistic tea ceremony practice, which I will discuss further in the next chapter.
The efficiency and naturalness of tea ceremony movements are better performed without much conscious deliberation. Lohit described this in his personal experience as follows: “I noticed that especially when I start overthinking my temae . . . the speed and the flow decreases.” He connected this mindset as similar to one he encountered in sports “where you kind of just have to let muscle memory take over.” Specifically, he connected his tea practice to his experiences in archery, in which “a lot of the best shots you just look at the target and then let your arms do it.” Similarly, he explained that “my best tea ceremonies that I’ve performed . . . are definitely when I let muscle memory take over, and you just don’t think about anything.” By not thinking about it and “just letting his arms do it,” a meditative aspect is added that helps improve the performance.

**Teaching with the Body**

The embodied nature of tea ceremony means that practitioners are not only learning with the body but also teaching with it. In my observations, I have noticed four primary ways that instructors use their bodies to teach students: modeling, monitoring, mirroring, and manipulating.

Modeling actions is perhaps the most obvious way to teach tea ceremony. It is particularly effective since, as Morgan-sensei said, “seeing is so much easier to understand than verbal explanation.” Kitazawa-sensei echoed this sentiment, explaining that showing is easier than explaining with words, particularly for Japanese instructors who may not always feel confident in their English. Morgan-sensei also mentioned that modeling is effective in helping students unconsciously pick up on the teachers’ movements and establish the rhythm of the temae. “I want them to feel the rhythm, and I want them to start feeling the pace so they start to incorporate it into their muscle
memory and so their subconscious starts to pick up on it.” Teacher demonstrations are almost always accompanied by some form of verbal narration, with the quality of voice and level of detail often varying based on students’ demonstrated proficiency or perceived confidence. The more comfortable students appear, the quieter and less detailed this narration is.

Figure 25. Matsuda-sensei models scooping tea for Savanna.

Monitoring is an obvious choice to pair with modeling. By observing students’ movements throughout the process, sensei are able to adjust their teaching as needed, gauging whether students need more or less assistance. Morgan-sensei mentioned that if she sees students beginning to anticipate her prompts, she will stop prompting them to allow their muscle memory to take over. Conversely, if students look lost, she will say more and give more detail. The ultimate goal, however, she said, is to be able to say “begin” and have students complete the temae without any prompting. Both Lohit and Dakota said they preferred and enjoyed practices in which the student performed and the sensei corrected their mistakes. “I think it’s easier to do yourself, rather than watching
someone else do it and then doing it yourself,” Lohit said, indicating that perhaps modeling was not as effective of a technique for him as being monitored and corrected.

Similar to modeling, mirroring was a technique several instructors used. Morgan-sensei often made heavy use of it in beginner lessons. As with modeling, doing the motion along with students provides a reference on which they can base their own actions. A teacher modeling motions as students actively practice gives students a flexibility and agency in choosing either to focus on the subtleties of the teacher’s movements or to focus more on their own actions while listening to teacher prompts to build confidence. Mirroring was especially useful for practicing footwork, as can be seen in the following example with Morgan-sensei and Alec.

Morgan-sensei was guiding Alec through his first full temae, practicing the host’s exit from the tea room after the ceremony concludes. They both were seated on the tatami, with Morgan-sensei sitting on Alec’s right, and both were facing in the same direction. Morgan-sensei was sitting on the center half-mat so that both she and Alec had the full width of their respective mats on which to practice the footwork.

“So, pick up the kensui first, and then . . .” Morgan-sensei said, rising to a kneeling position. Alec was already standing fully upright, but Morgan continued, providing an example. “Left,” she said, standing upright on her left foot, “and now—this is a little bit different because you have the kensui in your hand—you’re going to turn away from the guest.”

“Ah,” Alec said, watching his teacher while holding the kensui at his left side.

“Your left goes back to the right corner here,” she said while looking down at her feet and drawing her foot from the center of the tatami into the corner, the movement
turning her body so that she now faced the left. Alec was copying her instructions while looking down at his own feet.

Figure 26. Morgan-sensei and Alec practice footwork for exiting the tea room.

“Your right foot comes up to the line, and your right foot crosses,” Morgan-sensei explained, turning to the left again as she slid her right foot up to and then across the black cloth borders that separated the central mat from the mat that ran up to the host’s exit of the room. “And your left foot crosses,” she said, as her left foot followed. These steps had turned her body a full 180 degrees from her starting position. Alec copied her movements in his own space, arriving in the same final position.

“Oh, right, we’re leaving,” Alec commented as he remembered that crossing onto a new mat with the right foot was the procedure for leaving.

“We’re leaving, exactly,” Morgan-sensei continued, watching as Alec moved toward the exit. “And your right foot comes up to the line, and left foot steps out.” As Alec exited the tea room, he followed Morgan-sensei’s narrated directions and then placed the kensui on the nearby sink. “Good, and then you’re going to come back in for
the tray,” Morgan-sensei said, directing him to return to the tea room to remove the rest of the wares.

Because so much of the tea room choreography for entering, exiting, and moving around the tea room requires paying close attention to which foot is stepping where, mirroring is an ideal way to ensure that students can see a model while also having space and opportunity to simultaneously try out the movement for themselves. Mirroring provides scaffolding for students to feel supported as they build confidence in executing movements semi-independently.

The last technique, manipulating, was the least frequently used. When using this technique, the tea instructor physically moves students’ bodies, hand placement, or object orientation in order to help them understand the correct movement or placement. Morgan-sensei mentioned that she tries to draw attention to the way things feel when she is adjusting positions. Particularly in correcting awkward hand positions, she asks students to “feel how much better that feels when you’re doing it [this way].” This helps students develop a bodily awareness of natural and comfortable positions, which is revisited when students begin studying more advanced techniques when “you start to talk about the way that our state of mind affects the way that you move and the way it affects other people in the room.” As I discuss further in the next chapter, awareness of one’s individual, embodied experience in tea comes to impact the communal experience for all participants in the tea room.

During an Urasenke beginner practice focusing on the fukusa-folding portion of warigeiko, I observed a confluence of these embodied teaching techniques. Morgan-sensei was sitting with the group on the tatami, demonstrating and narrating the folding
process (modeling and mirroring). One member, Jared, was having some trouble following the rest of the group. Although he tried to correct himself on his own by watching the teacher and his peers, when Morgan-sensei leaned over to see how he was doing (monitoring), he admitted that he “got lost.” Morgan-sensei was able to quickly diagnose the issue and physically took his *fukusa* from between his fingers to rotate it and reorient it in his hands (manipulating). Once the position was corrected, she continued working closely with him, demonstrating and explaining the folding as he followed along (modeling and mirroring). Though she eventually returned to face the group, she continued to glance over to Jared to check his progress until he seemed more confident with it (monitoring). While Morgan-sensei gave Jared more focused attention, she also continued to demonstrate and narrate for the benefit of the other students, monitoring the other students’ progress as well.

*Figure 27.* Morgan-sensei helps Jared to reorient his *fukusa* and correct his hand position.
Material Interactions

The body’s interaction with materials and objects is also an important consideration of tea study. Materials can influence or restrict movements, provide symbolic meanings, or contribute to practitioners’ aesthetic appreciation of their experiences in the tea room. Objects also serve to act as an intermediary through which tea students can communicate concepts and ideas. Most importantly, being able to utilize and interact with the materials and utensils in the tea room is an important way to help students learn. Lohit points this out, saying that “we could learn from a book, but having the materials for practice and being able to develop a tactile memory . . . it’s really easy to develop a muscle memory.”

One of the most fundamental materials in the tea room is the arrangement of the tatami mats. These mats dictate where people and objects can take up space and how they can move between the boundaries that demarcate one mat from another. Sitting on tatami in seiza also drastically impacts one’s posture.

Another reason that tatami is important is its function as a basic grid for many of the visible and invisible lines that are used to guide the movement and placement of objects and bodies in the tea ceremony. Courtney commented on the importance of alignment in the tea room, appreciating how “so many lines in or over or how certain things had to make triangles with other things and you had to align your body with the ro.” Thinking about objects and their orientation and alignment with each other, as well as their relationship to the body, is important in the environmental awareness required for tea. Even the body becomes part of these arrangements when its position is determined by other objects, such as the box-shaped ro or the heri borders of tatami.
As mentioned before, the long, 2-meter sides of the *tatami* are covered in plain black cloth, called the *heri*, while the shorter, 1-meter sides of the tatami are not. The arrangement of these mats and their *heri* create visible and invisible lines and corners that dictate the placement of objects and direct practitioners’ movements throughout the room. The arrangement of the *tatami* mats and their impact on movement are a large part of Morgan-sensei’s advice regarding the importance of “knowing the geography and the layout of the tea room.” In *Urasenke*, specifically, considering these boundaries and whether one is entering or exiting the tea room determines which foot is used to cross the mat-to-mat boundary. In both schools, the visible *heri* lines and the invisible continuations of these lines dictate where the host and guests can sit. Guests share the *tatami* space with typically two people to a mat, each person receiving half of the mat as divided by an invisible line breaking the rectangular mat into two square areas. In the warmer months when the ceramic *furo* (*風炉*)-style brazier is used, it shares the mat with the host, who sits in *seiza* so that their knees touch the invisible line that continues from the *heri* of the adjoining central mat. In Figure 28 below, I illustrate some of the visible and invisible lines that dictate the placement, orientation, and arrangement of objects and bodies in the tea room during the winter *ro* season. (Diagrams of additional tea room setups, including setups for the summer *furo* season can be found in Appendix D.)

For guests in *Omotesenke* reaching for an object like a tea bowl, the location of the object on either the nearer or farther side of a *tatami heri* border dictates which hand can be used to pick up and move it. In the following example during a peer-led practice of *koicha*, Bethany and I were helping Dakota with the placement of the tea-filled
chawan and the decorative silk dashibukusa (出し袱紗) cloth that is used when drinking tea in koicha.

Figure 28. (In)visible lines of the tatami mat’s heri borders in the tea room in ro season.

“Sam has more practice with this than me, so follow her advice,” Bethany suggested to Dakota. Dakota, who was seated to my right in the position of the first guest, picked up the black raku bowl and placed it between himself and me.

“Osaki ni,” he said, bowing.

“I’m pretty sure you put dashibukusa there as well,” Bethany pointed out, noticing that Dakota had only moved the bowl.


“Oh,” Dakota said, picking up the colorful rectangle of folded decorative silk. He hesitated regarding where to place it next.

“So, between you—” Bethany began.
“—The dashibukusa—wait—no, no, no—” I said, watching Dakota place the cloth between the bowl and himself.

“—No, other side?” Bethany said. “Sorry.”

“So you pick it up, because on the outside [on the communal space of the central mat], you use your right hand always to pick up the dashibukusa. But once it crosses this border,” I said, pointing to the double layer of black heri in front of us that marked the border between the central mat and the mat we’re sitting on, “you place it with the left hand.”

“Left hand,” Dakota confirmed to himself.

“And it will be placed here.” I pointed to a spot just to the left of the bowl. Dakota placed the cloth, saying, “Here. Like that. Oh. That’s what I thought.”

“Dōzo (ドーぞ; go ahead),” I said, gesturing with both hands to Dakota to continue.

“Osaki ni,” he said again, and we bowed to each other and resumed the normal flow of practice.

This example shows another way that tatami can influence bodily movement, particularly as the border represented by heri is one way of indicating the border between inside and outside. The dichotomy between inside (uchi; うち) and outside (soto; そと) is a core concept in Japanese culture (Kondo, 1990). Although a detailed discussion of this is beyond the scope of this study, whether one is marked as inside or outside in Japanese culture is an important factor in determining membership in a given group and is a strong influence on the patterns and degree of formality of speech. This concept of uchi and soto is also demonstrated physically through the movement of the tea bowl and dashibukusa.
from the communal space (*soto*) of the central mat with the right hand into the more private spaces (*uchi*) of individual guests with the left hand. The transition across and within the *heri* boundaries is marked by using either the right or left hands depending on whether it is placed outside of the border on the center half-mat or inside the mat in front of and between guests.

Lines are also important in the folding of the silk *fukusa* cloth used to cleanse tea utensils. As can be seen in Figure 29, the square cloth typically has a diagonal fold creased into it from one corner to another through many repeated uses. These folded lines are helpful when learning to fold the *fukusa* because the cloth naturally will fold in the direction it is meant to go in, and the presence of these folds influences the movement of the cloth. Similarly, as tea practitioners train their bodies through *temae*, they are training metaphorical folds into the body that will later assist in making their motions more fluid as they practice.

*Figure 29. Folded lines on a fukusa.*
Another textile that has great influence on guiding the body’s movement is the wearing of kimono. Especially for women, who wear a large *obi* sash tied around their waists, the garment and the way that it is wrapped around the body constrains movement. Kimono wearers must also be careful of the long, draping sleeves, particularly as a host, to avoid dropping them inadvertently in the liquid in the *kensui* or *chawan*. Before I studied tea, I had already become accustomed to kimono through my *kitsuke* (着付け; kimono-dressing) lessons and wearing kimono casually. However, in the Institute, kimono were only worn rarely until recently because they lacked regular access to both the garments and accessories as well as the knowledge on how to wear them. When I joined the *Chanoyu* Club, I began bringing kimono to lend to members for master-led lessons and then initiated a small group for learning *kitsuke*, which helped increase the frequency of kimono-wearing during master-led lessons. As students practiced in kimono, they began recognizing the ways that the garment influenced their movements. The logic behind certain movements suddenly became clear now that they had, for example, a long sleeve to keep out of the way, or an *obi* constricting their range of motion.

Morgan-sensei spoke about the importance of kimono and how “it really affects the ways you think about things and the way that you do everything,” since, like *seiza*, it has a large impact on movement. “I feel a bit sloppy when I’m not wearing my kimono. Like I feel a little undone almost because I can move around too much or because my posture’s not necessarily being enforced,” she reflected. Though I am still relatively new to the tea ceremony, I had already become accustomed to the ways that kimono both constrains and helps to provide structure to movements and postures. It is, for example,
very difficult to slouch in kimono, and long sleeves are typically held back with the opposite hand when reaching for objects. Rosemary also commented on this, suggesting that it would be very advantageous for new students to start studying tea in casual kimono “to have this influence on their movement because the movement of tea is shaped by the kimono.” Rosemary’s insight comes not only from her involvement in the kitsuke group I led but also from her experiences as a dancer who is aware of the impact costuming can have on movement.

Interacting with materials through tea ceremony practice is also a way of gaining knowledge and appreciation. “Each item in the room and each thing that you learn about has a lot of significance,” Lohit explained. He gave the example of how when guests bow to the scroll, they are symbolically bowing to the artist in respect for their work. “Because each step and each item has a really deep significance that you can go into, I think that makes it a lot easier to learn,” he said. “Nothing really feels random.” The meanings associated with the items and movements in the tea room make them easier to remember and understand, which, in turn, makes performance easier.

As in Lohit’s example, practitioners bow to the scroll as a way of respecting its creator. This is just one of the ways that objects serve to act as an intermediary for human relationships. The scroll, flowers, and arrangement of other tea utensils are carefully chosen by the host to convey a particular theme or message. Lohit often experimented with the selection of tea wares and the tradition of giving wares symbolic or poetic names to convey meaning to guests. Themes of a ceremony can also, however, be expressed more literally, such as in the final Omotesenke public demonstration. Kitazawa-sensei thoughtfully brought a scroll with calligraphy of the character 関 (kan). Kan refers to a
type of gate or boundary, in this case signifying the graduating students’ transition to a new stage in life and, for the remaining students, the conclusion of one school year and entry into the next. With this understanding, participants were able to reflect on the theme of progress during the quiet stillness of the tea ceremony.

A host’s choice of tea wares is also a reflection of their knowledge of the guests. Both Courtney and Geoff spoke of making this consideration while in the host role. “With Japanese tea ceremony, you’re always supposed to consider your guests above yourself. At least in terms of ware choices, if I know the first guest and know their choice of bowl, I’ll typically go for that and make tea accordingly,” Courtney explained. Geoff got a little more specific when he asked me, “You like the blue tea bowl, right?”—referring to the only blue bowl used by the club, my personal chawan. “If I bring you a green tea bowl, then you won’t be happy about it—that’s extreme. But the fact that I’m trying to, as a host, I’m trying to cater to your needs,” he said. Between the symbolic meanings of wares and the knowledge of guest preferences, students who practice in the host role must carefully consider the arrangements and aesthetic choices they make so that they can properly convey the feeling that they wish their guests to enjoy during tea.

**Sensory Experience**

Because of the plain quietness of tea rooms, distractions are limited, and the mind starts to pay more attention to sensory elements, as Morgan-sensei pointed out to me. Though the tea room at Penn State cannot entirely represent the traditional tea room environment, it still maintains a quiet atmosphere to help students attend to the sensory experience of tea ceremony. Rosemary described tea as “much more a sensory experience than an intellectual one.” Nahks agreed with her that it is a “meditative, relaxation thing
as well,” but he struggled to connect fully with the sensory nuances of practice, in part because he said he has a hard time shutting off his tendency to intellectualize the experience. Rosemary noted that “when [the practice] becomes meditative,” the intellectual part is removed and one can achieve “a state of empty mind in which you are thinking primarily with the body.” Provided that students are able to attend to the sensory elements of tea ceremony, they can then use that experience to further develop their sensory awareness. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this awareness helps students consider the relations between themselves, the objects, and the others sharing the space, as well as with the space itself.

One of the most important sensory elements that contributes to learning is the subtle sounds of the tea ceremony. Elkinton (1995) described the sounds of the tea ceremony as being functional signals for the host and guest, as well as incidentally occurring as the natural result of temae gestures, and noted how sounds contribute to the beauty of the ceremony (pp. 50–51). Courtney mentioned how sounds act as “audio cues” that measure time in the ceremony but also spoke of enjoying the aesthetic beauty of “how the pitch of the water [boiling in the kama] changes whenever you pour hot or cold water.” One of the most important signaling noises, Morgan-sensei pointed out in one practice, is the sound of the rinse water from the chawan being emptied into the kensui after all guests have been served tea: “That pour after the rinse is the moment of decision because this is the moment where the host needs to know, am I wiping the bowl and preparing a second serving in it? Or am I finishing?” This signal is the point where the first guest may request that the host close the ceremony, or if the first guest says nothing, the host will know to continue preparing tea. Therefore, both guest and host need to be
aware of this signal as well as how they plan to respond to ensure that the ceremony flows smoothly.

Both Courtney and Nahks also mentioned making use of touch as the host when judging the temperature of the water as it is added to the tea in consideration for the guest. Nahks described how this also influences his movements and timing: “Oh, this is getting cold quick, speed it up,” so that the guest receives a hot bowl of tea, or “this is far too hot, let’s drag this out a bit,” so that the tea cools to a more drinkable temperature by the time it reaches the guest. By engaging with their senses, students use sensory information to make judgments on when and how they act in the tea ceremony.

During master-led lessons, teachers often intentionally drew students’ attention to these sensory aspects, asking them to consider a sound or what they are looking at or how they are feeling during the ceremony. In different lessons, Mihori-sensei commented on the “very nice sound” of water being poured out of the hishaku into the kama, and Kitazawa-sensei drew attention to the quieting sound of the kama after the cold water was added. When students were drinking tea, Morgan-sensei encouraged them to think about their experience of the tea, explaining that “you’ll find that everyone’s tea is different based on their body.” Emphasizing the body and the role it plays in the tea that each person produces underlines chanoyu as an embodied practice whose product is both produced and experienced by the body. She also suggested that “you can taste a lot about someone’s spirit in their tea,” drawing a connection between the bodies imparting their uniqueness into making the tea, the sensory experience of the taste, and the influence of one’s spirit on the making of the tea and others’ experience of the product.
The *haiken* (拝見; observation) of the tea bowl after the tea has been drunk is one point where sensei often guided students in engaging with the sensory nature of the tea bowl. In one lesson, Mihori-sensei simply asked students, “What are you looking for?” Through this, Mihori-sensei encouraged students to contemplate for themselves what they were focusing on as they looked. Morgan-sensei, however, was a little more direct in telling students what qualities to pay attention to: “You’re looking at the details of the bowl, the shape, glaze, and sometimes there’s a signature,” she reminded students in an advanced *Urasenke* lesson. With the beginners later in the day, Morgan-sensei asked them to “look at the shape of [the *chawan*] and how it feels in your hand.” After students observed the bowl, they then returned it to the host, which Morgan-sensei suggested is “like saying goodbye. Thank you, little bowl, for serving me tea.” While Mihori-sensei was more indirect in prompting students to consider what they were looking at, Morgan-sensei drew students’ attention to specific details such as the texture and feel of the bowl, as well as modeling an attitude of appreciation by saying “thank you” to the bowl when she finished with it.

Morgan-sensei discussed the development of her own sensory awareness, explaining how she went from thinking as a beginner that “[a] tea bowl is a tea bowl. This one costs $50 and this one costs $5,000, and I don’t get why it’s different.” Now, through her many years of training in tea, she has come to better understand these subtleties:

You can pick up a tea bowl, and you can feel the story of the person who made it, and you can feel the weight of it and the shape of it, and you really get a sense of the quality of it. I find that having that sense of the quality of things, having the
sense of the taste of things, having the sense of picking apart the nuances of the
tea or waiting for a certain sound, I think you kind of get trained into that a little
bit, but it affects the way that your mind works, in a way. It’s kind of like voices
carry across a quiet space or scents carry across a space.

These scents and noises, she explained, become memory triggers that create paths
associated with tea experiences that build up over time. Though the students at the
Institute are still quite far from reaching this level of sensory awareness, they have shown
some signs of beginning to develop those kinds of sensitivities.

Courtney, in particular, discussed her awareness of the aesthetics of the tea room,
reflecting on her interest in space and study of architecture. In particular, she discussed
her appreciation for tatami at length: “It’s just very good. Like the duality of them, they
are smooth in one direction and rough in the other direction. . . . [L]ooking at a tea room,
the lighting difference on tatami oriented in different directions is crazy.” Reflecting on
the amount of time that it must take to weave the narrow pieces of straw together, she
expressed respect for the amount of time and skill required to do such fine work.

“They’re just comfortable and smooth, and they smell nice. And they make nice sounds,”
she said, recognizing the multisensory nature of tatami.

In addition to tatami, Courtney also drew attention to the general atmosphere of
the room. “The lighting of the room is a big thing. Like, taking lessons with Morgan[-
sensei] on the weekends this semester has been really nice because it’s been during the
day!” she said, comparing her current lessons those previously held with Dr. Hanson in
the evenings. Reflecting on the difference between traditional tea rooms in Japan and the
basement room that houses the Institute, she mentioned that though the dirt surrounding
the outside walls is unchanging, “the lighting that comes in the window is nice, and we can get some air in there. And Lohit can open the windows and freeze us all to death if he wants.”

Though Courtney jokingly mentioned Lohit’s tendency to keep the windows open even during the winter, it also brings to attention the role temperature can play in the tea room. This is particularly relevant when one considers that traditional tea rooms have thin walls and that the only source of temperature control is from the same brazier that heats the kama. Lohit often used this as a point of argument that opening windows was more authentic. This was probably somewhat true, as I recalled my own experiences of Japanese winters where interiors are heated room by room and windows are sometimes intentionally left open to allow fresh air inside.

Fresh air was not the only element of the natural environment that tea members considered. Alec pointed out the distinct naturalness of the tea ceremony’s sounds: “It’s all natural sounds. . . . It’s iron on iron; it’s bamboo on tatami. It’s nothing jarring or—”

“—Plastic?” I suggested.

“Plastic,” he echoed. “Shkskcskskks,” he said, imitating the sound while miming crumpling up plastic trash. “Wrappers. That’s never done—giving someone a sweet with a wrapper on it, right? That can’t—no. No. Way.”

“I don’t know . . .”

“No. Way. Nice. Ooh. Polyalthic crunch. Ooh. That’s real natural. No, that would withdraw me from the focus,” he laughed. “But yeah, that’s another thing I really like. All the sounds are very organic, wholesome, and not . . . usually, they’re not really
sounds you hear all the time every day in your life, which again just contributes to pulling
yourself out of the real world and putting yourself in chanoyu zone.”

Even as a beginner, Alec picked up on the natural aesthetic of tea ceremony
sounds and how out of place a plastic wrapper would sound. He discussed the “natural
sounds” as being unusual to his daily life, which is a matter of course for someone
coming from a modern American background. Interestingly, however, these sounds and
utensils were intentionally chosen because of their commonness in daily Japanese life as
a way of creating harmony between the tea space and everyday life. Elkinton (1995)
described this characteristic of the tea ceremony as a call to “the abiding sense of
naturalness, beauty in the midst of the everyday world, not hovering somewhere elusive
above it” (p. 264). This is one way that cultural background and historical position tie
into a practitioner’s interpretation of the aesthetic experience of the tea ceremony.

Engaging with the sensory nature of tea helps students to gain a sense of the
relationship between their bodies, objects in the space, and the space itself. In addition to
these relationships, the embodied sensory nature of tea ceremony also allows participants
to develop relationships with other people in the space, as I have already alluded to in the
previous discussion. The relational possibilities of the tea ceremony are brought out, in
part, from one of the principal philosophic considerations in tea, ichigo ichie. The
concept of ichigo ichie places deep emphasis on engaging fully with the present moment
because that time, that space will never exist in exactly the same way ever again. This
means that for each tea ceremony, even if the host, actions of the temae, choice of wares,
and gathering of guests are all the same, the actual experience will be a unique, once-in-
a-lifetime event that should be appreciated with careful attention. The intention of a
guest’s careful observation of a tea bowl in *haiken* after drinking tea at a formal tea gathering is founded in this concept of *ichigo ichie*: Because it is likely that the guest may never have the opportunity to see the bowl again, they should do their best to observe it thoroughly. “You may never see this bowl again” is a phrase Chanoyu Club members often uttered jokingly to each other when we practiced observing one of the Institute’s frequently used tea bowls. However, it remains a good sentiment to remember, since one can never be certain whether they may have the opportunity to revisit any given experience.

Because of the importance placed on mindfully engaging with the present, tea practitioners often come to develop an intensified sensitivity. Morgan-sensei explained that this happens as tea “makes you more sensitive to the quality of the things you touch, the quality of the things you taste and see and hear. Your senses become open, and you pay attention to everything.” This intensified sensitivity extends to other people as well as the objects of the tea room, and Morgan-sensei explained that this makes experienced tea practitioners particularly good at identifying the moods and thoughts of others as revealed by their motions both inside the tea room and out.

*Chanoyu*, like the *matcha* it is centered around, must be experienced through the body with all of the senses. Just as *matcha* is prepared according to the prescribed forms of the *temae*, the body is also prepared for producing tea through the discipline of *temae* forms. The structure of these forms is reinforced and supported by sitting in *seiza*, wearing kimono, and observing the borders demarcated by *tatami* mats. These restrictions are accounted for in the *kata* of *temae*, which are intentionally designed to create a natural flow of movement when practiced at a high level of proficiency. As the
movements become more and more natural through repetition, the boundary between art and artist begins to blur. Skills become part of the artist, just as matcha becomes part of the guest who drinks it. Because of the increasingly indistinct differentiation between the host and temae, the tea that is produced can reveal the spirit of the host. When one shares tea with others, it is not merely a physical experience but also involves one’s whole being. This holistic quality can be perceived through a focused honing of the sensory awareness within the tea room by mindfully engaging with the materials and objects used in the ceremony. Thus, just as subtle flavor notes can be revealed during the mindful drinking of matcha, so, too, is a more nuanced understanding of the holistic practice of chanoyu revealed through the movements of the body and the mindful sensory experience of the tea room.
Chapter 7
Observing the Tea Bowl – Tea Ceremony as a Relational, Aesthetic Practice

Placing the tea bowl down in front of me again, I use my thumb and index finger to wipe the edge of the bowl where my lips touched and dry my fingers on the innermost sheet of the *kaishi* in the overlapping layers of my kimono collar. I pick up the bowl again and rotate it counterclockwise in two short movements so that the front of the bowl is now facing me.

The tawny brown surface of the *chawan* is covered with burnt-in ruddy slashes that follow the curvature of the bowl. With the bowl on the *tatami* in front of me again, I rest my fingertips on the mat on both sides of the bowl and look at it closely, swaying from left to right. I take the opportunity to subtly lift my weight off of my feet slightly, and curl my toes under me so that I can regain some feeling in my legs. Brush-like grooves follow the circuit of the bowl’s inner walls, catching some of the slight *matcha* foam remaining in the bowl. A single splash of grey glaze sits off-center in the bottom of the bowl, surrounded by a rusty orange haze and green *matcha* residue.

![Image](image_url)

*Figure 30.* Holding the tea bowl in both hands for observation during a lesson.

Wanting to look at the bowl more closely, I stabilize my elbows on my thighs and pick up the bowl so that it is raised just inches from the floor. Doing so allows me to look at the bowl from all angles without fear of accidentally dropping and breaking it, out of respect for the bowl and the host who is serving me. I tilt the bowl away from me so that I can inspect the underside, looking for the maker’s chop. I find it, a small but clear impression of the character 義, likely one of the characters of the
artist’s name, pressed neatly within the circle of the bowl’s foot. At the same time, I cup the rim of the inverted bowl to catch any of the residual matcha foam that may drip out.

Placing the bowl back upright on the tatami, I take one last look at the bowl before picking it up with my right hand. Reaching forward, I place it ahead of myself on the tatami and, in the same way I originally received the chawan from the host, slide my kneeling body forward, leveraged by both fists. After a few short scoots, I reach the center of the tea room. I pick up the bowl and rest it on my left palm. With my right hand, I turn the bowl two times, 45 degrees each turn, so that the front now faces the host, and I place the bowl back down in the same spot from which I initially received it.

The host collects the bowl that I have just returned. As I slide backward to my place on the tatami, the host prepares to make a second bowl of tea. She uses the hishaku to pour a cupful of hot water into the chawan. As she did previously, while cleaning the chasen, she tilts and rotates the bowl, allowing the hot water to remove any remaining tea on the walls of the tea bowl. Pouring this green-tinted rinse water out into the kensui, she again wipes the bowl with the chakin. She continues to prepare a bowl of tea for the next guest in the same, careful manner as she prepared my tea. Just as I did, the second guest collects his tea, drinks it, carefully observes the bowl, and slides forward to return it.

During the observation of the chawan, guests carefully attend to the various subtleties and design characteristics of the bowl. In doing so, they are aware that the host has carefully and intentionally chosen this bowl for the guests in this specific ceremony. Therefore, observation of the chawan is not only centered on the individual characteristics of the bowl itself but is also a consideration of how these characteristics relate to the other items and people in the tea room, all of which come together to convey a specific theme. This relational consideration of the tea bowl is similar to the ways that participants use their chanoyu practice to find connections with themselves and with others. The sharing of a single bowl to take tea together becomes a symbol of the overall shared and embodied experiences that occur within the tea room. Students also consider the ways in which cultural concepts and cross-disciplinary connections influence their understanding of the tea ceremony. Through these connections that link experiences
inside and outside of the tea room, participants notice how *chanoyu* begins to have an impact on their daily lives.

Like *chanoyu* itself, the tea bowl has both aesthetic and utilitarian aspects. Just as the *chawan* is beautifully crafted, it is, at its base level, a functional vessel designed to hold tea. Similarly, the tea ceremony is beautifully presented, but stripped down, it is simply a process of preparing tea with rigid rules that govern its practice. As Sen no Rikyū said, *chanoyu* is “nothing more than boiling water, making tea, and drinking it” (Hanson, 2017). Does this, then, preclude it from being considered an art? Conversely, can this ordinariness help to broaden what can be conceived of as art?

**Relationality**

Through tea practice, the participants of this study found many ways to connect and relate to people, their own bodies, and previous experiences. Cultural concepts such as the Zen tradition, from which the tea ceremony arose, and the radical hospitality of *omotenashi* (おもてなし) help students to relate more closely with themselves and others. The training of the body and senses that takes place as one studies tea ceremony also contributes to a person’s ability to make connections between one’s body, mind, and spirit, as well as connections to others. Tea ceremony as a conglomerate of many different arts and practices also facilitates students drawing connections between tea practice and their experiences in other arts and disciplines as a way to understand tea.

**Relating Through the Body**

The holistic practice of tea ceremony draws connections between the mind and body through embodied action and sensory experience. These connections expand to become relational in the context of the group present in the tea room. Powell (2012) also
explained this phenomenon as it occurs in *taiko* playing, in which drummers are required “to think beyond the immediate physical self, to integrate these various environmental features into one’s playing. To play *taiko* thus requires an expanded, or relational, sense of self, a self that is always conscious of instruments, people, and spaces” (p. 118). This same consciousness is required in the tea room, as Morgan-sensei explained:

> So it’s really ultimately not just about your body and your senses, but about your state of mind and what you’re communicating through everything because . . . we have this ability to pick up on each other’s body language and emotions and small movements to an amazing degree that we don’t always take advantage of in our everyday lives. And one of the things that tea ceremony brings out is . . . how much of their minds and their spirits you can pick up on by watching what they do, so that’s part of tea training, too.

This is an ability that becomes more fully realized through the training that occurs in the tea room, so it is not yet something that many of the *Chanoyu* Club students experience to a deep degree. Some students, however, did begin talking about how they had already begun making connections between mind and body through embracing the meditative aspects of *chanoyu*.

Morgan-sensei also cautioned that emotions and moods can be communicated unconsciously to others through movements and *temae*. Prior to entering the tea room, hosts (and, to a lesser extent, guests) should focus on being calm and ridding themselves of any stressful or negative thoughts so as not to transmit those feelings to others. She discussed that because of the link between mind and body, “your mindset affects the way that you express things in your body, but you can also start with your body and start with
the movements in your body, and let that inform your mindset.” Considering this, even if students are struggling with keeping a calm, focused mindset, they can utilize engagement with the movements of *temae* to influence their mind to be calmer through bodily movement. This concept is very similar to the experience I described in which I focused on the *temae* movements to deal with my feelings of frustration during a lesson. Similarly, Morgan-sensei discussed the importance of embracing vulnerability through adopting an open body position. By opening up one’s body position, as is required in *chanoyu*, it invites openness and vulnerability in one’s mindset as well. According to Morgan-sensei, “[y]ou need that vulnerability to do tea well” because doing so allows one to better sense the moods of other people in the tea room and to adjust accordingly.

Thus far, I have mostly focused on Morgan-sensei’s advice as an experienced tea person; from now, I turn my attention to the realities of students’ experiences and how they are beginning to adapt to and embrace these concepts. Geoff, who was already highly attuned to relationships within the tea room with regard to showing respect and deference, as informed by his Asian cultural background, said that “being mindful of everything you do is a kind of meditation that helps to calm you down and be mindful of other people.” Though he didn’t take this explanation quite as far as Morgan-sensei did, he demonstrates an understanding of how focusing on actions can connect the body and mind, which then enhances one’s awareness of others’ emotions and thoughts as communicated by their actions and postures.

Through his training in classical piano, Phill also had a strong understanding of how minimizing the needs of the ego can unify the mind and body, as seen through the lens of performance:
The goal is to get you in a state of clarity that allows you to really focus on what you’re doing and by almost objectifying your body . . . and literally treating your body as an object, as through a medium of which to perform this art, it’s kind of almost mitigating the sense of self, mitigating the ego, mitigating the conscience, getting you in a state of quietude that allows you to perform that art.

Phill describes this as a kind of “disembodiment” in which one becomes “so involved in the experience that’s happening that your sense of self, like your mental sense of self, is mitigated.” Though, at first glance, this seems to be at odds with the notion of the unification of mind and body through experience, as Elkinton (1995) explained:

It is this very quality of undifferentiation [(Northrup, 1946)] that allows the participants and their media the deepest sense of mutuality; this experience is steeped in intuition, and it is the objectivity in the creative act that allows it to rise above the level of mere sensual subjectivity (p. 155).

Both Phill and Elkinton (1995) connect this experience to the Zen tradition, which seeks “the selfless, non-dual state [manifest] in the humble austerity of pure hospitality” (p. 5). This experience of “mitigating the ego,” as Phill said, allows the practitioner to “extend yourself as a piece of art, or become part of the whole”—that is, the ceremony—by “becoming part of the movements . . . instead of just being caught up in your own mind.”

When I asked students if they had begun to experience anything like the ability to get beyond consciously thinking about their movements, most did not yet have any such experiences to share, but several did recognize the potential or reported catching glimpses or glimmers of that kind of unified experience. Lohit said he had some “flow moments where it kinda just clicks.” Usually, he said he thinks about the actions or the tea or
scroll, but “meditating on the experience would be something that I feel like I could reach if I practiced enough and integrated that meditative aspect.”

Courtney was another student who reported that she hadn’t fully realized this kind of experience but had experienced some hints of it. As she progressed to the point where she had mastered the basics, she said she recognized that while it was important to master these skills, it was equally important to understand the meaning behind the actions: “It’s about to what ends and with what goal are you doing the things, which is to be as respectful as possible and to just enjoy tea with your company and enter this separate world.” She told me about some of the “glimpses” she had had of unifying the body, mind, self, and others:

In between my legs falling asleep and beginning, somewhere there is a moment where I’m . . . just, feeling the space, as it were. . . . When the light filters into the room, and we’re all just sitting there, and I just finished [making] a bowl of tea, and someone’s drinking it, and I ask the sensei if they want a bowl of tea, too . . . even though it’s not a ceremony, even though we’re just in lessons, I feel like that is a good gathering and that is the effort of the ceremony.

**Relating Through Cultural Ideas**

The emphasis on humility in tea becomes an important foundation as a relational tool in the practice of *chanoyu*. The Zen roots of the ceremony and its strong connection to meditative practice help tea practitioners to feel more connected with themselves and forge points of transference through which the practices of the ceremony become part of daily life. The profound hospitality of *omotenashi* demands a humility from practitioners that helps them relate more deeply to each other.
As Chung (2014) described, Zen tradition acts as a holistic approach to art and practice. In tea ceremony, we see the Zen goals of unification embodied in the four tea principles of wa-kei-sei-jaku (harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility). Additionally, we find in tea ceremony the Zen practice of a Way (-dō), through which a particular practice becomes part of one’s life (Chung, 2014; Elkinton, 1995). Bethany also spoke about this framework influencing her experiences with tea: “One thing that really struck me was that when you study chanoyu, you’re meant to take all the . . . ways of doing things and apply them to your whole life. . . . The idea [is] that you’re supposed to apply [chanoyu] to everything.” She told me that her experience of practicing the ritualized way of making tea, in which “you do things in a very purposeful way, in a very considerate order,” had also inspired her to similarly design a ritual-like process for her morning routine since “it makes sense to apply that to the rest of your life as well.” The impact of chanoyu practice on participants’ daily lives is discussed further in the next section.

The Zen origins of tea ceremony provide it with a close relationship to meditative practice, as I have already touched on earlier in this thesis. I invited a colleague, Lucy, who had no experience with tea ceremony, to observe a practice one weekend. Though she had no experience or knowledge of Japanese culture, she was still able to connect with this meditative experience, saying, “I felt like I had been meditating for like an hour and a half.” She connected this feeling to her practice of yoga and stated that she came away from the experience feeling that “everything is really vibrant. I feel really in touch with myself, and I feel like I had had quiet time in my heart.” Though yoga and Zen are from two different cultural traditions, both take a holistic approach to learning that is centered around meditative practice. The heightened focus of observing the ceremony
and being “intent on the motions and movements of the ceremony” provided Lucy with a heightened sensory experience, which allowed her to feel more centered and connected with herself. Even as an observer with no previous tea experience, she was able to enjoy tea ceremony as a relational experience that helped her feel more connected with herself.

In his final lecture given at the Institute, former Urasenke instructor Dr. Drew Hanson (2017) spoke of another cultural concept in tea, *omotenashi*, which he described as the central relational dynamic. This word can be translated as “hospitality,” but as Dr. Hanson emphasized, “it is Hospitality with a capital H” because of the profound ways in which it is expressed (p. 1). Though I have not yet mentioned the concept of *omotenashi* by name until this chapter, its presence has been referenced throughout the thesis, as seen through actions in the tea room, such as when students who are acting as hosts select wares they know will please their guests or use their sense of touch when preparing tea to ensure the tea is at an enjoyable temperature.

For these actions to be truly meaningful in the context of tea, though, they must not be done, as Dr. Hanson (2017) described, “just to impress the guest or to show off acquired knowledge. Rather, the host’s concerns are honestly directed outwardly toward the guest” (p. 3). In a similar way, Hara-sensei cautioned that while practicing tea, “don’t show off. It’s not like a Broadway musical. So you don’t need to show off, just, you know, like a general kind of *nanigenaku* (何気なく；calmly, naturally).” In this way, by humbly focusing on the guests’ experience, the hosts’ movements become less showy and more natural and unassuming. Though this is the ideal in tea ceremony, students did not necessarily practice like this. In the joint interview I did with Phill and Dakota, both had different opinions about including flourishes in their performances. Phill felt that “if
there’s even . . . the slightest bit of egotistical goal in it at all, it just doesn’t work. It has
to be purely about just enjoying the moment and enjoying yourself and enjoying
everybody there.” In contrast, Dakota interpreted his approach in a more performative
way; however, this was not because he was interested in making himself look good but
because he felt it would be more enjoyable for his guests. Though Dakota’s current
approach doesn’t seem to quite match up with Hara-sensei’s advice, he still is
approaching the practice with a focus on the guest over self. Both Phill and Dakota’s
approaches can be considered two different interpretations of the focus on guests’
experience that is so important to omotenashi in tea ceremony.

The practice of omotenashi hospitality in tea becomes a complete, relational
dynamic through the guest and host experiencing and responding to each other’s actions
and intentions, as Hanson (2017) described. The host’s “focus [of] mind and heart almost
exclusively on the guest or guests” (Hanson, 2017, p. 1) is put into action through the
ceremony. In turn, guests “shift the focus back onto the host as the gathering progresses,
a truly shared interaction” (Hanson, 2017, p. 1). In this way, omotenashi becomes a
transformative experience, in which participants “free the heart and mind, … give
themselves permission to be fully present, to be totally in the moment, and . . . mutually
share that moment, the host and guest together” (Hanson, 2017, p. 3).

This experience of omotenashi is connected to the sensory openness and
vulnerability that comes from the practice of engaging with the body, as Morgan-sensei
described earlier. By engaging with one’s own senses and establishing a close
relationship between mind and body, tea practitioners are also better able to anticipate the
sensory experiences and bodily comfort of others. Through the mindset of omotenashi,
the constant focus on the other helps to facilitate a deep relationship between people who share tea together.

**Relating to the Experience of Other Disciplines**

Tea ceremony itself is comprised of a number of different arts, which was echoed again and again by my informants. As Bethany explained, whatever aspects someone is interested in, they will be able to find that in *chanoyu*. Because of the holistic nature of tea ceremony and its inclusion of so many other arts and disciplines, it becomes very easy for practitioners to make connections between these experiences and *chanoyu*. The connections to and influence of experiences in other disciplines come to impact how these practitioners approach tea practice and develop tea-related skills.

Just as students tend to come to tea ceremony through tangential interests, several visiting *sensei*, too, began studying tea through other traditional Japanese arts. Mihori-sensei began studying tea, in addition to *nihon buyō* (日本舞踊; traditional Japanese dance) and *ikebana*, as a part of *hanayome shugyō* (花嫁修業). *Hanayome shugyō* can be understood as a kind of bridal training in which young women begin these traditional practices to become more feminine and more marriageable. Although Mihori-sensei primarily teaches tea and *ikebana* now, she was originally focused more on practicing and teaching dance and only became a tea teacher when she took over for her own sensei who had fallen ill. Mihori-sensei’s dance training is evident in her emphasis on walking beautifully in the tea room. “How to walk beautifully... And how to stand up, how to sit down, how to bow—those beautiful movements are pleasing to the guests’ eyes, right? That’s very important for the tea ceremony, where everything is beautiful,” she explained. During lessons with Mihori-sensei, much time and effort are dedicated to
practicing footwork as students move around the tea room, ensuring that they step carefully and correctly.

Matsuda-sensei also was studying under and assisting Mihori-sensei with her *ikebana* practice. Both Mihori-sensei and Matsuda-sensei spoke about how *ikebana* training helps to develop one’s eye for beauty and attention to detail, which becomes helpful in recognizing aesthetically pleasing arrangements of placing tea objects as part of *chanoyu*. Matsuda-sensei also spoke about how her *ikebana* training in arranging flowers helps her to plate tea sweets beautifully. She mentioned being complimented for her plating of foods in everyday contexts as well, indicating one way that these practices begin to bleed into one’s daily life.

For other sensei at the Tea Institute as well, their auxiliary interests often find a way into their practice and teaching of tea. Though Hara-sensei also had significant study in *ikebana*, her Zen Buddhist training tends to more significantly impact her teaching of tea. For example, Hara-sensei sometimes utilizes *zazen* (座禅; seated Zen meditation) as
a prelude to her lessons. In lectures, she has also used her experience to teach about difficult Zen aesthetic ideals, such as *wabi-sabi*. Similarly, Morgan-sensei’s interest in sweet-making has always been appreciated by students, and she would often bring fresh, handmade Japanese tea sweets to practices. These were helpful in giving students a taste, literally and figuratively, of tea ceremony aspects that are difficult to replicate in central Pennsylvania. Through these sweets, students can get a sense of the way that tea sweets can be used to evoke the seasons and the presence of nature in the ceremony and can gain exposure to the various tastes and textures of the sweets that accompany tea.

*Figure 32. Ryakubon tray with a chawan and Morgan-sensei’s handmade sweets.*

Students also often reflected on their individual backgrounds or experiences with other arts and disciplines to make sense of tea practice in a more metaphorical sense. Some of the artistic comparisons students talked about, such as music or dance, are not such a stretch from *chanoyu* because they share performative aspects. However, I was somewhat surprised when students also made connections to things like scientific lab work and sports.
Music was a common analogy that students found to describe the relationship between discipline and expression in tea. Bethany described tea as similar to a piece of music that remains the same structurally but can be played in different ways or via different renditions. *Chanoyu*, she said, “follows a process but that process itself is beautiful—it’s very graceful. It’s profoundly, artfully thought out, and there’s also interpretation on top of that.” Phill also connected tea practice with his approach to classical music, commenting that the discipline and structure seem “like it stifles you, but actually [it] opens the window to creativity.” This very much echoes Dr. Hanson’s statement about how “discipline promotes freedom.” Phill explained this concept in more detail, noting that

[i]t’s very minimal expression to an external observer. I mean, you look at the movements of *chanoyu* and you listen to . . . a Bach piece or something. The vibe is the same, in that sense of, “Okay, they’re playing a bunch of prescribed notes. They have no freedom. They’re just following the rules. They’re robots.” But to someone who knows what they’re doing, the little details in which you can express yourself give yourself a range of expression that’s more than you can possibly imagine.

He continues by saying that through playing with these small details, “you can turn it into anything you want and make it *absolutely* insane, but still retain the context of sticking to these laws and rules. . . . [R]estricition gives you a way to freedom beyond what you could possibly imagine.” As Phill described, the expression of *chanoyu* is in the subtle details that become more obvious as practitioners progress in their study. His experience in classical music has allowed him to understand the purpose behind the disciplined and
restrictive nature of tea ceremony without feeling like these rules have removed his agency in carrying the practice out.

Rosemary, who is a dancer, found ways in which her dance experience carried over into her learning of chanoyu. Rosemary’s experience with the embodied practice of dance has influenced how she carries herself and helps to make her movements, particularly walking, more natural. She mentioned that Dr. Hanson once commented on being able to see the effects of her dance training through her movement in tea ceremony lessons because they were so fluid. Rosemary also characterized the movements of temae as a kind of choreography, describing the multiple ways that dancers can remember their movements. When she is in the tea room, she said, “If I try and memorize step one, step two, step three, I don’t get it. But if I think of it as a continuous flow, and a three-dimensional shape in the air even, it helps me remember it much better.” Her experience with dance has helped her to gain a level of competency in moving her body that helps her recognize how she moves best and most smoothly so that she is able to incorporate this knowledge into practice in the tea room.

Bethany and Lohit, both of whom come from scientific backgrounds, compared tea ceremony to science. Bethany described how the ceremony is “precision engineered” in its organization as a unified expression of art and science. Lohit also spoke of science-as-art in tea and often described Chanoyu Club practices as a “tea lab.” During my interview with him, he explained, “I just kind of treated it as a lab environment—you just kind of learn by doing. There’s no point in sitting here and like . . . reading that,” he said, pointing to the small library of chanoyu books sitting on the cabinet across the room. “We have the temae book, but just reading it over and over
won’t do anything. I can look over it to remind myself of some of the steps,” but actually doing it is more important. For Bethany, the methodical organization of the steps of the ceremony was important in helping her to understand and appreciate the flow of the experience. Lohit, on the other hand, identified most strongly with the active, experiential learning that took place in the tea room. His frequent experimentation with pairing and naming wares can thus be taken as one way that he learned within the context of this “tea lab.”

Sports were another type of comparison that was brought up by both Lohit and Nahks. Lohit referenced his experience with tennis, crew, and archery to explain how the intuition of his bodily movement can result in a better performance. “The more you think about it, the worse you do,” he said, a statement he applied equally to athletic performance and to his temae. Nahks referenced his experience with the martial art of aikidō, which is notably also one of the -dō associated with Zen training (Elkinton, 1995). As such, Nahks told me about how he was easily able to make connections between the philosophical principles in both aikidō and chanoyu. That both practices come from a Japanese, Zen-inspired tradition likely facilitates Nahks’s drawing of these connections. Nahks described how he found parallels between tea’s four principles of harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility and aikidō:

Aikidō is very much involved in calmness, sort of finding strength through a calm, positive state of mind, and that’s harmony or tranquility. . . . Respect, being a guiding principle, for the art, the space in which you train, who you train with, whether that’s aikidō or tea. . . . Respect for the utensils and everything. Purity, or in aikidō, posture, . . . which is both physical posture and state of mind as well.
The familiarity Nahks had with aikidō, which he started a few years prior to tea, helped him to better understand the guiding principles of chanoyu. As he continued studying both traditions, he was able to use the knowledge he gained interchangeably, making connections between the two practices and using information from one to inform his practice in the other.

In the above examples, students used their experiences from other domains to improve their understanding of tea. However, knowing that information can be applied cross-disciplinarily does not always mean that students were successful in doing so. Phill provided an interesting example because his classical music background gave him a firm foundation for understanding how learning in disciplined processes works. However, he wasn’t able to realize that same degree of expressive potential in chanoyu. In fact, he had actually decided to stop studying chanoyu to dedicate more time to gong fu cha. As he explained, “In chanoyu, I don’t get it. Because I’m very new to it, but I think that knowing this process, just by studying other things, it kind of gives me the discipline to stick through that.” Understanding how to progress through disciplined practice does not necessarily guarantee easy entry to the stage at which a practitioner can begin freely expressing themselves through practice. However, Phill noted that simply having that experience was helpful because he knew that he was capable of going through the time and discipline required to reach that stage—if he chose to do so. “In gong fu cha,” he continued, “I very much get the sense of once you’ve mastered the basics, you can just . . . endless freedom. And I think I incorporate that into what I do. But not in chanoyu yet.” Thus, while Phill recognized the benefit of transferring experience and knowledge
between different disciplines, he also recognized there are some limitations as he was unable to reach that level of proficiency in *chanoyu.*

**Tea and Daily Life**

Tea ceremony is said to be deeply connected to the ordinariness of daily life, beginning with its origins as a part of everyday monastic life when tea drinking was first introduced to Japan. In one of the *Urasenke* public demonstrations, Dr. Hanson stated, “study of tea is a life study,” a sentiment several other instructors echoed. Hara-sensei explained that tea ceremony tends to come more easily to Japanese people because actions, utensils, and concepts, “everything came from basic daily Japanese life.”

Elkinton (1995) also commented on the roots of *chanoyu,* describing its location on “the boundary between art and the ordinary,” which provides for the “genius of *chanoyu*” in the “creative recognition and celebration of the plain, the simple and the normal without elevating them above their commonness” (p. 346). However, *chanoyu*’s foundation in the tradition of ordinary Japanese life does not reflect the actual daily lives of the students in the *Chanoyu* Club. For these students, the difference in cultural background means this particular significance is lost, but that does not prohibit students from relating their *chanoyu* experiences to their own daily lives.

As in the previous section, students have found ways to connect other aspects of their lives to their practice of tea ceremony. Similarly, Kitazawa-sensei explained how *okeiko*-style practice can also create links between focused tea practice and life outside of the tea room: “*Okeiko* and life should be the same way. So, if I do [things] very neat and nice only in *okeiko,* but my private life is very messy, and then if I live in a messy, dirty house, it doesn’t make sense.” Once established, the habits developed through careful,
mindful practice in the tea room and the ways of moving and thinking in tea ceremony do not disappear when one leaves the tea room but rather manifest themselves unconsciously as a mark of the proficiency that a practitioner has attained. As Elkinton (1995) suggested, “The quality of utility in Tea is commensurate with the abiding sense of naturalness, beauty in the midst of the everyday world, not hovering somewhere elusive above it.” Tea ceremony exists as a practice that straddles the border of ordinary life and art, and in doing so, causes us to contemplate the relationship that art practice has on daily life.

Ordinary Tea Movements

Several students shared that they had begun noticing that they unconsciously perform tea-like movements in everyday life. Most commonly, students like Alec and Lohit said that the way that they hold bowls, particularly when washing dishes or serving food, has been strongly affected by the way they have been trained to hold and use chawan in tea ceremony. I noticed this myself when I realized that when I washed dishes, I was beginning to make the same movements with my sponge as I would with the linen chakin when wiping the chawan. In rinsing a dirty bowl, I found that I often used my left hand, holding it with my thumb on the rim and fingers over the base to dump out the sudsy water, much like I would do in chanoyu when emptying the chawan into the kensui. Courtney also described a similar phenomenon.

“Sometimes I put down utensils like I put down hishakus,” she mentioned.

“Like this?” I asked, amusedly, miming one of the ways of resting the hishaku on a furo brazier. I held my palm out, facing the imaginary brazier, and lowered it as I
imagined the handle of the ladle resting in the junction between my held-together fingers and thumb.

“Like any of those ways,” Courtney said. “Like, I’ll put them down in weird ways, and I’ll think about it and be like, ‘That felt very elegant and natural, but what did I do?’ And it was from tea ceremony.” She also said that she’ll realize she is carrying things in ways that are similar to tea out of habit. “It’s fun to just see it kind of happen, but it’s also taught me a thing or two about like calming down and entering a different kind of mental state while doing tea.” Here, she makes a connection between bodily movement and mental state while also illustrating how tea not only impacts her regular life but how these everyday experiences, in turn, inform her experience in the tea room.

When tea-like motions manifest unconsciously in one’s daily life, it can be surprising, as Courtney explained when she didn’t consciously realize that she was moving in a graceful way because it felt so “natural.” In situations in which I have realized that I moved or placed something in a tea-like way, the feeling was surprisingly similar to instances in which I experienced reverse culture shock. As I readjusted to the U.S., I recognized some behaviors and expectations that I had unconsciously become accustomed to in Japan now strangely seemed simultaneously both natural and foreign. This feeling of confusion likely occurs for tea practitioners when the movements acquired by the body within the specific cultural context of the Japanese tea room come into conflict with modern American life. It also can be surprising for practitioners to realize in these moments that they didn’t always move in such ways and that tea training is reprogramming what feels natural to their bodies.
Nevertheless, that students are beginning to notice these movements outside of the tea room seems to be a good thing. Kitazawa-sensei spoke about the importance of the most basic movement of walking: “If your body remembers the movement, your daily movement will be beautiful.” She explained that remembering the action with the body (karada de oboeru) means it will not be forgotten outside of the tea room. This concept is very similar to one Kondo (1990) described in Japanese artisan identities, in which “the assumption is that the technique becomes one with the person, and that once learned, this knowledge can never be effaced. Once committed to muscle memory, skill and technique become a palpable part of the self” (p. 238). In a similar way, when students see tea movements manifesting outside of the tea room, it is an indication that tea skills are beginning to become more deeply embedded in their bodies and sense of self. Alec summarized this idea well, stating that “the end goal is to achieve a grace and a smoothness, but at the same time, having that so well practiced that it becomes the way you actually move without thinking.”

In considering the phenomenon of tea movements in the context of tea ceremony as an arts practice, it is significant in that the adoption of these movements into a practitioner’s daily life begins to blur the lines between what is intentional aesthetic performance and what becomes the natural movements of the body. In this way, tea’s ability to fuse with the ordinary can challenge the conception of art as a special event or experience that is comprehensible only by the cultured, as it is often understood in the West. In tea, too, it takes dedicated training to both achieve this naturalness of movement and to deeply appreciate the aesthetics and cultural meanings of these movements. However, tea’s emphasis on the everyday and the intention that tea practice should not be
limited to the tea room but, instead, should shape and eventually become the part of the practitioner’s natural movement make the art more accessible as it becomes synonymous with daily lived experience. Essentially, the goal of tea is to erase the boundary between the tea room and the outside world; in other words, one is never not practicing. This approach also encourages students to notice and embrace artful ways of being in their daily lives, thus helping practitioners increasingly expand the idea of art to increasingly include everyday tasks, like washing dishes, which become imbued with an aesthetic beauty associated with tea-like movement.

**Tea Philosophy in Life**

Just as the movements of tea ceremony surface in everyday life, so, too, do the philosophical concepts. Several students mentioned that they were able to apply a tea ceremony mindset in everyday life as a way to maintain a sense of calm and to slow down to appreciate life. Other students, like Bethany, talked about applying tea ceremony thinking, particularly the intentional design of rituals, to their daily habits. When Bethany told me that she used *chanoyu* thinking to develop a ritualized version of her morning routine, I also tried that approach myself. Having a thought-out plan of how tasks flow from one to the next is helpful in automating the process, so that, as in tea ceremony, mental resources become a bit more freed up to focus mindfully on the experience itself. Other students, like Rosemary, noticed that the appreciative mindset of *chanoyu* influenced their relationships with objects and materials they encountered in their daily lives, showing the indication of a heightened sensitivity that Morgan-sensei discussed.

Nahks was one student who spoke about how he was able to utilize tea philosophy in ordinary life, intentionally trying to take the feelings of the tea room “out of the room
with you as a state of mind to approach the world.” He discussed the feeling of entering the tea room and bowing to ask for a lesson as something that he tries to emulate in other places by “trying to dedicate the space around me in whatever setting that is, to refocus on whatever I’m trying to accomplish in that space and time.” In this way, he attempts to take the focused and dedicated mindset that he has learned to engage with during tea and apply it to increase his focus as he works to accomplish other goals. In addition to trying to adopt this mindset, he also spoke about how he attempts to use “omotenashi, or that principle of taking every encounter as a potential growth experience for all parties involved,” particularly when teaching and interacting with his own students as part of his work in astronomy. For him, taking this philosophical approach is a way to achieving the goal of “effect[ing] a positive outcome so that all parties leave with something constructive.” In this effort, though he does not say so explicitly, he is demonstrating an understanding of the mindset of yoroshiku, the desire to work together in mutual respect that is expressed in the aisatsu at the beginning of okeiko.

Many students discussed the ways in which tea has become a part of their daily lives, whether intentionally, such as Bethany and Nahks’s application of tea ideals to their daily habits, or unintentionally, such as the realization that one has unconsciously performed a graceful movement inspired by tea practice. Lohit, on the other hand, mentioned that instead of noticing the extension of tea into his daily life, he experienced the reverse, finding that his external interests became part of his tea practice. Because of his involvement in tea ceremony, an interest in flower arrangement and ikebana became an inspiration for him to learn more about tea through chabana (茶花), flower arrangement specifically for tea ceremony. Though this is not necessarily a part of his
everyday life, I include it here to mention that not all students experienced the connection of tea and life in the same way. Though almost all students did see ways in which their tea practice expanded outside of the bounds of the tea room, how and to what degree that occurred varied by individual.

*Chanoyu’s* ability to manifest in practitioners’ everyday lives, as a carrying over of their embodied experiences from within the tea room, was one of the most intriguing realizations of this research. When considered through the framework of art education, the connection that is established between focused art practice and everyday living can be powerful. Since tea practice is intended to be a never-ending endeavor, it represents the ideal of art as being one and the same as life—rather existing than as a separate, individual component of one’s life. However, it is also important to consider whether or to what degree *chanoyu* is, in fact, art.

**Is It Art?**

Speaking of the relationship between *chanoyu* and ordinary life, Kitazawa-sensei said, “The tea ceremony is a way of tea; the tea ceremony is a way of life.” Does being a way of life preclude tea ceremony from being art? Many of my informants did consider tea ceremony to be an art. However, interestingly, of the instructors I spoke with, several expressed some degree of uncertainty regarding its status as an art, and one said they did not see it as art. Students, on the other hand, unanimously agreed that tea ceremony is an art. This difference of opinion between teacher and student may indicate that as practitioners grow in *chanoyu*, their views on it may change and evolve as they gain a more complicated and nuanced understanding.
Of those informants who saw chanoyu as an art, many mentioned that it already includes other arts and that it is itself like an experiential or performance art. Kitazawa-sensei commented that “it’s the mother of all Japanese art forms” because it contains all kinds of artistic traditions in addition to history, spiritual practices, and a connection to lifestyle. Through the coordination of these different arts, Matsuda-sensei explained that the host is able to create the experience that is the ceremony. Nahks also commented that tea could be viewed as “an occasion that celebrates arts” since “the creation of the space . . . and all the performance elements” are “[brought] together in the spirit of community or gratitude [and] hospitality.” He also included that arts not only “create that composition,” but are also important in the appreciation of it.

Matsuda-sensei explained that though tea ceremony does not result in the production of a physical object that can be preserved or left behind, it is still a type of art. This is a type of art in which the ephemerality of the experience is an important part of its performance and appreciation. Several other participants also spoke about chanoyu as an aesthetic experience. Lohit drew a comparison between tea and ballet. In tea ceremony, a guest can enjoy the host’s movements and admire the wares just as an audience enjoys the beautiful movements and background of a staged ballet performance. He pointed out that though both guest and host sit on the same tatami surface, the temae-datami is set off in an almost stage-like manner from the guests by items such as the furosaki byōbu and, in the winter season, the ro. In comparison to the audience–performer dynamic, Phill pointed out that the guests are also active participants and co-creators of the artistic nature of tea:
What’s unique about it in the art world . . . is that it’s something where the people are the art. . . . There’s something beautiful about the guests and the way they’re sitting and the way they look and the way they act that, in a sense, is contributing to the art piece. It’s as though they are all painting together, and the experience of creating that painting is the artwork itself.

The experiential nature of the art and the involvement of the audience is what makes it unique. Returning to the painting metaphor, he explained, “When you just see a painting, you’re separate from it; [chanoyu] is you’re in that painting.” The two different ways these students interpreted the role of the guest in tea ceremony were perhaps influenced by the kinds of roles both Lohit and Phill tended to take in their involvement with Chanoyu Club. Lohit tended to take a host position frequently, whereas Phill often took the role of guest. In both cases, Chanoyu Club’s frequent demonstrations, in which an audience seated outside of the designated tea room space observed the interactions between host and guest, likely influenced their conception of chanoyu as a performance that is observed by an audience, whether within or outside of the bounds of the tea room.

In comparison to performative conceptualizations of tea ceremony, Lohit also pointed out that the tea room, particularly when it is prepared for a formal chaji with a lacquer tana (棚) shelf displaying wares, is a curated experience. “It feels like you’re walking into a museum almost, where you can come look at all these cool things,” he said. Rosemary also mentioned this, reflecting that hosts are able to “[adjust] specific factors in order to create a mood and create an overall environment,” which she likened to interior decoration. This again points to the experiential nature of tea ceremony, in
which both the items and surroundings of the tea room are equally important to the participants.

Others mentioned that the ceremony served as a physical manifestation of an emotion to be communicated to others. Alec and Rosemary both spoke to this concept specifically, saying that the transfer of an emotion into a physically perceivable medium is what made tea ceremony art. Alec also linked this back to the idea of hospitality, describing the feeling that hosts strive to convey for guests as “the most relaxing, most reinvigorating, most peaceful moment.” Alec described the relational dynamic of *omotenashi* through the metaphor of a gift that the host gives to the guest, who in turn accepts the host’s preparation by enjoying it as much as they can. In this situation, the emotion that is transmitted and presented to the guest is conveyed through the aesthetic and experiential nature of the host’s efforts.

Hara-sensei and Courtney were two informants who, though they ultimately classified tea ceremony as an art, did so with qualifications, recognizing that there are also ways in which it is not an art. Hara-sensei was the first person who brought it to my attention that not everyone may conceptualize tea ceremony as an art practice. “This is also, you know, controversial,” Hara-sensei said. “One philosopher of Japan, he said tea ceremony is not art. And the other scholar said tea ceremony is a kind of folk art. But Daisetsu Suzuki . . . said tea is art.” While she agreed with Suzuki in calling it art, she recognized the ways that tea functions as a spiritual practice, describing it as a “spiritual art because Zen and tea shouldn’t be separate.” If, she said, Zen is separated from tea, it is no longer an art. She further emphasized the spiritual component of tea ceremony by
explaining that “[i]t’s not a performing art. Always from here, inside,” she said, pointing to her chest. “That’s it. I can tell.”

“Like kokoro?” I asked.

“Kokoro, yes, yes. You have to be very honest, you have to be very more like, uh, you have to behave [with intention] from the bottom of [the heart], not like a surface. That’s my main [concern].”

For Hara-sensei, involving heart in the practice of tea ceremony is what elevates it to spiritual art. Powell (2012) also spoke of the integration of spiritual expression that can be achieved through an embodied teaching philosophy that “focus[es] explicitly on the ways in which the individual body fuses with an aesthetic, physical form and engages the individual in spiritual practice” (p. 113). In other words, in order to fully participate in tea ceremony as an art, a practitioner must not only use their body but also engage with the complete fullness of their being, as conceptualized through the idea of kokoro (Sato, 2004).

Courtney spoke to the humility that Hara-sensei hints at by describing tea ceremony as “creative acts of respect.” Like Hara-sensei, she recognized that the performance of tea ceremony is not actually about being performative:

I also think it’s kind of, in a sense, a mindset, in a way that art can be. . . . You’re not doing it to perform; you’re not doing it because you’re just going through the motions. You’re doing it with a mindset to be respectful and graceful and kind, and in that way, it’s kind of an art of living. Here, Courtney draws together the mindful humility involved in chanoyu and connects it with the ways it influences a general mindset of living. Describing it ultimately as “an art
of living” is one way to encapsulate what Elkinton (1995) described when she spoke of chanoyu being situated between art and the ordinary.

Some of the other sensei were less clear on whether they felt tea ceremony was an art. For Mihori-sensei, “tea ceremony itself is not necessarily, you can say, an art form, but related to art.” She commented that tea ceremony was a way to increase the quality of one’s daily life, which comes about as practitioners develop expanded sensory perception skills through focused engagement in the tea room and are able to be more discerning in their everyday lives. The sentiment Courtney expressed echoed what Mihori-sensei said when she concluded that “maybe you can say it’s a living art.” This was also reiterated by Kitazawa-sensei who said, “Tea is life. Even if you’re not in tea ceremony, your actions have to be the same as if you were in the tea ceremony. You have to be graceful, you have to be elegant.” She explained that this goal is an ongoing project for her as she attempts to consistently apply the principles of wa-kei-sei-jaku to her own life.

Morgan-sensei was the only participant who definitively said that she did not see chanoyu as an art, though she did acknowledge that plausible arguments for that case exist. For her, tea is primarily a discipline and “a way of focusing your mind and your body and ultimately your spirit.” Morgan-sensei also recognized that chanoyu is located “at an influx of many different arts.” However, for her, applying the concept of art (“taking what’s inside you and expressing it to other people”) to tea ceremony is “miss[ing] the point.” Interestingly, these concepts are precisely why others believed that tea ceremony could be classified as an art. However, Morgan-sensei’s interpretation of this is that “tea ceremony should not be about you creating, you kind of expressing your own vision, so much as creating an experience that you are part of.” For her, chanoyu
“becomes much more about being receptive to everything in your environment and being adaptive to everything in your environment.” As she elaborated, “It’s more like everything in the room making you a work of art and making you an expression of itself than it is about imposing yourself on what’s external.” The difference in Morgan-sensei’s understanding of the expressiveness of tea is that where others see the participants in an active role, she sees chanoyu as a way to accept and allow the forms of tea ceremony to express themselves through the practitioner in the ultimate experience of humility and vulnerability.

By considering these myriad views, the relationship of tea ceremony and art practice becomes more nuanced. Though no one seems to completely deny that there are elements of artistry involved in chanoyu, it is the viewpoints that question tea as an art that broaden the conception of chanoyu the most. Considering tea as a mindset or way of life while also acknowledging that there are some artistic elements in the tea practice helps practitioners to consider what art is and what their role is in it. Especially considering tea ceremony as a practice that is integrated with everyday living, art educators are encouraged to seek out other ways that lives can be lived artfully through engaging with embodied and aesthetic experiences that help us relate more closely to ourselves, others, and our environment.
Chapter 8
Cleansing and Removing the Tea Utensils – Discussion

After the second guest returns his tea bowl, the host collects it and fills it with hot water from the gurgling kama. She gently swirls the water in the bowl then empties it into the kensui. This time, however, I listen carefully for the final drop to fall from the bowl. This is my cue to ask the host to conclude by bowing and saying, “Oshimai kudasai (お仕舞いください; Please close the ceremony).”

Holding the chawan aloft in her left hand, the host places the fingertips of her right hand on the tatami and acknowledges the request by gently lowering her head. Once she places the bowl on the tatami, she bows formally, stating, “Oshimai ni itashimasu (お仕舞いに致します; I will close the ceremony).” She begins the final cleansing of the utensils.

![Figure 33. Alec as host acknowledges Geoff’s request to close the ceremony in a lesson.](image)

The host uses the hishaku to pour water from the mizusashi into the chawan and then whisks the chasen briskly in the water. As earlier in the ceremony, she traces the curves of the bowl with the whisk before raising it to inspect the tines. Repeating this sequence twice, she whisks the water again. She traces the bowl’s circumference with the chasen, draws it out of the bowl, and then places it upright on the tatami. She empties the chawan into the kensui and then plucks the chakin from its perch on the kama lid to place it in the bowl. Picking up the chasen, she rests its tines on the pillow of the chakin.

She pulls the fukusa from her obi and folds the orange cloth into a square, this time without a snap. Enveloping the chashaku in the folded
cloth, she wipes away the remaining *matcha* and rests the clean tea scoop across the mouth of the *chawan*. The host turns to hold the *fukusa* over the *kensui*, striking the green smudge twice audibly to brush residual powder into the *kensui*. Folding the *fukusa* back into a triangle, she tucks it back into her *obi*. She picks up and places the *natsume* and *chawan* in front of the *mizusashi*, in the initial positions they were after being brought into the tea room.

Grasping the *hishaku*’s handle, she dips its cup into the *mizusashi*’s cool water. She pours first one then another cup of water into the boiling *kama*, which hisses into silence. In the quiet, I notice other ambient noises: raindrops outside, the fridge’s electric hum, the other guest’s breath. The host holds the *hishaku* upward in her left hand and then grasps the *kama* lid’s metal knob in her right hand. The lid sliding over the kettle’s mouth emits a hollow, metallic sound. Resting the *hishaku* on the *futa-oki*, the host leans forward to pick up the *mizusashi* lid and then places it on the vessel with a ceramic *clink*. The *kama* quietly begins making its voice heard again.

She picks up the *hishaku* and holds it horizontally with her right hand grasping the center of the handle. Reaching across her body with her left hand, she picks up the *futa-oki*. The thumb, index, and middle fingers of her right hand grasp the *futa-oki* around the ladle handle from above. Taking the *kensui*’s edge in her left hand, the host rises off her heels to stand but pauses, uncertain if her legs are stable enough. As she waits, she lifts and then lowers her numb feet. Standing shakily, she turns to obscure

![Figure 34. Picking up the *chawan* to carry it out of the room.](image-url)
the kensui, showing us her back and the square-shaped knot of her obi. Her steps are careful, but uncertain, as her legs continue to recover sensation.

As in her entrance, she makes several trips to and from the mizuya to move all the utensils. After removing the kensui and hishaku, the host returns to carry out the chawan and natsume in each hand. The last item remaining, the mizusashi, was also the first to enter. She grasps it with both hands at its base. Before exiting for the final time, she kneels on the worn half-mat at the entrance, balancing the mizusashi on the mat’s slight slope. She bows deeply, and we return the bow, silently completing the ceremony.

![Figure 35. Bowing at the close of an Urasenke Ryakubon practice.](image)

The actions performed in the closing procedure of the ceremony mirror those that the host initially used to open the ceremony. Performed in reverse as the ceremony ends, gestures circle back on each other self-referentially to complete the shared experience as the state of the tea room is returned to how it was when the guests first entered. Just as the guests reflect on their shared experience as each utensil is carefully cleaned and removed from the tea room, in this section, I also revisit and examine the findings of my research as I prepare to conclude my metaphorical tea ceremony. In looking again at the findings I have shared thus far, I discuss the three concepts of intercultural practice,
embodied experience, and artistic relationality as they influence each other in the Tea Institute’s Chanoyu Program.

**Reflecting on Culture, the Body, Relationality, and Art in Chanoyu**

Through my research, I have investigated some of the ways that culture, embodied experience, and conceptions of art interact in Japanese tea ceremony as it is practiced in the intercultural context of the Tea Institute at Penn State’s Chanoyu Club. In revisiting findings related to the cultural translation, embodied experience, relationality, and artistic considerations of *chanoyu*, I also consider and address preconceptions that have been revealed through my work and contextualize my findings with references to the literature.

I first concern myself with addressing how my mostly non-Japanese informants interpreted the Japanese cultural elements of tea ceremony practice and *okeiko* pedagogy. One of the most important issues that surfaced was a concern for cultural authenticity, which became significant as participants recognized the limitations of a non-Japanese setting for this Japanese practice. The pursuit of authenticity also became relevant in validating the Institute’s self-branding as an entity that both teaches and preserves tea ceremony knowledge and practice. For both of these reasons, participants expressed that it was important to them that what they learned and replicated through practice was as authentic as possible. When Lohit discussed the master-led lessons as an opportunity for club members to get a taste of what *chanoyu* used to be, he, like many members, drew a direct correlation between the formality of a lesson or event and its authenticity. Much of the emphasis on authenticity was placed on how well Chanoyu Club members we able to, as Surak described, “recreate Japan as they recreate tea” (pp. 831–832). However, not as
much emphasis was placed on the authenticity of the unique way that tea ceremony practice was beginning to develop as a result of the interactions between the Japanese and surrounding American cultural concepts, including the adaptation of practices such as “Philly style” usucha and the modified way that okeiko pedagogy was adapted in peer-led practices. In this way, events that were coded as “formal” tended to emphasize an attempt to recreate authentic Japanese practice, whereas more casual events illustrated the creation of a kind of hybrid culture unique to the Institute that had its own authenticity.

This, in itself, can be seen as an iteration of the shu-ha-ri concept, by which the Chanoyu Club itself is beginning to progress through the levels of proficiency, albeit being somewhat limited in its ability to fully do. Currently, much of the club’s emphasis is placed on the shu level, focusing on adherence to the fundamentals of practice. However, students’ incorporation of elements like Philly style tea as well as their experimentations with ware pairings are an indication of some initial explorations into the ha ring. The club has not yet achieved—and may never fully achieve—the ri level, in part because of the club’s situation in the university setting, which limits students’ participation time. With the exception of Bethany, advanced students typically depart from the group once they graduate, taking with them their levels of proficiency and opportunities for curious experimentation. Because of the small size of the group, the overall atmosphere and general proficiency of the club is greatly affected by the number of advanced students who graduate and the number of new students who join each semester. As students leave and join, the club atmosphere ebbs and flows between the focused mastery of fundamentals and a playful experimentation with the rules. In the context of this study, a clear difference can be seen between new students like Alec and
Geoff, who tended to focus on following the rules, and advanced students like Lohit and Dakota, who have begun to challenge some rules. The club’s dependence on visiting instructors to train new students in developing basic skills maintains a consistent connection to and firm basis in practice at the fundamental shu level. However, this reliance in combination with the constantly rotating door of student membership may prevent some students from reaching the ha or ri levels, in which the foundations of tea ceremony are challenged and then transcended.

In my consideration of cultural authenticity, my own assumptions and subjectivities were challenged as I initially presumed that Japanese tea masters would be one of the most authentic sources of information in this study. My initial emphasis was on attending to the Japanese origins of tea ceremony practice, framing it with reference to my experiences with okeiko pedagogy in Japan. However, some of the findings that had the greatest impact on me came from explorations of the authenticity of the non-Japanese elements of the practice, including the American tea masters. Both Morgan-sensei and Dr. Hanson not only had a deep understanding of tea but also were skilled at expressing and conveying those understandings with a balanced respect for the tea ceremony’s Japanese origins and its implementation in an American setting. As I conducted my analysis and engaged in my writing, I noticed my frequent reliance on Morgan-sensei because she was able to utilize her own positionality as a non-Japanese American who has studied tea in intercultural contexts for many years. The approaches she expressed about tea ceremony practice helped me to better navigate the contextualization of Japanese elements in the setting of the Tea Institute. Carriger (2009) also addressed some of these concerns by questioning the role of non-Japanese practitioners in chanoyu:
Are there perhaps ways in which non-Japanese people access cultural “memories” that they can “authentically” own, such as ideas about peace, community, or Zen practice? These non-Japanese bodies, too, “re-present” ideas, the diversity of bodies, contributing to the diversity of “meanings” conveyed, be they about Zen, Japanese history, or peaceful communion. (p. 147)

Based on the observations in my study as well as insights and understandings from both the well-established non-Japanese sensei and budding students, I agree with Carriger that non-Japanese practitioners, too, have something to contribute to this Japanese tradition, especially as it continues to grow globally.

Considering okeiko as a Japanese approach to learning, I looked at how participants adapted to or resisted specific, culturally informed elements. Surprisingly, despite the potential for cultural conceptions of hierarchy embedded in elements such as aisatsu to be alienating, these aspects remained, for the most part, significant and meaningful parts of practicing tea ceremony for Western participants who were used to more egalitarian approaches to learning. Some participants, such as Morgan-sensei and Lohit, expressed some resistance to or skepticism of aisatsu as it was practiced in an American environment. Morgan-sensei’s resistance to the idea that her students should ask her for a lesson with aisatsu was surprising in that it was a stark break with the traditional expectations of a tea teacher. At the same time, though, I recognize that as an American educator, I also would feel uncomfortable expecting students to explicitly ask for a lesson. However, she seemed to have reached a compromise between her obligation to the cultural expectations of okeiko-style teaching and her personal beliefs by not requiring aisatsu of beginners and teaching aisatsu to advanced students primarily so that
they could understand and enact competent tea practitioner behaviors under all circumstances. Morgan-sensei and Alec also pointed out that another significant function of *aisatsu* as an explicitly non-Western approach to beginning lessons was as a trigger to help students settle into the hierarchical mindset of tea and its approach to learning differently.

Though I expected students to express some resistance to the hierarchical structures of tea study, instead, I found that most students embraced it and appreciated the assertion of validity and authenticity that such hierarchy provided. This was especially true for students who expressed admiration of instructors’ *chamei*. Courtney and Alec admired the high level of expertise and experience that earning a *chamei* represented. Lohit, on the other hand, saw it as a symbol that knowledge shared by such a person was verified and could be trusted in both his formal study at the Institute and used as a guide in individual research. In the Institute setting, non-Japanese students largely did not see the hierarchical elements of *chanoyu* practice as alienating. They also recognized that these elements serve multiple functions beyond maintaining structural levels. It is important to note, though, that this observation may not be generalizable to a high level because most *Chanoyu* Club members also have gone through a similar, though abbreviated, hierarchical verification process via the Institute’s Tea Specialist Exam. It is possible that the elements of hierarchical structure in *chanoyu* are more attractive to the kind of students who would join this club than to the general populace.

In considering *chanoyu* as an embodied practice, perhaps one of the most important findings of this study was in regards to the ways in which participants’ bodily movements and experiences were influenced by cultural ideas. As in the Deweyian
(1935) conception, in *chanoyu*, the experience itself is the art. This fusion of aesthetic experience and art also aligns with Zen tradition, in which “the doing is the art” (Elkinton, 1995, p. 364). Dewey (1934) established aesthetic experience as a medium for social interaction that can be generalized to the scale of civilization (p. 339), but he neglected to consider the impact of culture, which can create different interpretations for these aesthetic experiences on the individual or cultural group levels. In my study, I have attempted to discuss how culture influences the understanding of aesthetic experience, by demonstrating how non-Japanese members of the *Chanoyu* Club navigated the cultural influences of both their own cultures and of the Japanese origin of tea ceremony.

In the study of *chanoyu*, bodily and sensory experiences carry meanings that are culturally coded. By simply performing the action of bowing to a scroll or sitting in *seiza*, a non-Japanese person would not necessarily come to understand the same aesthetic meaning as a Japanese tea practitioner without being informed of the cultural significance of these experiences. In other words, the participant can directly experience the movement, but they cannot come to fully understand its significance without first being provided cultural context. It is for this reason that visiting tea masters at the Tea Institute dedicate time in their lessons to explaining the cultural significance and context of such actions, such as bowing or snapping a *fukusa*, in addition to providing instruction on how to perform the actions themselves. In this way, cultural knowledge becomes embodied, and physical movement becomes a way of understanding culture.

Additionally, considering the intercultural environment of non-Japanese participants practicing a Japanese art outside of a Japanese environment, participants must consider not only the intended significance from within the original Japanese
context but also their own cultural background and environment. In this way, the participants at the Institute do not necessarily come to the same understanding but, rather, come to multiple, similar, yet varied understandings that are reflective of their individual experiences. Taking *seiza* as an example, each informant’s interpretation of their experience was nuanced, reflecting both their individual body’s physical capabilities and experiences as well as the Japanese context and their personal and cultural backgrounds. Experiences of the body and cultural meaning are intimately connected in developing an understanding of tea ceremony practice. As a holistic practice, understandings gained from one mode of knowing can often have an impact on or inform understandings of another mode of knowing.

The embodied experience of tea ceremony is also notable for its emphasis on discipline and the restriction of movement. This can be seen in the prescribed movements of *temae*, sitting in *seiza*, and wearing of kimono, as well as in the ways the visible and imaginary lines of *tatami* affect where and how the body can move. The restriction of the body, in turn, has an impact on an individual’s mindset, as Morgan-sensei explained when she described the intimate connection between mind and body and how one facet can impact the other: “Your mindset effects the way that you express things in your body, but you can also start with your body and start with the movements in your body and let that inform your mindset.” Understanding this relationship allows practitioners to achieve a desired state of either mind or body by focusing on the corresponding factor of this relationship, as I did when focusing on *temae* movements to clear my mind of frustration. Thus, by disciplining the body, one is also disciplining the mind and vice versa.
The control that can be achieved through the disciplined mind and body, in turn, offers a sense of freedom. As Dr. Hanson explained, “[D]iscipline promotes freedom.” Freedom operates within the constraints of discipline when practitioners achieve a proficiency that allows them to engage with “the little details in which you can express yourself [to] give [you] a range of expression that’s more than you can possibly imagine,” as Phill noted. In tea ceremony, discipline is enacted by the prescribed movements controlled by temae, which also serves as an analog for kata. This study contributes to already-existing scholarship on the role of kata in acquiring artistic skill in Japanese arts (Powell, 2004, 2012; Matsunobu, 2007). However, the mechanism of kata can appear somewhat contradictory from a Western standpoint: As Powell (2012) described, “[K]ata must seem excessively dictated and prescribed,” and it “would seem to necessarily create a fixed performance. Yet it is precisely in such prescriptive movement that creates a space for improvisation and the potential for authoring new forms” (p. 119).

By linking ideas of the embodied practice of skills through temae-as-kata to the model of shu-ha-ri, the evolution from strict adherence to foundational rules to expressive potential can be better understood. Shu-ha-ri describes three phases of proficiency that flexibly allow practitioners to return to more basic, fundamental levels of practice. This model helps to illustrate the prescriptiveness of kata as the foundation upon which expression is based. In this way, Chanoyu becomes an expressive practice because the kata of temae provides spaces of flexibility within the structure of the disciplined forms that comprise the practice.

Just as skill acquisition and expressive ability can be modeled through shu-ha-ri, so can shu-ha-ri also describe can tea practitioners’ development of sensory awareness.
At first, sensory aesthetics are perceived to be merely physical phenomena. However, as a tea student progresses in their study, they recognize the ways that these sensory experiences can be linked to and interpreted in metaphorical ways, such as the way the sound of the fukusa snapping is interpreted as purifying one’s mind and intention at the beginning of the ceremony. This sensory awareness eventually reaches a transcendent (ri) level, in which tea people are able to almost supernaturally sense others’ spirits by drinking the tea they have made, as Morgan-sensei described. As I discussed above, chanoyu provides an example of cultural understanding being embodied. Tea practitioners’ development of an expanded sensory awareness is one of the mechanics through which this embodiment is achieved.

Both these embodied cultural understandings and this highly attuned sensitivity to sensory elements contribute to an expanded sense of self that facilitates the relational potential of chanoyu. Through tea, participants developed connections with themselves and other people, as well as with their experiences in other disciplines. The most significant of those connections is the social one, particularly as it is governed by what Dr. Hanson called the “relational dynamic” of omotenashi. Developing openness to the sensory experiences of the tea room and engaging with the cultural concept of ichigo ichie, which emphasizes mindful presence in the moment, both contribute to the transformative potential of omotenashi. Although many informants in this study strove to realize omotenashi, most had not yet been able to fully achieve it. Through their actions, though, they had each begun to demonstrate that the Hospitality of omotenashi was a deeply considered part of their practice. By paying attention with their bodies to their own sensory and aesthetic experiences, students utilized this embodied knowledge to
relate with each other through tea. Manifestations of *omotenashi* can be seen in simple actions, such as a host’s attention to the temperature of tea during preparation or their selecting wares that they knew their guests had an affinity for.

As Dr. Hanson described, this relational dynamic of tea is completed when the focus and attention that the host gives to the guests is returned by the guests’ acceptance of the attention and their reflection of this focus back to the host. Tea students train in the physical forms requisite of both guest and host so that they have an embodied understanding of each role. Regardless of the role they take in the tea room, by reflecting on their embodied experiences, they are better able to fully appreciate each other’s efforts. In this way, *chanoyu* is established as a practice in which the goal is to focus on others, including both those physically present (host and guest) and those represented symbolically through their work. Though the artist of the scroll and craftsmen of the utensils and materials are not physically present in the tea room, their contributions toward this shared aesthetic experience in the tea room are recognized when guests bow at the *tokonoma* or carefully observe a *chawan*. Students reflected an understanding of this when they discussed the importance of guests’ appreciation of objects, both for their aesthetic qualities, which resulted from the skill of their makers, and for the host’s selection and arrangement of particular wares. In this way, practitioners are able to participate in a relational dynamic that includes but also expands beyond the immediate relationship between the host and guest.

Students’ and teachers’ experiences in other arts and disciplines also become part of tea as a relational practice when they make cross-disciplinary connections with the one or more of the many elements that make up the holistic practice of Japanese tea.
ceremony. By attending to these connections between outside experiences and tea ceremony, individuals bring more detail and nuance to specific elements of tea ceremony. Emblematic of this are the ways in which Mihori-sensei’s *nihon buyō* training influenced her emphasis on footwork while teaching, Lohit’s interest in *ikebana* spurred him to begin creating flower arrangements for practices, or my own interest in *kimono* helped other students experience the effect of clothing on movement and performance. Especially since tea is taught in a group setting, where participants can share their expertise with others, the result is a practice in which knowledge and skills are shared and exchanged for the benefit of all.

This concept also relates to the idea of tea ceremony as one of the Ways associated with Zen Buddhism, wherein one develops oneself at the same time as they develop their skills. This development of self can be seen in the ways that participants notice tea having an impact on their lives outside of the tea room, both in the form of bodily movement (unconscious, graceful movements that occur outside of the tea room) and in the application of tea philosophy to life (as in Kitazawa-sensei’s emphasis on keeping a clean house and Nahks’s application of *omotenashi* to his teaching practice). These kinds of occurrences illustrate the integration of tea concepts into daily life. Tea practice becomes part of the practitioner’s life even when they are not actively practicing tea. In this way, as practice becomes part of the practitioner, tea becomes truly embodied in a continuous learning process that never ends.

In viewing tea as an artistic practice, we consider not only the aesthetic experiences associated with tea but also its deeply relational aspects. Informants who saw tea as art pointed to the aesthetic, experiential nature of it, which reflects the Deweyian
and Zen conceptions of direct experience as art. Many participants also defined art as the physical manifestation of emotion, which speaks to the connection that is established between mind and body in the embodied experience of tea. Several also spoke of tea’s potential for interpretation and expression even in its restrictiveness, which can be connected to the concept of *shu-ha-ri* as well as the ways in which *kata*, like *temae*, controls the body while also providing a means of expression.

However, the only informant who did not see tea as an art, Morgan-sensei, contributed an important consideration to this discussion: the intention of the host. For her, the host’s humble consideration for the guest necessitated that the host must take a vulnerable, receptive position in allowing the forms of the ceremony to express themselves through the host’s actions, rather than imposing the hosts’ intention on the forms. The importance of minimizing the ego and not using the ceremony as a way of showing off was also echoed by both Hara-sensei and Phill, as well as in Dr. Hanson’s conceptualization of *omotenashi*. By taking this approach, Morgan-sensei explained, “It’s more like everything in the room making you a work of art and making you an expression of itself.” This statement, in turn, calls back to the idea of the artist becoming one with their art (Matsunobu, 2007; Powell, 2004; Kondo, 1990; Okakura 1906/1964). In this way, the confluence of dedication to the discipline of the body through form and the mitigation of the ego in tea ceremony allows for the expression through which host and guest create a transformative relational practice together.

In considering both the ability of *chanoyu* to act as a transformative relational practice and the ways in which tea study impacts the daily lives of its practitioners, it can be seen as a lived art. Several informants spoke of the connection between tea and life,
stating “Tea is life” (Kitazawa-sensei), “The study of tea is a life study” (Dr. Hanson), and that tea is an “art of living” (Hara-sensei, Courtney). Hara-sensei also spoke of the importance of including kokoro in the study of tea as a way of incorporating a spiritual element, without which tea could not be considered an art. When we recall that kokoro is “the center of one’s entire being, the inseparable combination of our mental, physical, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual capacities” (Sato, 2004, p. 3), the holistic nature of tea study becomes more obvious. From this consideration, chanoyu becomes a “living art,” as Mihori-sensei described, an aesthetic way to engage in both disciplined practice and everyday life with the entirety of one’s being.
Chapter 9
Looking Again at the Brazier and Scroll, Leaving the Tea room – Conclusion

When the host departs, we guests are left alone in the tea room to reflect on the experience we have just shared with the host. I reach behind myself to pick up my fan and think about the condition of my feet. Because I have been slightly shifting to relieve pressure throughout the ceremony, my feet still prickle, but I am able to cautiously stand. Raising my ankles and curling my toes underneath me, I shift my weight backward, using the muscles of my thighs to leverage myself upward.

I rearrange my kimono skirts, rest my hands against my thighs, and take slow, hesitating steps toward the ro. Each footfall stings with a hollow numbness as blood flow resumes. I kneel in front of the ro and the simmering kama. I place my fan on the tatami in front of me as I observe the tools. A small tendril of steam curls up from under the tilted kettle lid. Pivoting to the left, I move my fan in front of me again and observe the furosaki byōbu before standing and turning to walk toward the tokonoma.

The second guest stands as I cross the midpoint in the room. He follows the same path I took toward the brazier and kettle. We reach our respective destinations and seat ourselves in seiza at almost at the same time. Placing my fan in front of me, I bow again to the scroll, thinking about the meaning of the words inscribed in the dark ink brush strokes, and look down at the flower. Looking back up at the scroll, I bow for the final time.

Figure 36. Empty tea room with a tana shelf and hanging scroll in the tokonoma showing the image of Sen no Rikyū.
Picking up my fan, I stand at the same time as the second guest does. As I begin moving toward the exit, the second guest moves toward the tokonoma and seats himself in front of the makeshift folding screen. As I kneel and leverage myself off of the raised tatami, I cross over the wooden frame—the border out of the tea world. I find myself back on the cool, black tile of the ordinary world.

Just as the host revisited actions that occurred earlier in the ceremony, the guests also must retrace their literal and metaphorical steps before leaving the space. Contemplating for a second time the same objects we looked at before sharing tea together, they may take on new meanings as we reflect on the new dimensions that our shared experience brings. As we step out of the tea room and back into the realm of everyday life, the effects of this tea experience remain with us. Likewise, I reflect on the journey through which this research and my study at the Tea Institute have taken me. Just as in an actual tea ceremony, the realizations of this research are not meant to be left in the metaphorical tea room but instead should be applied to other contexts. Through this reflection, I also consider the ways in which the findings of this research can be extrapolated and applied to the field of art education and can contribute to the development of further scholarship on culturally significant and embodied arts practice.

**Final Thoughts**

Through this research, I have illustrated the ways in which students and teachers engage with the culture and embodied pedagogy of chanoyu, as it is practiced in the Tea Institute at Penn State’s Chanoyu Club. Their engagement with these elements of chanoyu have helped contribute to the development of an understanding of tea ceremony as a relational, lived art practice. A consideration of the various views of chanoyu as it is practiced in the Tea Institute reveals multiple implications for the field of art education.
The Japanese cultural origins of *chanoyu* both attracted students to the tradition and influenced the ways in which they engaged in tea ceremony through the culturally specific elements of *okeiko*-style learning. Though students heavily emphasized maintaining the authenticity of *chanoyu* as a Japanese cultural practice, the blending of the cultural elements inherent to Japanese tea ceremony with those of the American setting in which it takes place has produced a new, hybridized culture, in which the resultant tea ceremony practiced by the *Chanoyu* Club can be said to be neither fully Japanese nor fully American. The Tea Institute at Penn State is not in Japan, nor are its members Japanese (with the exception of the visiting *Omotesenke* sensei); thus, seeking after a type of “authenticity” that is solely reflective of the Japanese culture from which tea ceremony originates is ultimately a goal that is fruitless and ignores the relational connections that are being made in a space that bridges different cultures. Indeed, when practitioners in the United States focus their attention solely on achieving the authenticity of the origin culture, those attempts will ultimately fail because the cultural background of the environment in which they practice does not support this reality. However, at the same time, concentrating too much on the surroundings that the practice has been relocated to risks a shallow, exoticized practice of empty aesthetics and verges on cultural appropriation. Instead, by recognizing and respecting the hybridity that is a balance of both components, practitioners can affirm their own lived experiences in tea ceremony while also respecting the cultural origins of the tradition.

The new culture that emerges from respecting both the practice’s origins and the new contexts in which it is occurring cultivates a meaningful, authentic practice of its own and contributes to the practice’s relational potential. Practice becomes relational.
when, by validating both the tradition and present experience, practitioners are able to understand new perspectives and connect to broader cultural heritages. For example, in the case of *chanoyu*, the non-Japanese practitioners I interviewed often discussed cultivating an awareness of hierarchical positions in relationships and deepening their demonstrations of humility and respect. Yet, while students come to greater understanding of Japanese cultural ideas, by drawing connections and comparisons to their own cultures, they begin to examine and better understand their own cultural backgrounds as well. Especially through an embodied art practice like *chanoyu*, this understanding is not simply reached in an abstracted, cerebral sense but is grounded in students’ physical, embodied experiences. Much like cultural adaptation, these embodied habits and movements do not suddenly change for students, but rather shift over time and often imperceptibly. Thus, by practicing this art through an embodied experience, the learned behaviors of both art and culture can converge in the body, facilitating a connectedness through shared experience that fosters personal and cultural growth and understanding.

The development of this new, localized cultural practice can be viewed in terms of the concept of the *shu-ha-ri* model, expanding it from its initial role in describing student-teacher relationships and skill development. Applying this model to the cultural adaption that occurs at the Tea Institute, at the fundamental level, club members pay great attention to the rules that dictate traditional practice (*shu*). At the same time, though, some of these rules are challenged or experimented with (*ha*), especially since being in a non-Japanese setting necessitates finding creative solutions to address missing or difficult to obtain materials. Additionally, as more advanced members become more comfortable
with the foundations of the practice, they begin experimenting with rules, such as those
governing the choice and pairing of wares. Though it has not yet been fully realized in
this specific site, the ultimate goal of this tea ceremony practice is to achieve a
transcendent (ri) state in which cultural practices and even physical objects from both the
original Japanese tradition and the surrounding culture of the Institute come together in a
new practice that is relevant in both contexts. The adaptation of Philly style thin tea is
one practice that hints at these explorations at the ri level. Taken as a model of cultural
adaptation in an art practice, shu-ha-ri is helpful for exposing the mechanic by which
artists can expand the concepts and items that they make use of through their art practice.
Importantly, since shu-ha-ri is grounded in a strict focus on protecting the
fundamentals—in this case, understanding and staying true to the original cultural
meanings—the concept works particularly well for artists who engage in traditions that
are not their own as it discourages shallow, exoticized appropriation and encourages
genuine cultural exchange.

*Shu-ha-ri* is also an important model for conceptualizing the development of skill
in arts practice. Particularly when considering arts that are based on disciplined,
restrictive foundations, like tea ceremony, the *shu-ha-ri* model places equal importance
on each stage of development. Though the goal remains to reach a transcendent, creative
art practice (ri), this model validates and underscores the importance of intermediary
steps by centering on foundational skills and encouraging practitioners to frequently
return to the disciplined practice of the fundamentals. Western viewpoints often tend to
focus more on progressing toward the goal of creative expression, frequently overlooking
the beginning and intermediary phases. The constant focus on all steps of the *shu-ha-ri*
progression facilitates continuous learning while promoting a beginner’s mindset, which supports the idea that tea ceremony is meant to be constantly practiced as a way of life, even when outside of the tea room. Taken on a broader scale, shu-ha-ri challenges ideas of mastery by encouraging a beginner’s mindset for all practitioners and underlining the importance of constantly returning to more fundamental and less complex ways of practice. For art education specifically, this approach may help to alleviate some of the anxiety felt by artists to constantly produce original creative work (envisioned here as ri) while valuing the more fundamental (shu) and experimental (ha) exercises that support the realization of creative expression.

Just as students at times experiment within the traditional confines of chanoyu practice, so, too, does okeiko pedagogy ask Club members to adjust to different, culturally specific ways of learning. Through practices such as aisatsu, students learn to enter a mindset that is different from the egalitarian Western approaches they may be used to. In okeiko, hierarchy and respect become concepts that students must learn to adapt to and engage with as a part of fully understanding and developing their study of chanoyu. Hierarchy and respect become concepts that are themselves embodied and made corporeal through physical and aesthetic gestures, such as bowing and the sensory appreciation of craftsmanship. Respect, in particular, becomes profoundly embodied through the actions of omotenashi hospitality. Through these actions, culture becomes embodied, and students gain a deep understanding that contributes to the embodied relationality of the practice.

The link between culture and body is also reinforced by the disciplined movement through kata in the form of temae. Though seemingly contradictory at first, the repetition
of these prescribed movements through disciplined, repetitive practice allows students to work toward developing a comfortable naturalness in their movements. It is the attainment of this naturalness that affords participants greater opportunities for expression. The emphasis on natural and flowing movement as developed through the disciplined repetition of form gives primacy to knowing with the body, which allows students to build their own understandings without the limitations of language as they rely less on words and more on their bodies. Additionally, direct experience with the materials and sensory elements of tea helps students to develop a high sensitivity and openness that extends beyond the sensory perception and contributes to improved interpersonal awareness as well. The disciplined and aware body trained through practices like chanoyu is more capable of embracing the humble vulnerability that is necessary to allow the aesthetic forms to creatively express themselves through the practitioner.

This vulnerability is also an important foundation that supports the relational elements of chanoyu. As one of the Ways of Zen tradition, tea allows practitioners to connect with themselves. These Zen Ways espouse that as one develops in skill, so, too, do they develop themselves (Chung, 2014; Elkinton, 1995) as a holistic way of improving the self via art. At the same time, the deeply spiritual and disciplined nature of tea may preclude it from being considered an art by some. However, tea ceremony can also be explored as a way of questioning and broadening the kinds of practices that can be considered art practice.

Holistic art practices like tea ceremony validate participants’ lived experiences and knowledge as they establish connections between outside specialty knowledge (such
as dance, music, kimono, language, etc.) and tea practice. Through the interdisciplinary connections that individuals bring to tea ceremony, they contribute to a richer learning experience as they arrive at a more detailed and nuanced understanding of tea ceremony elements not just as individuals but also as a group. These holistic elements of tea practice also often tend to carry over into students’ lives outside of the tea room. For some members, this was intentional (for example, applying tea concepts like *omotenashi* relationality to their teaching or using the concepts learned in tea practice as extra motivation to keep their house clean); for others, tea training made itself known when students noticed their bodies automatically performing tea-like actions and holding objects with a natural, unconscious grace. Unintentional movements resulting from relearning how to use one’s body can feel like culture shock when they surface in daily life, indicating a cultural embodiment of the tea room. At first, the movements of daily life are starkly different from the aesthetic movements that occur in the tea room, but just as one can acculturate to new surroundings, movements influenced by tea practice gradually become the same as one’s normal movements. This progressive fusion of tea and daily life is an indication of practitioners’ growing proficiency and engagement with the *chanoyu* tradition, which has always occupied a liminal position on the border between art and daily life. This liminal position and the goal to never not be practicing tea ceremony asks us to consider the relationship between life and art and to explore the ways that art constantly practiced can become a way of life.

As an art practice, tea gains its expressiveness through practitioners’ dedication to honing their bodily movements through the precise *kata* of *temae* and the high sensitivity that develops over time through careful attention and focused awareness of sensory
experiences in the tea room. These two elements, combined with the philosophical concept of *ichigo ichie*, become the basis for tea to act as a powerful, meaningful, and relational mechanic that allows host and guest to connect through their cocreation of the aesthetic experience of tea. The confluence of culture and the body that occurs in *chanoyu* creates a living, relational art practice in which participants learn to better understand themselves, others, and their surroundings both inside and outside of the tea room.

This study is significant in illustrating how tea, as a cultural practice, requires participants to think of life and art in different ways. In *chanoyu*, participants are asked to discipline their bodies, develop a sense of sensory openness, and relate to one another with mutual respect and humility. Though attention to sensory aesthetics is often critical in the arts, additional elements of *chanoyu* practice, namely the disciplining of the body through *kata* and the respect and humility required of the practice, make the practice considerably more holistic. The holistic nature of tea is one reason that tea behaviors begin manifesting unintentionally outside of practice as the art becomes part of everyday living, tea room behaviors become fused to the practitioner, and the artist becomes the art. This practice demonstrates the ways in which the concept of art can be expanded to include practices that influence and eventually become part of one’s daily life. This study helps us to consider how art can become a truly embodied practice in which the boundary between active art practice and one’s everyday life is blurred and eventually effaced. Most of my informants felt that they are still quite far from fully achieving this goal, so this study can be helpful in considering the beginning parts of this transition. Further
research could help to examine more deeply the relationship between art and life for advanced practitioners who may have more fully realized this goal.

In this study, I have worked to address some of the gaps in the literature thus far, such as the impact that culture has on the interpretations and understanding of embodied, aesthetic experiences. I have also contributed to English-language research on and discussions of Japanese pedagogical approaches, particularly by exploring how these culturally relevant pedagogies can be effectively applied in non-Japanese settings. By establishing *chanoyu* as an arts practice, I also examine how the teaching and learning of *chanoyu* help to cultivate students’ understanding of and ability to engage with embodied, aesthetic experience as artistic expression. *Chanoyu* places a cultural imperative on attending to the ephemeral through *ichigo ichie* philosophy, which gives the embodied experience of tea much of its effective and transformational power. Extrapolating this mindful approach and emphasis on the present moment to other embodied arts practices may imbue them with a similarly transformational and relational effect. The structure and discipline of movements that support meditative yet expressive gestures in the tea room through the concept of *kata*, too, may be helpful for art educators to consider integrating into their teaching or creative practices, as the intentionally structured progression of movement can help to overcome roadblocks to expression and support creativity. I have contributed to the gap that Powell (2007) discussed regarding the lack of knowledge and theory of the significance of the body in art education. By focusing on *chanoyu* as an embodied art practice, we can see the ways that the body is not only used in teaching and learning during lessons but also, importantly, the way that it retains and reenacts the actions that it has been trained in even outside of active
practice. In this way, the body becomes not only the medium through which learning takes place and the location where artistic knowledge is stored, but when the body unconsciously responds in artistic ways, it also becomes a teacher that reminds us of the constant potential for artistic expression throughout our lives. Embodied art practice is therefore realized through, with, and also importantly, from the body. Lastly, by discussing the teaching and learning of chanoyu as a form of art education, I have contributed to broadening scholarship on tea ceremony by offering more perspectives in addition to the typical historical (Avdulov, 2015; Hioki, 2013; Ludwig, 1974, 1981) and cultural (Carriger, 2009; da Rocha, 1999; Surack, 2006) approaches that have been taken with regard to chanoyu.

As I reflect on my work, I also consider the ways in which this research could have been implemented differently. One of the issues that became the most obvious to me as I was analyzing my data was that I did not ask my informants about their understandings of the concept of art beyond whether they saw chanoyu as art. Though some participants volunteered their understanding of how they defined “art,” not all did, and so there was no way to establish a baseline for what constituted art for informants. Especially because one’s conception of art can be affected by their cultural background or other experiences, asking this question would have allowed for greater consistency between answers about how and whether chanoyu fits as an art practice according to participants’ understandings. Another limitation I faced in this study was the relative inexperience of the students at the club: As most of the participants’ primary focus was on being university students, this limited the extent to which they could and did study tea. This was compounded by the limited frequency with which instructors visited the Tea
Institute, creating a significantly different pacing dynamic than other tea groups, which, in turn, had an impact on students’ proficiency. As I discuss below, it would have been helpful to see how the connections between tea practice, art, and life continue to develop as practitioners gain more confidence in their abilities.

Despite the narrow focus of my site, the Tea Institute, it has proven to be a particularly rich source of information for my research. However, some of the limitations of the site also point toward avenues for future research. One of the most significant limiting factors of my site was that students of tea move on relatively quickly and, thus, tend to remain in the very beginning stages of tea study during their time at Penn State. Further research with other tea groups who have more advanced members and have been studying tea for a longer period of time could confirm to what degree my informants’ understandings of the potentials of tea study come to fruition. In particular, this type of study can help to better understand whether and to what degree artistic, tea-like ways of being influence a practitioner’s everyday life and can allow for a more thorough investigation of the qualities of the deeply relational experiences that can occur in the tea room. Given that none of the students at the Tea Institute are Japanese, it would also be interesting to see how engagement with cultural ideas changes with the presence of Japanese peers. Morgan-sensei, whose home tea group has several Japanese members, discussed with me at points how there can be a significantly different dynamic when both Japanese and non-Japanese students study together. According to Morgan-sensei’s accounts, it seems that different cultural backgrounds can inform participants’ understandings of how practice is carried out and what they expect from teachers in lessons. In the Chanoyu Club, much of the cultural understanding was unilateral, with the
American and non-Japanese students learning to think about practice in more Japanese ways. However, in tea groups in which both Japanese and non-Japanese students learn together, I anticipate that cultural interactions would likely be more bilateral and would provide fertile ground for investigating how culture affects student experience within this kind of embodied learning. Additionally, in reflecting on my own introduction to Japanese traditional art pedagogy while I was living in Japan, future research might also be useful to explore how non-Japanese students study tea (or another, similarly disciplined practice in the same tradition of okeiko pedagogy and the Zen Ways) in Japan. Though this is a reversal of the resituation of the Japanese practice as I have examined it here (with non-Japanese students in a non-Japanese context), research on whether or how a non-Japanese student’s involvement with okeiko learning can impact their acquisition of or adaptation to Japanese culture could provide insight into cultural adaptation and the impact of local, embodied art on one’s lifestyle (and, in this case, particularly one living abroad). In addition to these avenues of research, throughout my work, I have relied on scholars who have discussed Japanese embodied approaches to music (Elkinton, 1995; Matsunobu, 2007; Powell, 2007; 2012); as such, it would be beneficial to study other embodied art practices, such as dance, theatrical arts, martial arts, visual arts, etc., in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of embodiment in the arts and how this embodiment affects relationships and ordinary life.

When I reflect on my time studying with the members of the Tea Institute’s Chanoyu Club, I am reminded of how much my understanding of both tea ceremony and the impact of embodied art practices has grown. Like many members, I came to the club to connect with Japanese culture, but I have come away with so much more. At the same
time, I am also reminded of how much I yet have to learn. Tea ceremony is very broad and easy to get interested in, but as Kitazawa-sensei once told me, “it’s deep and so anyone can start but the learning is forever until [your] life ends, so that’s why it’s very interesting.” Both the breadth and depth of tea ceremony make it easy to maintain a beginner’s mindset, which is important to the humble approach to learning that *chanoyu* requires.

The first person to introduce me to the phrase “*ichigo ichie,*” was the secretary of the first school where I taught in Japan. She wrote in a parting message that our meeting was *ichigo ichie*—a “once in a lifetime chance.” Now that I am leaving another school, this time as a student graduating, I reflect on how my understanding of this phrase has been developed as I studied *chanoyu* with the members of the Tea Institute over the past two years. *Ichigo ichie* philosophy is all about recognizing that this moment that is occurring right now will never happen again. In other words, it acknowledges the ephemerality of each and every moment, or as Elkinton (1995) explained, that “we will never have this particular experience again, . . . makes even the simplest matters and the humblest objects noble and important as we assume the task of being entirely present to them and to each other” (p. 380). This philosophy is what gives *chanoyu* its transformational power. Imagine infusing the teaching and practice of other arts with that mindset as well. Being fully present makes each brushstroke, each note sounded, and each step meaningful. Furthermore, this meaning can be made and experienced by both the artist and the audience. In the tea ceremony, the host and guest, mindful of the ephemeral experience they share, enact profound consideration for each other in the tea room where not only the participants but also the environment contributes to the
relational possibilities of aesthetic expression. Ascribing to a mindset in which each aesthetic gesture is a once-in-a-lifetime event invites both the artist and audience to engage deeply with their experience of art and to find within that fleeting moment connection—whether to oneself, to others, or to the environment.

This attention to and presence in the moment is what has made tea study such a transformative force for me. By recognizing the power of the moment, I have learned to pay more attention to the movements of my body and the sensory experiences I am able to take in. Recognizing the fleetingness of the moment, too, causes us to fully engage with, in gratitude and respect, the others who share these moments with us. Experiencing these moments in the tea room and recognizing their significance there has naturally carried over to the rest of my life. As I recognize the ways in which chanoyu training has taught me to better appreciate the finer yet meaningful points in life, I also know that there is still much left to learn and experience. Even after 60 years of study, Hara-sensei expressed a similar sentiment: “At this point, I still have to study a lot. . . . I need to know more. That’s my level. I feel I’m still a beginner, I need to know more, more, more.” Though I have only been studying for the tiniest fraction of this amount of time, I recognize that where I have arrived thus far, accompanied by my fellow students and led by our teachers, is just the beginning.
Appendix A
Glossary

aikidō (合気道) – Japanese martial art primarily aimed at self-defense that utilizes and redirects the energy from an opponent’s attacks via holds and throws

aisatsu (挨拶) – greeting, often involving a set phrase; aisatsu are an important element of social interactions in Japanese culture; in lessons specifically, it is important for students to formally ask their teacher to begin a lesson via this greeting

chabana (茶花) – flower arrangement for tea ceremony; rules and guidelines for this type of flower arranging consider the timing of the seasons as well as the understated aesthetics of the tea room, which means that very ostentatious flowers, such as roses, are typically not considered appropriate

chadō (茶道) – (also known as ‘sadō’) the Way of Tea; the Japanese tea ceremony

chaji (茶事) – a small, intimate tea gathering that involves viewing of the tea house garden, a charcoal-laying ceremony, a small Japanese meal, a thick tea ceremony, and a thin tea ceremony; typically guests are personal acquaintances of the host

chakin (茶巾) – a small white linen cloth used to clean the tea bowl prior to making tea and after a guest has returned the bowl after drinking; the cloth is soaked and folded prior to the ceremony and is brought in and out of the tea room placed in the basin of the bowl

chanoyu (茶の湯) – literally, “hot water for tea;” another word for the Japanese tea ceremony

cha-ire (茶入れ) – small, lidded vase-like vessel used as a tea caddy in the thick tea ceremony; typically the body of the vessel is ceramic and the lid is ivory (or meant to imitate ivory) with gold leaf foil on the underside; the tea caddy is stored in a decorative silk drawstring pouch called a shifuku (仕覆)

chamei (茶名) – tea name; bestowed upon a tea practitioner once they have attained the level of proficiency that they are certified to be a teacher; the tea name denotes that the practitioner is now symbolically a part of the familial lineage that has passed down the tea tradition; in the case of the Urasenke and Omotesenke schools, a tea name is comprised of the Sen family name and a given name involving the character 宗 (sou) and another character chosen by the grandmaster of the school
chasen (茶筅) – bamboo tea whisk; whisks typically have between 80–120 tines that are created via fine cuts into a section of bamboo; different types and colors of bamboo are preferred by and associated with different tea schools

chasen-tōshi (茶筅通し) – ceremonial cleaning of the tea whisk prior to making the tea in the ceremony; this involves both preheating the whisk by whisking it in warm water as well as raising the tines to inspect for any broken or damaged tines

chashaku (茶杓) – bamboo tea scoop; a thin section of bamboo with a curved end for scooping tea; high-quality versions of these utensils are produced by Zen monks and are given evocative poetic names which are discussed as part of the thematic elements of formal tea ceremonies

chawan (茶碗) – tea bowl; can be made from many different ceramic techniques, which contribute to determining a bowl’s level of formality and which kinds of ceremonies it can be used in

chiri-uchi (塵打ち) – snapping of the fukusa during folding in the Omotesenke school tradition; literally, “knocking off of dust,” it is meant to be both a physical and a metaphorical cleansing of the space that reminds the host and guest to clear their minds at the beginning of the ceremony

darye (다례) – the Korean tea ceremony

dashibukusa (出し袱紗) – decorative square, silk cloth constructed with two layers; provided in the Omotesenke school tradition by the host during thick tea ceremony for guests to use almost like a saucer below the tea bowl when drinking

-dō (~道) – literally, “path” or “way”; suffix used for traditions associated with Zen

fukusa (袱紗) – square, silk cloth constructed with two layers; a symbol of the host that is used for the cleansing (both actual and symbolic) of the tea scoop and tea caddy; the color of the cloth varies based on the host’s gender and school: purple is for men of either school, red is for women in Urasenke, orange-scarlet is for women in Omotesenke

furo (風炉) – brazier typically made of a ceramic basin used in the warmer months (May–September); placed in the corner of the room where the host prepares tea

furosaki byōbu (風炉先屏風) – short, decorative, two-panel folding screen placed in the corner of the tea room where the host prepares tea
*futa-oki* (蓋置) – literally, “lid rest”; functions as a place to rest the lid of the cast-iron kettle or the bamboo ladle; made of a section of bamboo, decorative ceramic, or cast-iron

*gong fu cha* (工夫茶) – the Chinese tea ceremony; literally, “skillful preparation of tea”

*hanayome shugyō* (花嫁修業) – literally, “bridal training”; traditional practice in which women began practicing arts such as tea ceremony, Japanese dance, and flower arrangement in preparation for marriage

*haiken* (拝見) – observation; observation of tea utensils occurs in the ceremony after guests have finished drinking tea; depending on the ceremony, they may observe only the tea bowl, or they may also observe the other utensils used for making tea

*heri* (縁) – the long edge of a *tatami* mat that has been covered in fabric

*hishaku* (柄杓) – long-handled bamboo ladle used to draw water from the cast-iron kettle

*ichigo ichie* (一期一会) – “one time, one meeting”; Japanese philosophy that focuses on the importance of being in the moment because it will never come again

*iemoto* (家元) – head of a school tradition; grand master

*ikebana* (生花) – Japanese flower arrangement

*kaishi* (懐紙) – square pieces of *washi* paper that are used as part of a stack that has been folded in half; this folded stack of paper is used to take the place of a plate for tea sweets during a ceremony; individual sheets of paper can be used like napkins to wipe tea residue from the rim of the tea bowl or to clean dirty fingertips

*kama* (釜) – cast-iron tea kettle that is placed on the brazier or hearth to boil water

*karada de oboeru* (体で覚える) - remembering with one’s body

*kata* (型) – literally, “form”; Japanese cultural idea of prescribed motions of a given practice that are practiced over and over again to train the body toward an ideal fluidity

*katachi de hairu* (形で入る) – entering through the form

*keikogi* (稽古着) – practice wear; for tea, when kimono is not available or practical, this is a vest that is meant to simulate the elements of kimono useful in tea practice, such as the overlapping collars in which practitioners can store
kaishi or a rectangularly folded fukusa and an obi sash in which hosts can tuck the corner of a triangularly folded fukusa

kensui (建水) – waste water container; because this vessel contains waste water, it is considered to be dirty and is thus obscured from the guests’ view during the ceremony as well as when it is brought into or out of the room

kimono (着物) – traditional Japanese garment that is characterized by long sleeves and overlapping collars and that is secured by an obi sash

kitsuke (着付け) – kimono-dressing

koicha (濃茶) – thick tea; three scoops of tea are used per person to prepare a tea with a thick, paint-like consistency; all guests drink from the same shared bowl

kokoro (心) – literally, “heart,” but this is broader in the Japanese conception than in the Western conception; in this thesis, I refer to Sato’s (2004) definition: “the center of one’s entire being, the inseparable combination of our mental, physical, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual capacities” (p. 3)

matcha (抹茶) – powdered green tea used in the Japanese tea ceremony; this type of tea is different from steeped teas because the fine powder made from grinding tea leaves is not steeped but is instead whisked into suspension, meaning the leaf itself is ingested with the tea

mi ni tsuku (身につく) – (also conjugated as 身につける [mi ni tsukeru]) literally, “to attach to one’s body”; refers to the acquisition of skill

mizusashi (水差) – lidded ceramic vessel containing fresh, cool water

mizuya (水屋) – area adjacent to the tea room where dishes and utensils are cleaned and prepared

Mushanokōjisente (武者小路千家) – the smallest of the three most prominent styles of Japanese tea ceremony

natsume (棗) – jujube-shaped lidded tea caddy used in the thin tea ceremony; traditionally lacquered, but modern versions may be made of plastic

New Brew – prospective Tea Institute members who are undergoing the semester-long training for the Tea Specialist Exam through which they can become full members of the Institute

nihon buyō (日本舞踊) – traditional Japanese dance

nijiriguchi (闇口) – narrow, 1-meter-square doorway through which one enters a traditional tea room
nyūmon (入門) – introductory course

obi (帯) – sash used to secure kimono; women’s obi tend to be significantly wider (30cm) than men’s (10cm)

obi jime (帯締め) – braided cord used to secure and support a tied obi

obi age (帯揚げ) – silk cloth tied above and tucked into the upper edge of the obi

okeiko (お稽古) – lesson; particularly lessons in the Japanese traditional arts that involve disciplined practice, hierarchical structure, and a close relationship between students and teachers

Omotesenke (表千家) – one of the three most prominent styles of Japanese tea ceremony

omotenashi (おもてなし) – Japanese concept of profoundly expressed hospitality

Philly style – practice of using the thick tea remaining in the tea bowl after guests have drunk the tea to make an additional bowl of thin tea; this practice was developed by an Urasenke group in Philadelphia

sadō (茶道) – (see chadō)

sakura (桜) – cherry blossoms

sansenke (三千家) – the three schools descended from Sen no Rikyū: Omotesenke, Urasenke, and Mushanokōjisenke

seiza (正座) – literally, “correct sitting”; a kneeling seated position where one sits with legs folded underneath oneself, with buttocks on heels

Sen no Rikyū (千利休) – influential figure in the development of Japanese tea ceremony who is considered to have perfected the ceremony in the mid-16th century; the three main schools of tea ceremony descended from his practice (see also sansenke)

sencha (煎茶) – a type of Japanese green tea; steamed leaf tea prepared by steeping

sensei (先生) – teacher; also used as an honorific suffix appended to a teacher’s name

sensu (扇子) – folding fan; used by guests in the tea ceremony as a symbolic representation of oneself; it is kept closed and never opened in the tea room; it is placed on the tatami in front of oneself while bowing; during the ceremony, it is placed on the tatami behind the seated guests, with the direction that the open portion faces indicating respect to other guests
shihan (師範) – license in Japanese traditional arts certifying a practitioner as a teacher

shu-ha-ri (守破離) – Japanese concept that describes the stages of skill acquisition and mastery as well as the development of student-teacher relationships: in the first stage, shu (literally, “protect” or “obey”), the practitioner is primarily concerned with obeying the rules and getting the foundations down; in the second stage, ha (literally, “break”), the practitioner begins to break some of these rules; and in the final stage (literally, “separate”), the practitioner realizes mastery that transcends a focus on rules, and their practice becomes natural; important in this concept is that regardless of the level of proficiency achieved, one always returns to the base level of foundations

soto (外) – (see also, uchi) literally, “outside”; one part of the cultural ideological dichotomy (along with uchi) that defines whether someone is a member of the in-group or out-group; this, in turn, defines cultural interactions, such as speech patterns and inclusion

raku (楽) – a traditional style of Japanese pottery where bowls are hand-built (rather than thrown), are porous (and thus comparatively lightweight), and often are glazed in either black or red; because of a strong historical connection between raku potters and tea ceremony practitioners (notably, Sen no Rikyū’s preference for the bowls), they are considered to be the most highly ranked and are typically reserved for more formal ceremonies in which thick tea is prepared (see koicha)

Rikyū – (see Sen no Rikyū)

ro (炉) – box hearth brazier used in the colder months (October–April); placed in the corner of the central half-mat of the tea room; traditionally, ro are sunken into the floor of the tea room, but when sunken hearths are not a part of the tea room, a movable oki-ro is used, as in the Tea Institute

ryakubon usucha temae (略盆薄茶点前) – procedure for preparing thin tea on a tray; this is the first procedure studied in the Urasenke school

tabi (足袋) – split-toe socks in which the big toe is separated from the other toes and the sock is fastened with tabs at the ankle

taiken (体験) – literally, “experience”; in this thesis, I refer to Sato’s (2004) “whole body experience and understanding with one’s whole body” (p. 3)

taiko (太鼓) – Japanese drumming

tatami (畳) – woven rush mats used as flooring in traditional Japanese architecture; they measure 2m x 1m; the longer, 2-meter sides are covered in cloth (see heri) while the shorter sides remain uncovered; the arrangement of the mats in
the tea room dictates how participants move through the room and where they will be seated

Tea Specialist Exam – exam used to certify that a New Brew has successfully completed training to achieve mastery of both content knowledge about tea and the skills necessary to prepare tea in the gong fu cha ceremony; successful completion of this exam grants full membership in the Institute

tana (棚) – shelf, typically lacquered, used to display wares (such as natsume and mizusashi) in more advanced procedures

teishu (亭主) – the host

tema (点前) – (may also appear with the polite o- prefix as “otemae”) a procedure for preparing tea; there are many kinds of procedures that vary in terms of formality, tea type, and utensil usage

tema-datami (点前畳) – area of the tea room where the host prepares tea; specifically, the mat where the host sits and places tea utensils

tetsubin (鉄瓶) – cast-iron tea kettle

tokonoma (床の間) – alcove in the tea room where the hanging scroll is hung and flower arrangements are placed

Tsutsujawan (筒茶碗) – a variation of the tea bowl that has a slightly narrower opening and taller walls; often used in winter

uchi (内) – (see also, soto) literally, “inside”; one part of the cultural ideological dichotomy (along with soto) that defines whether someone is a member of the in-group or out-group; this, in turn, defines cultural interactions, such as speech patterns and inclusion

Urasenke (裏千家) – the largest of the three most prominent styles of Japanese tea ceremony; this style is known for being significantly more internationally-minded

usucha (薄茶) – thin tea; 1.5 scoops of tea are used per person to prepare a tea with a watery consistency and foam on the surface, and each guest is served their own portion in a tea bowl; desired amount of foam varies by school

wabi-cha (侘茶) – style of tea ceremony developed by Murata Jukō and later Takeno Jōō centered around the wabi-sabi aesthetic; this style of tea was a notable departure from the previous tea styles, which were lavish events hosted by nobles on their estates (either outdoors or in their large studies) to show off precious Chinese imported wares; wabi-cha instead is a much more intimate affair that is held in small, modest tea houses inspired by the
mountain huts of hermits and that uses simple, roughly hewn, and imperfect yet beautiful wares; it is a tea style that embraces simplicity, modesty, and natural forms

wabi-sabi (侘寂) – Japanese aesthetic tied closely to tea ceremony and other traditional arts that values the simple, aged, rustic, natural, subtle, and imperfect in a reflection of embracing the ephemerality of life and nature; these ideas are usually reflected in intentional imperfections, such as roughness, asymmetry, modesty, astringency, etc.; this aesthetic concept is actually quite complex in its simplicity, and it is best understood through direct experience over time; even experienced tea masters do not feel like they have a complete understanding of this aesthetic concept

wa-kei-sei-jaku (和敬清寂) – four guiding principles of tea ceremony: harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility

warigeiko (割稽古) – literally, “split-practice”; an approach to practice that involves splitting the procedure into essential parts and practicing the basics of each part separately

washi (和紙) – Japanese paper; often one side has a slightly rougher texture than the other

yoroshiku (よろしく) – Japanese cultural concept of mutual cooperation and respect; asking to be treated favorably, with the nuance that it will be returned in kind

zazen (座禅) – seated Zen meditation

Zen learning – an approach to learning used in the Institute that involves little to no explanation from the teacher; instead, learning primarily taking place through student observation; according to Phill, one of the informants in this study, Zen learning is “usually practice-based and requires a clarity of mind to advance in, as you better yourself along with the skill”
Appendix B
Key Informants and Demographic Data

Key Informants

Teachers:

Mihori-sensei
*Omotesenke*, instructor
Studied tea for 40 years, taught for 25 years

Hara-sensei
*Omotesenke*, instructor
Studied tea for over 60 years, taught for 10 years

Kitazawa-sensei
*Omotesenke*, instructor
Studied tea for over 16 years, taught for 9 years

Matsuda-sensei
*Omotesenke*, instructor’s assistant
Studied tea for 25 years, taught for 4 years

Morgan-sensei
*Urasenke*, instructor
Studied tea for 23.5 years, taught for 14 years

Students:

Bethany
*Omotesenke*, alum and university staff
Studying tea for 6 years
Became involved through interest in Japan

samantha [the author]
*Omotesenke*, graduate student
Studied tea for 2 years
Became involved through a desire to connect with Japanese traditional culture and practice *okeiko*-style learning

Lohit
*Omotesenke*, undergraduate student
Studied tea for 1 year
Became involved through interest in tea and, later, through interest in Japanese culture and history
Dakota  
*Omotesenke*, undergraduate student  
Studied tea for 1 year  
Became involved through interest in Japan

Nahks & Rosemary (married couple)  
*Urasenke*, staff at the university  
Studied for 4 years  
Became involved through a friend and their interest in Japanese culture

Courtney  
*Urasenke*, undergraduate student  
Studied for 3 years  
Became involved through interest in Japanese culture

Phill  
*Urasenke*, undergraduate student  
Studied for 1.5 years (has stopped *chanoyu* to focus primarily on *gong fu cha*)  
Became involved through friendship with Courtney

Geoff  
*Urasenke*, graduate student  
Studied for 1 semester  
Became involved through interest in tea and other Asian cultures

Alec  
*Urasenke*, undergraduate student  
Studied for less than 1 semester  
Became involved through interest in Japanese culture

**Demographic Data**

32 total participants (including myself)

The following graphs refer to the demographic information of the participants in my study. While the demographics of the club membership are similar to those presented here, what is presented here is not intended to represent the club membership as a whole.
Figure B1. All participants as students and teachers.

Figure B2. All participants by gender.
Figure B3. All participants by nationality/cultural background.

Figure B4. Students and teachers by school affiliation.
Figure B5. Instructors by school affiliation.

Figure B6. Students by university status.
Figure B7. Students by nationality/cultural background.

Figure B8. Students by school affiliation.
Figure B9. *Omotesenke* students by gender.

Figure B10. *Omotesenke* students by student status.
Figure B11. Omotesenke students by nationality/cultural background.

Figure B12. Urasenke students by gender.
Figure B13. Urasenke students by student status.

Figure B14. Urasenke students by nationality/cultural background.
Appendix C
Tea Utensils and Materials

Arranged in order of appearance in this document.

*Figure C1.* Detail of *tatami* (畳) mat.

*Figure C2.* *Sensu* (扇子) folding fan resting on *tatami* mat.
Figure C3. Folding screen used to represent tokonoma alcove with kakejiku (掛け軸; hanging scroll) and maple leaves placed in the hana-ire (花入; vase).

Figure C4. Two types of kama (釜) kettles; a ro-style kettle (L) placed on a portable ro (炉)-style brazier and a furo (風炉)-style kettle (R) placed on a wooden trivet.
Figure C5. Ceramic *furo* (風炉) brazier placed in front of *furosaki byōbu* (風炉先屏風) folding screen.

Figure C6. Folded *kaishi* (懷紙) napkins.
Figure C7. Mizuya (水屋) preparatory area set up for a master-led lesson.

Figure C8. Silk fukusa (袱紗) ceremonial cleansing cloths folded in quarters in storage boxes; orange for women (Omotesenke), purple for men (both schools).
Figure C9. Lidded mizusashi (水差し) container for cool, fresh water.

Figure C10. Chawan (茶碗) tea bowl with matcha (抹茶) (R) and sweets tray with maple leaf bean-paste cakes (L).
Figure C11. Open natsume (棗) tea caddy with matcha powder inside.

Figure C12. Two chasen (茶筅) tea whisks made from white bamboo.
Figure C13. Two chashaku (茶杓) tea scoops made from smoked (L) and white (R) bamboo resting on a chawan.

Figure C14. Ceramic kensui (建水) waste water container.
Figure C15. Bamboo *hishaku* (柄杓) ladle resting on a *futa-oki* (蓋置).

Figure C16. Bamboo *futa-oki* (蓋置) lid rest.
Figure C17. Matcha prepared on a bon (盆) tray as set up for ryakubon usucha temae (略盆薄茶点前).

Figure C18. Cha-ire (茶入れ) in a tied shifuku (仕覆) pouch (L) and cha-ire outside of decorative shifuku pouch.
Figure C19. Two cast-iron tetsubin (鉄瓶) kettles on an electric hotplate.

Figure C20. Linen chakin (茶巾) drying after use on a mizuya shelf.
Figure C21. Folded decorative silk dashibukusa (出し袱紗) cloth and black raku (楽) tea bowl with gold speckle design.

Figure C22. Trays prepared with utensils for practicing Urasenke ryakubon usucha temae.
Appendix D
Tea room Tatami Layout Diagrams

Figure D1. Ro layout in Chanoyu Room for lessons and practice.

Figure D2. Furo layout in Chanoyu Room for lessons and practice.
Figure D3. Ro layout in the main tea house room for demonstrations.

Figure D4. Furo layout in the main tea house room for demonstrations.
Figure D5. Walking path for the first guest from entrance to seat (same path is reversed for exit).
REFERENCES


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