

A Touch of Japanese Tradition

Welcome to A Touch of Japanese Tradition, published by the Japan America Society of St. Louis and the Japan America Women's Association. This newsletter highlights our programs and events about Japanese culture.

Chanoyu: Japanese Tea Ceremony

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What is Chanoyu?

Chanoyu (茶の湯) is the ceremonial preparation and presentation of powdered green tea, known as *matcha*. The tea ceremony is about more than just making and serving tea; it is about a specific mindset that goes alongside these practices. Practitioners of *chanoyu* must work to integrate the principles of Wa Kei Sei Jaku (harmony, respect, purity and tranquility) into their performances of the tea ceremony as well as their daily lives. These principles are a reflection of the pure spirit and soul of the tea master Sen Rikyu.

Thin tea is served in a casual and relaxed atmosphere and is served to each guest with accompanying confections in an individual bowl. When we talk about Japanese tea ceremonies, it usually refers to making and serving a bowl of thin tea. However, there are two types of tea: thin and thick. In contrast to the thin tea, thick tea is served in a formal full-length tea event called *chaji* in which the preparation and drinking of thick tea is the most important part of the event. After a meal, one bowl of thick tea is shared among several guests.



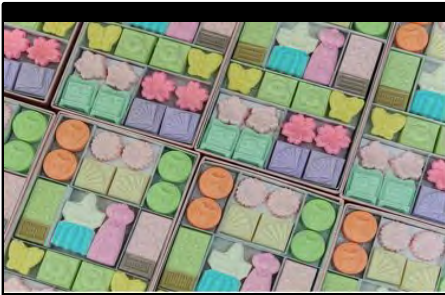
Meet the Staff

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And special thanks to all of our contributing authors.



Wasanbon and Wagashi

和三盆 (わさんぼん)

A traditional confection served with tea during the tea ceremony.



Wagashi, or fine Japanese confections, are a representative element of Japan's traditional culture. One indispensable ingredient of these delicacies is a sugar known in Japanese as *wasanbon-to*. For most people the word "sugar" calls up the image of the snowy white sugar commonly found in household kitchens. *Wasanbon* sugar, however, is a pale ivory color. This fine-quality sugar from Japan is derived from a special variety of sugar cane called *chikuto* that is cultivated only in certain parts of Shikoku. The plant is comparatively short, reaching less than two meters when fully grown, and the stalks are thin, with the sweetness concentrated at the root.

Chikuto is harvested from mid-November through December and processed into sugar during the winter months. Basically, juice is pressed out of the sugar cane in a mill and boiled down to draw out the lye, leaving a raw product called *shiroshita-to*, which literally means "sugar before it becomes white." *Shiroshita-to* is allowed to stand and cool very slowly for more than a week, then the syrup is extracted and it is cooled again into a partially solid state. Water is added and the sugar is kneaded by hand, placed into wooden tubs, and pressed with stones to remove more syrup. The name *wasanbon* is thought to originate from this kneading process, because it used to be done on trays (*bon*) and repeated three (*san*) times. Nowadays, kneading is repeated four or five times.

Photo sources, top to bottom: http://tonymcnicol.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Wasanbon-sugar-Mar-2012/G0000WKAY714iftA/100001_AUL21pSg8, Jodi Dobinsky, <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/%E5%92%8C%E8%8F%93%E5%AD%901261441.jpg>, http://thumbnail.image.rakuten.co.jp/@0_mall/tokushima-shop/cabinet/00389560/wasan-yusan500w.jpg

A Brief History of Chanoyu

- 9th century: Tea seeds were introduced to Japan from China.
- 12th-14th centuries: Tea was considered a miraculous means of prolonging one's life and was consumed mainly by Zen monks, the nobles and high-ranking warriors.
- 15th century: A style of Tea similar to the one we know today was developed and was placed in an ideological context, which raised tea drinking to the level of a fine art.
- 16th century: The foundation for the way of Tea was completed by Sen-no- Rikyu who expressed the spirit of Tea as 和敬清寂 (wa-kei-sei-jaku) (harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility). Chanoyu provided refuge to the warrior samurai from battle.
- 17th century – Chanoyu became popular among the great lord (in the 17th century. The way of Tea established by Rikyu was passed down by his three great grandsons who created three lines (schools) of Sen family: Ura-senke, Omote-senke, and Mushanokoji-senke

The Way of the Tea

Jodi Dobinsky

In the art of Chanoyu, conversation between the practitioner and her guest is done not through words, but through actions. There are certain rehearsed phrases to be said, but greater importance lies in the body language in those involved. The art of the Japanese tea ceremony, or *chanoyu*, highlights my favorite aspect of the Japanese language: the importance of not only what you say, but how you say it. I have found that this idea permeates most traditional Japanese cultural events. One has to be very careful with the message their body is sending, even when she is silent. Did I bow deeply enough? Did I turn my cup enough times? Should I try and sit in the traditional *seiza* position for just a little longer, or can I give up and sit like I normally would? For a student of not only the Japanese language, but the culture as well, I constantly find myself marveling at how much weight is placed on these silent signs of respect that seems to be downplayed in my own American culture.

For much of the ceremony, everyone was silent. Though we knew we were allowed to talk, the calm atmosphere seemed to lull everyone into a peaceful quiet, which allowed us to simply enjoy the soft sounds of the ceremony itself. There was the sound of water being poured, of the whisk mixing the tea, and the soft rustle of fabric made by incredibly controlled movements. In a way, the same inner peace that the tea ceremony practitioners must master was reflected in the setting of the ceremony.

The *chanoyu* event organized by the Japan America Society of St. Louis, on June 10th, was my first time to see a traditional tea ceremony with all the proper tools and in a tearoom. This was the first time I was able to understand the appeal of learning how to properly execute a tea ceremony. As a practitioner of martial arts, it seems easy to me to draw connections between the two arts. Perhaps, however, it seems a strange thing to compare martial arts to a tea ceremony. On the surface, the two seem radically different. Both the tea ceremony and martial arts teach a discipline and place an emphasis on controlled movements. Both are about adhering to a certain traditional set of rules or virtues. Both offer a deep sense of inner calm when those virtues are internalized fully and both take years of hard work and dedication to master properly. In the same way that many traditional styles of martial arts are not about fighting, *chanoyu* is not merely about making tea, but so much more.

This deeper meaning to what, on the surface, appears to be such a simple concept is what draws me to learn more about *chanoyu* and Japanese culture as a whole. Japanese culture seems to have perfected the art of taking something complex and making it look effortless. Not only effortless, but beautiful as well. Japanese culture takes mundane activities such as making tea, arranging flowers, or packing lunch and turns those chores into moments of expression.

Jodi Dobinsky is the Japan America Society's summer intern. She is a senior International Relations Major at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

Did you know?

All true tea (white, green, black, and oolong) comes from the same plant, the *Camellia Sinesis*. It takes a minimum of three to five years for a tea bush to grow and be ready for harvesting.



<http://www.yamanashi-kankou.jp/>

富士北麓茶会便り

The English version of this article is on the following page.

富士山北麓に住み、毎日富士山を眺めながら暮らす私たちは、気楽なお茶会を開いて楽しもうと、2年前から時々集まるようになりました。遠くセントルイスで日本に興味を持っていただいている皆さんに、私たちのお茶会ニュースをお届けしたいと思います。

私たちグループの中心になり、またお茶室を提供してくださるのは陶芸家の松田さん、彼女の友人でお茶の先生でもある安藤さんのお手伝いのおかげで、流儀を超えた破格のしつらえとはいえ伝統的ルールも大切にしてお茶会を年に4回ほど開いています。

この3月の終わりには、セントルイス日米協会会長の臼井智観子さんを迎えて

ひな祭り茶会を催しました。ひな祭りは女の子の成長を、祝い祈る日本の伝統的な催しです。現代でも毎年3月3日には、女の子のいる多くの家庭で、ひな人形と桃の花を飾り、家族みんなで女の子の幸せな人生を祈ります。

今回のお茶会では、床の間には桃の花が飾られ、掛け軸も、床の間に飾られた香合もひな人形が選ばれていました。特にこの香合は、松田さんの作られた愛らしいもので、男雛と女雛が赤い両紙の上に並んで私たちを迎えてくれました。茶道具は、これも松田さん作の大きな花模様の水差を中心に選ばれていて、白地に南洋の花が咲き乱れる華やかな背の高い水差しを引き立てるように取り合わせられた唐津焼きなど渋いお茶碗との対比が味わい深いものになりました。菓子器はメンバーのひとりの手づくりの漆塗りの箱、黒地に緑の抽象的な蒔絵の柄と角ばった形が現代的な印象を与えていました。

いつになく厳しい寒さが続いた日本でしたが、ようやく訪れた暖かい春の午後の日差しが差し込む茶室は、静けさの中にも春を喜ぶ気持ちが満ち溢れていました。いつも思うことですが、お茶室の中には普段とちょっと違う清らかな空気が流れていて、あわただしい日常生活を忘れさせてくれます。非日常の空間の魅力、これが私たちをお茶の世界に向かわせる大きな要因かもしれません。

さて、昨年東日本大震災の際には、セントルイスの皆様も私たち日本のために多くの募金をお贈りくださったと聞いています。皆様の温かい気持ちにお礼を申し上げるとともに、大変につらい体験をされた被災者の方々のことをこれからも忘れずに、心にかけてくださるようお願い申し上げます。私たちの住む富士山の北麓地域は被災地からは数百キロ離れていて大きな被害はありませんで

したが、この一年間毎日つらいニュースに接し、心痛む毎日を送ってきました。それでもまた春は巡り来て、早春の木々の芽吹き、鳥たちのさえずり、そしてなによりも、いつも変わらぬ富士山の美しい姿が私たちに未来へ向かう力を注ぎ込んでくれます。日本人の経験したつらい体験や悲しみが無駄に終わらず、世界中の人々の未来に貢献するような提言をもたらすものになれば、それが皆様の暖かい応援への何よりの御礼になると思います。石田裕美 (代表)

Note: 香合(コウゴウ)： 炉の中の炭の近くに入れるお香の入れ物

Greetings from the Northern Foot of Mt. Fuji Chakai

By Hiromi Ishida

Please see the endnotes on the following page for the Japanese terminology used in this article.



For the past two years, our group has gathered together to appreciate and enjoy Japanese tea and the art of *chanoyu* (茶の湯) in a casual atmosphere. We would like to send our club¹ news to the people of St. Louis who may have an interest in Japan.

Our tea ceremony group meets at a tearoom, known as a *chashitsu* (茶室), which is owned by Yuriko Matsuda who is a contemporary ceramic artist and veteran potter. Ms. Ando, who is an *Urasenke* (裏千家) teacher and a friend of Ms. Matsuda, serves as our hostess. Ms. Matsuda serves as the assistant to the hostess. We hold tea ceremony events as many as four times a year. In March 2012, we had a pleasure of having Chikako Usui, the president of Japan America Society of St. Louis, at our tea ceremony. The theme of the March event was *Hinamatsuri* (雛祭り The Japanese Doll Festival or Girl's Day). *Hinamatsuri* is one of major traditional celebrations in Japan in which people pray for the healthy growth and happiness of all girls. Japanese families with female children display special dolls for the holiday along with peach flowers and enjoy special food.

We entered the tearoom through the entrance for guests², and were greeted by peach blooms in an alcove³, hanging scroll with a pair of hina dolls (Emperor and Empress dolls), and a lovely incense container called a *kougou* (香合) that was also decorated with a hina dolls design. The *kougou* was ceramic, hand-made and a painted work of art by Ms. Matsuda. In addition, Ms. Matsuda selected a large water container⁴ with floral pattern, which was also one of her works. It was an elegant ceramic container with a splash of tropical flowers against the white-color background. This modern water jar

contrasted with a rustic tea bowl from *Karatsu* (唐津), creating a harmony of the traditional and modern styles. A *kashiki* (菓子器), a box for sweets, was also a hand-made by one of the group members. It was a lacquer box with a lid, with black and green colors with an abstract design. The contrast between the two, again, gave a refreshing modern touch to the otherwise traditional tearoom.

The *chakai* was held in late March. Although we had experienced a lingering cold weather this winter, it was an early spring and we all felt the warmth of an afternoon sunshine. The tearoom was filled with the fresh air of spring. There is always a special air of purity and serenity in the tearoom, the air that is totally different from that of the mundane world. When we sit in the tearoom, it is as though we are transported to a different universe. It may be this tranquil space that keeps attracting people to the world of *chanoyu*.

Japan experienced a devastating disaster one year ago on March 11th, 2011. We have learned that the people of St. Louis have donated funds to aid the victims and recovery efforts of the Great Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami. We thank you for the warm support you have given us. Even though we live hundreds of miles southwest of Tohoku and were fortunate not to experience serious damages, it has been a challenging year for all of us in Japan to see the victims and their loss. We thought of what they must have endured. The

arrival of spring brings hope for new beginning and renewal. It gives us life and fresh energy. As we look at Mt. Fuji that soars into the sky alone with graceful lines and shape, it too gives us hope for the future. This mega-disaster taught us many lessons and we hope what we have learned will make the world a safer place.



<http://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/n/nijiriguch>



Tokonoma in Ms. Matsuda's tearoom

¹A *chakai* (茶会) is a tea ceremony club that meets regularly to hold events. ²*nigiriguchi*- It is an entrance door for the guests and is only 3 feet tall. Guests remove their shoes and crawl into the tearoom on one's hands and knees. The *nigiriguchi* separates between the tearoom and outside world. *Nigiriguchi* is a common feature of the teahouse. ³*tokonoma*- a built-in recessed space in a Japanese style reception room, in which items for artistic appreciation are displayed. In English, *tokonoma* are usually called alcoves.

The Way of Tea Connects Arts and Hearts

By Janet Grace Riehl



Junko Ikeda, Urasenke Chanoyu instructor and her husband/student, Yutaka.

Arigatou gozaimasu

Like so many delightful things in my life, a chain of circumstances led me to the June 10th Chanoyu. My great niece Amelia and I had hoped to attend the tea ceremony during the Japanese Festival (September 1st through 3rd) at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Alas, this year there was to be no ceremony on Tea House Island although we could tour the island and visit the *soan*, or farm hut style teahouse.

But maybe—just maybe—where there is one tea ceremony, there might be more. I searched the web, and immediately found the *Chanoyu* sponsored by the Japan America Society of St. Louis and the Japan America Society Women's Association. Just as quickly I bought two tickets. Amelia wasn't able to go with me, but another friend could, and we had the best time. Indeed the precision and beauty of the

ceremony performed by Junko Ikeda (Urasenke Instructor) soothed mind and soul.

My greatest joy in life is to create connections through the arts and across cultures. This Way of Tea ceremony did that brilliantly through combining direct experience with formally introduced information. I'd worried about being clumsy during this delicate ceremony in the intimate setting of a private tearoom. These fears vanished as my hosts made us comfortable with their good humor, fun, and frankness.

All our senses were evoked: sight, taste, smell, hearing, and touch as our hearts opened to each other and the Way of Tea.

For more information about Janet Grace Riehl, please see her website, "Riehl Life: Village Wisdom for the 21st Century" www.riehlife.com

Question, Comment, Contribute!

A Touch of Japanese Tradition is looking for volunteer newsletter staff and contributions for next edition. We are always looking for people to write for different editions as well people to write a short or long article about some aspects of Japanese traditions for fall and winter seasons. If you have comments about the articles published in this edition, suggestions to the editors, or have something you would like to contribute, please e-mail us at cisjas@umsl.edu.

Chanoyu Demonstration at Veronica House

Hatsuko Eilers and her three assistants; Rie Grimm, Mariko Matsumoto, and Satomi Morita, gave a Chanoyu demonstration at Veronica House over Mother's Day weekend. Over 70 people showed up for the event at the large assisted living facility. Throughout the hour-long demonstration, Ms. Yuka Kuo supplied a detailed narration to explain the demonstration.

Ms. Eilers met her three assistants at a joint Japan America Society/ Japan America Society's Women's Association event in February 2012. Though none of them had any prior experience or much knowledge about chanoyu performance, they all happily agreed to help Ms. Eilers with a chanoyu demonstration.

Over the course of two months, Mrs. Eilers taught her students the basics of the tea ceremony to prepare them for the demonstration. The group gathered and practiced once a week at the Missouri Zen Center. According to Ms. Kuo, who also attended the practice sessions, Mrs. Eilers was strict yet warm and patient with her students. Her assistants quickly learned and made the event a big success.

Hatsuko Eilers has given chanoyu demonstrations for more than 30 years in St. Louis. She is also a veteran kimono teacher and for the past 28 years she has presented a kimono fashion show at annual Japanese Festival at the Missouri Botanical Garden.



From left: Hatsuko Eilers, Mariko Matsumoto, Rie Grimm, and Satomi Morita

My First Chanoyu Experience By Rie 利恵 Grimm

お茶の世界は私にとって、全く無縁の世界でした。どちらかと言えば、避けてきた世界です。でも、2月の半ばから練習が始まり、当日のデモンストレーションまで、あっという間に当日を迎えました。本当に私にできるのかどうか心配でしたが、以前に抱いていた不安以上に上手く出来たので、終わってホッとしています。

お茶のお茶碗さえ触ったことのない私に、プレッシャーを与えることなく、根気よく、親切に教えて下さった初子先生に感謝しています。私の間違いをそっと教えてくれたお二方にも感謝しています。毎回のお稽古も笑いの渦の中、とても楽しく学んでいくことができました。

5月12日、当日、私たち3人が正座をして、先生のお手前が始まったころから、すごく厳正で静寂な空気を肌で感じました。その空気を感じるにより、「お茶の世界ってすごいな～異国の人たちにもこのお茶の世界の精神を伝えることができるんだ」と思いました。

茶の湯を通して、書道とは違った精神を学んだ様な気がします。それは何かというと、「静けさ」です。私は書道を書いている時の「無の境地」がとても好きです。それに比べてお茶は「和の静寂さ」、つまり、静けさをみんなと共有できるということです。それもまた、いいものだと思いました。

Tanabata Matsuri

By Toshiko Kitagawa

There are five seasonal festivals in Japan:

- (1) January 7- We wish for the families' health through the year
- (2) March 3 -- Girls' Day or Hinamatsuri. On this day we wish for our daughters' healthy growth and happiness
- (3) May 5 -- Boys' Day or Kodomono-hi. On this day, we wish for our sons' prosperity
- (4) July 7 - Tanabata-matsuri. It is also a day to pray for the talent of artistic accomplishment
- (5) September 9 – a day to wish for a long life! It is a season of chrysanthemums, which were traditionally believed to be a medicine for the ageless youth.

As mentioned above, July 7 is a day to wish to be a person good at anything with our hands, like cooking, playing the musical instruments, or writing something with a pen. Of course, we can also wish for the progress of Japanese language! Don't ask when we use hands in learning にほんご! God in the Milky Way knows when.

This is the story of Tanabata:

Long ago, God of the Galaxy lived alongside the Milky Way. He had a daughter named Orihime. She wove every day, and the woven cloth was made into the clothes of the fellow gods. It was her job.

Orihime grew up to be a beautiful lady, and her father began to look for a man as her husband. Finally he chose a young shepherd called Hikoboshi. He was an excellent man and was taking care of the cattle on the bank of the Milky Way. They fell in love at the first sight. They married and began to live a very happy life.

But they were too happy to work. They enjoyed being together from morning till night. Orihime didn't weave anything. Hikoboshi didn't take care of the cows. The gods' clothing became worn out. Cows became sick.

And so, their father-God got angry and decided that they should live separately; Orihime on the east side of the Milky Way and Hikoboshi on the west side. But Orihime was so shocked and looked so sad that her father-God relented that they could meet once, just once a year on the night of July 7. So the yearly meeting of Orihime and Hikoboshi became a festival for the Japanese. On Tanabata day we write down our dreams on the paper, tie them to bamboo leaves and wish for the dreams to come true. Because Orihime was good at weaving, we used to wish for the talent of handiwork, but these days any wish is all right.

Ms. Kitagawa is a member of the Northern Foot of Mt. Fuji Chakai and has taught English at the high school level.

七夕祭りについて

日本には5つのせっくがあります。

- 1月7日： 一年の家族のけんこうをねがいます。
- 3月3日： ひなまつり女の子のいる家ではこどものしあわせをねがいます。
- 5月5日： 子どもの日男の子のいる家ではこどものせいちょうをねがいます。
- 7月7日： たなばたまつりげいごとがじょうずになるようにおねがいをします。
- 9月9日： きくの季節きくの花が長生きにきくくすりといわれていましたので、ちょうじゅをいのります。

《たなばたのいいつたえ》

むかしむかし、天の川のそばに天の神さまが住んでいました。天の神さまにはおりひめという娘が一人いました。おりひめははたをおって、神さまたちの着物をつくる仕事をしていました。

おりひめはやがてうつくしいむすめになり、おむこさんをさがすことになりました。いろいろさがして、やっとみつけたのが、ひこぼしという、とてもりっぱなひつじかいの青年でした。二人はあいてを一目見ただけで好きになり、けっこんしました。

でもなかがよすぎて、二人は仕事をわすれて遊んでばかりいるようになってしまいました。

「おりひめがはたおりをしないので、みんなの着物が古くてボロボロです」

「ひこぼしがせわをしないので、牛が病気になってしまいました」

などとみんなが文句を言うようになってしまいました。

神さまはすっかりおこってしまい「二人は東と西にわかれてくらすがいい」と言って、おりひめとひこぼしをわかれさせてしまいました。でもおりひめがあまりにも悲しそうにするのを見た神さまは「一年に一度 7月7日の夜だけ、ひこぼしと会ってもよろしい」と言いました。

それから一年に一度だけ会える日を楽しみにして、おりひめはいしょうけんめいはたをおりました。ひこぼしも牛をかう仕事にせいをだしました。そして待ちに待った7月7日の夜、おりひめは天の川わたって、ひこぼしに会いに行きます。

A Touch of Technology

Are you a Japanese language learning looking for some reading practice, but you are having trouble with the kanji-filled version of this article? Use your smartphone to scan the QR code to the right for an all-hiragana version of this article and a writing practice exercise. Don't have a smartphone? You can find the same page by clicking [here](#).



JASSTL and JASWA
invite you to
**Chanoyu:
Japanese Tea
Ceremony**
with Junko Ikeda
(*Urasenke* Instructor)

Location: This session will be held at a *chashitsu* (tearoom) of a private residence in St. Charles (about 30 minutes from the U-City area).

2012 Event Dates:

September 16
(2:00-3:30 pm)
October 14
(2:00-3:30 pm)
November 11
(2:00-3:30 pm)
December 16
(2:00-3:30 pm)

Fee: \$10 (JAS/JASWA member special rate) \$20 (non-member rate)

Seats are limited to 6 and sold on a first come, first serve basis



裏千家宗家今日庵
Urasenke Souke Kon-nichi-an

裏千家宗家今日庵
The Urasenke Home:
My Favorite Place to Visit

by Junko Ikeda (*Urasenke* Instructor)

When I go back to Japan during summer, I often visit *Urasenke Souke Kon-nichi-an* (the *Urasenke* Home), which might be of some interest to you. It takes less than 10 minutes by bike from my house in Kyoto so I just stop by on the way when I go out for shopping or running errands.

This is where the tea ceremony practice takes place for *Urasenke* Tea Ceremony practitioners from all over Japan. *Kon-inchi-an* also offers hospitality for Japanese visitors, foreign VIPs, and those who practice Tea Ceremony at foreign *Urasenke* branches. The compound consists of several tearooms and a garden, including *Kon-nichian*. *Oiemoto* (*Grand master*) resides right behind *Kon-nichi-an*, gives instruction to *Gyoutei* (*immediate disciples*), and performs Tea Ceremony on special occasions. He dedicates himself to expanding the way of tea of *Urasenke*.

When I go back to Kyoto I also visit my tea ceremony teacher, *Hayashi sensei*. In her tearoom I learn something new and bring it back to the U.S. The way of tea (*chado* or *sado*) is known as the ultimate refined form of Japanese art; it is deep and there is no end of learning it! It gives me pleasure to pass on what I have learned about Japanese Tea Ceremony and introduce Japanese culture through the way of tea.



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