

# **Semiotic Perspective of the Japanese Tea Ceremony:**

## **Founded in Culture, Movements, and Symbolism**

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### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to widen my perceptions about the Japanese Tea Ceremony from the lens of a semiotic [47] ideology. Furthermore, the following seven sections discarding the beginning and end of the paper, will focus on certain parts of the Tea Ceremony and ways it inquires some form of semiotic values.

The second section in this paper is called “*History of Japan’s Cultural Icon: Tea Culture*,” will give an overview of Japan history during the Edo period and history after World War II, the changing roles of men and women in the practice of the tea ((6, 8)), as this section also focuses on the diachronic [11] perspective change of the “language” in tea culture after WWII and the synchronic [60] perspective of the traditional “language” of tea culture in ancient Japan, which will highlight when the cultural icon [20] of tea changed its representation in the culture and lives of the Japanese.

The third section of this paper, titled “*Postmodernism and Modernism Style of the Teahouse / Tearoom*,” details the physical structure of different outer designs. Tea Ceremonies buildings can look depending on whether it is postmodernism [39] architecture style and modernism [28] style, while also comparing the internal design of the tearoom where the Tea Ceremonies are held. Where the different placement of the ceremonies influences the interactions between the host and guest during the Tea Ceremonies ((2, 10, 11)), as the different semiosphere spacing of the tearooms and tea buildings leaves “room” for the guest and host to main a sense of proxemics [42] between each other.

The fourth section of this paper is headed, “*Different Types of Japanese Tea Ceremonies*,” which gives descriptions and explanations of the Hatsugama ceremony, Rinji ceremony, and Yuuzari-no-chaji ceremony as some diverse types of Japanese Tea Ceremonies that are held in Japan ((10,11)). This section will as express the connotation [6] and denotation [9] of the purpose and style of these Tea Ceremonies and the particular signal [54] or interactions the host and guest have with each other ((1)).

The fifth section in this paper is called “*The Codes within the Host, Guest, and Tea*,” and goes through the code [2] of the Japanese Tea Ceremony, social and hagiarchy codes the host and guest must follow as a sign [51] communication of manners, respect and boundaries between one another ((1,3,8,10)).

The sixth section of this paper, titled “*Body Movements and Gestures during Tea Ceremony*,” will discuss the different elements of non-verbal communication that happen during Tea Ceremony with the host and guest/s. The non-verbal communication elements that will be focused on is gesture [16], gesticulant [17], kinesics [25], proxemics, [42] and oculesics [32] ((4, 5, 10)).

The seventh section of this paper is headed, “*Functions of Communication in Japanese Tea Ceremony*,” which will hit on the concept of Jacobson’s functions of communication with how some of these functions are applied during the engagement of the host and guest ((1,4,5,10)). The functions of focus will be phatic Function (of communication) [37], poetic Function (of communication) [38], emotive function [13] and conative function (of communication) [3].

The eighth section in this paper is called “*Signs and Symbols the Tea Ceremony represents for Japanese Culture*,” will go into an analysis about how the tea bowl and tea are a conventional sign [8] and a symbol [58] for the people and Japanese culture, as well as how women are the main symbol during the Tea Ceremony, signifier [56] and signified [55] effect of the tea bowl between the host and guest ((3, 7, 9,10)).

The conclusion of this paper concludes the concept of the Japanese Tea Ceremony summarizing the vast ideas and structure from a semiotic perspective throughout this whole paper.

## **History of Japan’s Cultural Icon: Tea Culture**

**I want to write about** the history of the Japanese Tea Ceremony from ancient Japan to Japan after World War II. The cultural icon of Tea in Japan was represented in the past and present for the Japanese culture and people. **I plan to focus on** the cultural icon of the tea artifact matcha (green tea) on Japanese culture's sustainability. That has shaped the community from following an ancient warrior and special synchronic tradition of making matcha tea, shifting to a "fresh" diachronic manner of a popular and aesthetic form of matcha tea culture. **I would like my reader to** gain some formal knowledge of the first traditional ways of matcha tea in Japan and the modern ways of matcha tea highlighted today in Japan, as a connection of the Japanese Tea Ceremonies focuses on tea.

¶ I will write about the time frame of Japan’s Japanese Tea Ceremony during the Edo Period (1603-1807) and Japan’s Tea Ceremony after WWII.

¶ I will a basic overview of the practice and history of the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

¶ I will discuss the practice and history of the Tea Ceremony during the Edo period, then the practice and history of the Tea Ceremony during modern times.

¶ I will describe how these two different periods change the view of matcha tea among the vast communities of people in Japan such as the women or men roles during the Tea Ceremony.

## **Postmodernism and Modernism Style of the Teahouse / Tearoom**

**I want to write about** the vastly different architectural styles of Japanese Tea Ceremony places from the buildings outer and inner design that varies depending on where the Tea Ceremony is held. **I plan to focus on** the postmodern architecture of Japanese Tea Ceremonies and the opposite style of modern architecture of Japanese Tea Ceremonies. **I would like my reader to** gain a visual understanding of different ways Japanese Tea Ceremonies are held, whether in a teahouse, Teagarden, modern style house, etc.

¶ I will describe the machiai, tea garden, teahouse, nijiriguchi, Kaiseki types of tea ceremonies buildings

¶ I will describe the inner parts of the tearooms, what they are made of inside them and the objects commonly found in them

¶ I will explain the type of materials each building is made up

¶ I will explain what the guests and host do depending on the architecture of Japanese Tea Ceremonies

## Different Types of Japanese Tea Ceremonies

**I want to write about** the different variations of Tea Ceremonies and what elements must happen from the host to the guest visiting the Tea Ceremony, from drinking tea to enjoying themselves. **I plan to focus on** the denotation and the connotation of each type of Japanese Tea Ceremony and its style. **I would like my reader to** understand that the different types of Japanese Tea Ceremonies have different effects on the host and guest interactions.

¶ I will discuss the denotation and the connotation of the Hatsugama ceremony ( Season, time, formal or informal style)

¶ I will discuss the denotation and the connotation of the Rinji ceremony (Season, time, formal or informal style)

¶ I will discuss the denotation and the connotation of the Yuuzari-no-chaji ceremony (Season, time, formal or informal style)

¶ I will discuss how the host and guest interactions with each other during each ceremony

## The Codes within the Host, Guest and Tea

**I want to write about** the social significance of the Japanese Tea Ceremony and practice in terms of social codes, social status of the host and guest when making the tea. **I plan to focus on** different types of codes the host and guest/s engage with each other. **I would like my reader to** see the context clues that influence the spatial relationship the host grants for the guest during the tea ceremony.

¶ I will explain the social code of the host and guest

¶ I will discuss the connection of hierarchy social codes women follow during the ceremony

¶ Discuss the way the host and guest communicate, behave back and forth

¶ I will explain the social status of the host over the guest

## Body Movements and Gestures during Tea Ceremony

**I want to write about** the different types of body movements, gestures, and facial expressions of the host and guest during the Japanese Tea Ceremony. **I plan to focus on** non-verbal communication within the host and guest communicate, behave, physically move around, make the tea, and greet each other. **I would like my reader to** understand just how important the body language and different gestures are crucial parts of the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

¶ I will discuss the gestures and gesticulant movements of the host and guest

¶ I will discuss the kinesics of the host and guest

¶ I will discuss the oculusics of the host and guest

¶ I will discuss the proxemics of the host and guest

## Jacobson's Functions of Communication in Japanese Tea Ceremony

**I want to write about** some of Jacobson's Functions of communication that can be found in the process of the Japanese Tea Ceremony, that can be deciphered from the actions and emotions of the host and guest. **I plan to focus on** communication's conative, phatic, emotive, and poetic function when talking about the host and guest. **I would like my reader to** understand the imitate relationship of communication that is put forth during these Tea Ceremonies.

¶ I will discuss the host and guest relationship via conative function (of communication)

¶ I will discuss the host and guest relationship via phatic Function (of communication)

¶ I will discuss the host and guest relationship via emotive function

¶ I will discuss the host and guest relationship via poetic Function (of communication)

## Signs and Symbols the Tea Ceremony represents for Japanese Culture

**I want to write about** certain aspects during the Tea Ceremony that represents important attributes towards Japanese culture and the people in Japan. **I plan to focus on** the conventional signs, the symbol of the tea bowl, and clues that produce a signifier and signified effect of the tea bowl meaning to the host and guest. **I would like my reader to** gain a perspective on just how symbolic the Tea Ceremony has a considerable influence on the development of Japanese people and their culture as a whole.

¶ I will explain the conventional signs the connection the host, guest to the tea and tea bowl as “one”

¶ I will discuss history of the tea bowl's symbolic meaning

¶ I discuss the history of women with the tea bowl and tea

¶ Why the tea bowl and tea itself is a major symbol in Japanese culture

## Conclusion

**I want to write about** the conclusion that wraps up the connection of the Japanese Tea Ceremony's culture, movements, and symbolism. **I plan to focus on** making sure my conclusion represents what I previously talked about throughout the seven sections in this paper. **I would like my reader to** understand the semiotic perspective of the Japanese Tea Ceremony by learning about the culture, movements, and symbols that make up the Tea Ceremony.

¶ I will restate my purpose of writing this paper to refresh the reader

¶ I will connection back to why these sections are important to learn about the Japanese Tea Ceremony

¶ I will discuss the connection of culture, movements and symbolism has towards the development of the Tea Ceremony

¶ I will wrap about my paper and in clear and concise manner for the reader