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A Study of “The Tea Ceremony as a Time and Space for the Appreciation of Artworks and Their Design” for College Students

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Abstract

This study examines the tea ceremony (tea gathering) as an experience for teaching college students how to appreciate artwork. Expression and appreciation are the pillars of art education; however, there should be various avenues of approaching artworks instead of simply observing them in a museum or at other similar venues. With this in mind, I have tried to incorporate the experience of the tea ceremony into my class as a time and space for discovering art and to have students appreciate their artwork in the time and space of the tea ceremony.

Once one enters a tea room, one finds calligraphy or paintings hanging in the alcove, which can be appreciated as two-dimensional art pieces. The utensils of the tea ceremony include tea containers (*chawan*) that are ceramics, tea caddies are lacquer ware (*uryshi*), and the *fukusa* (wiping cloth) that is a textile. The architecture of the tea room may be in the *sukiya-zukuri* style, and the surrounding environment is also a space of art, including the tea garden and environs.

The time and space of the tea ceremony is not about simply drinking tea with others but is a private museum for the host’s guests. For the approximately four hours of the ceremony, the various artworks that have been removed from storage are displayed for the guests while tea is served.

During class, the students experienced the world of the tea ceremony and reflected on the artwork and its design. In addition, since the utensils used are also works of art, the aim of the class was that the students would learn the meaning of the “beauty of use.” This study seeks a way of understanding the nature of art and design appreciation through the spirit of the tea ceremony.

Keywords: *Appreciation of artwork and design; Japanese beauty in Chanoyu (Tea ceremony); Integrated art space*

Introduction

This study aims to raise awareness of everyday beauty and design among university students enrolled in the departments of Childhood Education, Food and Nutrition, and Integrated Career Studies. This is to be accomplished through the experience of traditional Japanese culture in the tea ceremony as an encompassing art space where one may appreciate artworks and their design.

The tea ceremony is a form of Japanese aesthetics that is expressed through both compassion and hospitality; it focuses not merely on artwork and design but requires commitment to the spirit of making delightful tea so that the host and the guests may find enjoyment and inner connection while appreciating art. It is not a special event but a sustainable habit of daily life.

From consciousness to appreciation and the design of artworks

“Expression” and “appreciation” act mutually in art education, but state that most of university students attending a class said, currently, there are few opportunities to participate in art appreciation experiences. In addition, it is difficult to fit art appreciation into a busy university student’s schedule and does not seem to be connected only then to the interval in sustainable appreciation space-time to have an opportunity to go to the art museum by oneself, and to appreciate a work even if a research theme is suggested in class.

Ask the early childhood education students the questions, “What is the design?” or “What is the difference between drawing a picture and designing one?” and not a few of their answers would be something like that “a picture cannot release a limit to obey the instructions of the teacher who should draw it well at most, but can release the design as oneself likes it.” So, I claim that it must be the influence of primary and secondary school art education that colors the aesthetic experiences of university students.

The world of the tea ceremony as an integrated art space

In the world of the tea ceremony, one finds an integrated art space where encounters with diverse of artworks are made possible. First, the flooring of the tearoom is always furnished with tatami mats, the aroma of which complements the feeling of entering *wa*, or Japanese space. A scroll of calligraphy or painting always hangs in the alcove to be appreciated as a two-dimensional artwork. In terms of tea ceremony utensils, ceramic art can be found in the form of incense holders, tea containers, and tea bowls for thick *matcha*, with lacquering on tea caddies for thin tea or the *shiho-bon* (square tray) for dry sweets. The details of bamboo work are displayed on tea scoops and tea whisks; metal-carving is shown on tea kettles or waste-water containers; and craftsmanship in dyes and weaving can be seen in the cloths used to wipe the utensils as well as in the silk pouch used to hold the tea caddy.

Another pleasurable part of the tea ceremony is the rearrangement and preparation of these utensils according to the taste or circumstances of the guests and the theme or the season of the ceremony. This is the role of the host. The tearoom itself is an architectural work such as a *shoin*-

zukuri or a *sukiya-zukuri*, which along with its garden and outdoor area, creates a space for environmental art.

The beauty of gestures, techniques, and mannerisms in the tea ceremony is not only expressed through spirituality and physical movements but also through the relationships between the host and the guests, between the guests themselves, and the “performer” (host) and the “stagehand” (the host’s assistant), allow who seek an appropriate *ma* (distance) from one another or a delicate sense of space between them. Beauty is also found in the yearning to cherish “once-in-a-lifetime meeting” or the perpetuation of the idea that “every day is a good day.”

Sen-no-Rikyu (1522–1591), the founder of *wabi-cha*, incorporated various crafts and artworks from foreign countries and regions into tea utensils. For example, celadon porcelain from Sangkhalok Kiln (situated near the city of Si Satchanalai), Thailand, was imported and prized as a *sunkoroku* (incense holder). Annam, a type of pottery from Vietnam, and ceramics from the Delft kilns in the Netherlands were used as water pitchers and dishes, and felt from central Asia was used as rugs or carpeting in the waiting room, completing an encompassing art space, enriched by artworks from around the world.

The tea ceremony is not only a space used for the people to gather and drink tea but, in a way, it is also a private museum where various artifacts are chosen from a collector’s warehouse to meet the specific needs of the guests during the four-hour period of the ceremony in which these artifacts are actually utilized.¹

However, unlike museum pieces, which are viewed behind a barrier of glass, the tea ceremony offers a more enriching experience in terms of art appreciation because the artifacts can be held in one’s hands or touched with one’s lips. In this way, the “viewing” of these tea utensils or the “appreciation” of these artworks constitutes one of the key elements of the tea ceremony, so much so that even the signatures on the box that holds the utensils have become a display item shown to guests. The scope of this type of art appreciation is then further extended through tearoom conversations, which focus on the lineage and origin of these artifacts or utensils and, in particular, the identification of previous owners.

Class summary of “Traditional culture of Japan – To discover the Japanese beauty in *Chanoyu* –”

I opened a course in this class as the general studies that the student of all departments can take lectures to search an artwork from the world of *Chanoyu*. And I aimed at learning lively and voluntarily by being active as well as the lecture in the classroom in a tea ceremony room and library commons room.

Lecture report in 2019

1. Search of the traditional culture in Japan
2. Flow of the history and way of *Chanoyu*
3. Spirit of *Chanoyu* and mind of *Omotenashi* (1) Guest in tea ceremony
4. Spirit of *Chanoyu* and mind of *Omotenashi* (2) Thick tea and thin tea

5. Spirit of *Chanoyu* and mind of *Omotenahsi* (3) Tea ceremony”*Asacha*”
6. Tea gathering experience workshop (1) Experience of the tea ceremony
7. *Chanoyu* as the composite art and modern tea ceremony
8. Appreciation of the tea utensils
9. Aesthetic kimono (1) Kimono, what we wore
10. Aesthetic kimono (2) Kimono for *Chanoyu*
11. *Kaiseki* meal and *Kashi* sweets (1) Main sweet and dry sweet
12. *Kaiseki* meal and *Kashi* sweets (2) Four seasons and *kaiseki*
13. Preparations for tea ceremony
14. Tea gathering experience workshop (2) Practice to whisk thin tea
15. "Japanese aesthetic things" in the daily life

About a student in attendance

Two people in the attendance student live in the house without the Japanese-style rooms, where it was spread the tatami mat in the houses such as the parents' houses too. Nearly half of students of this class had never drunk *matcha* before. I understand this to mean that there are few opportunities to experience traditional culture in Japan in everyday life, even if the students are interested.

Therefore, approximately half of the students could not sit straight on the tatami mats at the tea ceremony workshop and were puzzled. Below is an overview of the students' answers to the questions I asked in class. (There are 30 students. 22 July, 2019)

Question	Answer
1) Is there a Japanese-style room (room with a tatami mat and <i>tokonoma</i>) where you are living now?	Yes→25 persons The rooming house does not have either, but my parents' house does. →4 Both the rooming house and my parents' house have them. →3 My (parents' house) has them.→12 -Every room in the house is Japanese-style (other than the kitchen). Both my parents' house and my grandparents' house has them.→3 -In my parents' house there is a Japanese-style room of the four-and-a-half-mats type. -One room in my parents' house and four rooms in my grandparents' house. My parents' house does not have them, but my grandparents' house does. -There are two such rooms in my grandparents' house. No→2 persons

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2) Have you drunk thin powdered tea before?	Yes→15 persons, No→13 persons
3) Have you drunk thick powdered tea before?	Yes→7 persons, No→23 persons
4) Have you participated in a tea ceremony during school festivals (in high school or at university) and so on?	Yes→10 persons, No→17 persons
5) Have you participated in a formal tea ceremony?	Yes→1 persons, No→26 persons
6) Is there the experience of tea-serving manners?	Yes→8 persons I was a member of a tea ceremony club previously and am currently a member as well. As a high school student, tea ceremony training was part of the “home foundations” class. I learned about it in primary school in a tea ceremony class. I experienced it in kindergarten, but I have forgotten it. I learned “calligraphy” from primary school through to high school, and there was an annual tea ceremony. No→18 persons
7) Does anyone in your family host or participate in tea ceremonies (<i>sadou</i>)?	Yes→4 persons Mother, elder sister, grandmother No→14 persons

Course practice 1: Tea ceremony experience workshop

This experience workshop was held twice to allow students to participate in a tea ceremony in a real tearoom. Three applicants were selected as guests to enjoy thin tea in the first workshop. They were able to deepen their understanding of the significance of the greeting and of turning the tea bowl in front of other students who were there to experience their very first tea ceremony as observers. The second workshop was held in the second half of the course to give students the opportunity to practice what they learned in the course. All students got to participate as both guests and hosts, who make and serve thin tea from the preparation room (*mizuya*), so that they might experience the importance of spiritual connection in the ceremony.

Course practice 2: Appreciation of the tea bowl from a document and preparations for the tea ceremony – a handwritten letter

In the library commons area are a variety of the tea service sets, the design characteristics found in many documents, and the pictorial record; each student had to sketch these items and record them on a worksheet. In preparation for a tea ceremony, a notice was sent out by the student hosts, who, when they received my reply, did not believe that I had written my reply freehand with a brush-pencil and challenged me on it. In this time of texting, few people experience what it is like to write calligraphy freehand with a brush-pencil, and doing so seems to embarrassing and

straining for students. However, the impression I had after having finished writing the reply was a longing for the calligraphy that I learned and enjoyed so much in primary school. At that age I was able to gain a valuable experience, and the feeling that was all forward was expressed. It was an activity that resulted in my continued major interest in Japan's traditional culture.

Consideration of a student's description from the worksheet

1) About "a Japanese design"

"It is important to feel the thought and the sense of the seasons of the person who makes a kimono, tool, garden, or a tea-ceremony room, a Japanese sweet put from a design. I understood that the thought of the person who chose it was important." (MM)

"I thought that there was pleasure because I matched it with a visitor from various designs and was chosen. I thought that the sense of the seasons and the four seasons of the 12 months could take in anything from the design and color by a totally different design. I thought that it led to Japanese beauty." (SR)

"A bowl to have tea had each pattern, and there was a design. There were various designs to the cake and was entirely different by a season. I thought that it was the design of the quality of Japan." (HM)

"Things handed down to a partner by design characteristics, including the pattern of *tubo-tubo* are different." (MY)

"I think that the heart of hospitality is included in Japanese design." (KM)

"What is called design consists is not only of the form and color of a thing. 'It was a procedure to make tea' and was able to learn to the place 'that I handed to a visitor after making it' when it was a design." (IY)

2) About "Japanese beauty"

"I thought that the hospitality of Japan was the heart, not only the oneself but also partner became comfortable. I remember the word 'not to let a partner mind' very much." (FI)

"I think that all actions are beautiful. When I appreciated a particular tool in particular, I felt the beauty of the heart of that person. When posture to respect the world partner of the tea ceremony was the Japanese beauty, I learned." (MS)

"It may be said that such manners as moving the lip of the bowl from the front are Japanese beauty. I thought that "Japanese beauty" was born of "person" concerned. I thought that an invisible part, including courtesy and hospitality for the other person, was what was beautiful." (SR)

"I think that the humility and courtesy of the Japanese are Japanese beauty." (MA)

"The beauty of a tasteful tea-ceremony room is quiet and modest, which is different from the gorgeous beauty of the West being felt in a beautiful kimono to enjoy a tea break in the space with the article while being simple. Internal beauty." (MY)

"It is the commute of the heart." (ON)

"Think that valuing what a heart to be anxious about towards the other party and an old person valued, the heart is Japanese beauty." (YS)

"I thought that Japanese beauty was being anxious about one's partner, and hear the voice of the heart." (MY)

"I wondered whether the tea was connected to "beauty," but thought that manners and the manner of speaking were beautiful first. I thought that it was cool." (AH)

"Including an environment appropriate for tea such as a *tokonoma*, *shoji*, the hanging scroll, I think that it may be said that it is splendid Japanese beauty." (IY)

I understood from the students' descriptions that students they experienced Japanese beauty in a variety of levels of sensitivity. It has been said, "Things handed down to a partner with a sense of the seasons and design characteristics are different," "A heart of hospitality is included in design," and "Hearts to think about to be able to spend all comfortably are designs." Additionally, it is said they want to follow all the time in posture to respect a partner, internal beauty, the commute of the heart, now and the future. They also thought it was "cool."

Conclusion

The implementation of these courses has allowed students from Arts and Design departments as well as from Childhood Education, Food and Nutrition, and Integrated Career Studies to experience the world of the tea ceremony as a time and a space to appreciate artwork and design. Furthermore, students were able to explore the meaning of what constitutes the viewing or appreciation of an artwork according to their own individual experience.

Because some of the works of art were used as utensils, students had the opportunity to experience aesthetic design in daily life. By experiencing the spirit of the tea ceremony personally, students learned that the appreciation of art is not a special event but something that may be incorporated into every facet of life. Further improvement will be made to the implementation of these courses in order to better make the experience of the tea ceremony an integrated art space or a time and space for art appreciation in daily life.

Notes

1. Miwa Hasegawa (Tsujita), 'A study on "The Tea Ceremony" as a Time and Space For Discovering Artwork', *THE RONKO Bulletin of Kobe Women's Junior College*, vol. 64, 2019, p. 27.

Author Biography

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