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<b>Year:</b>	2003
<b>Title:</b>	The Historical Development and Contemporary Perspective of the Japanese Urasenke Way of Tea as Practiced in California
<b>Publisher:</b>	Edwin Mellen Press
<b>City:</b>	Lewiston, N.Y. u.a.
<b>Number of Pages:</b>	XI, 108 S. : Ill.
<b>Price:</b>	Hardcover: \$99.95
<b>ISBN:</b>	0-7734-6807-2

**Review:** This work provides a study of *chanoyu*, or tea ceremony, from an anthropological perspective, highlighting in particular its development in Southern California. The work is focused on the Urasenke tradition, which together with the Omotesenke and Mushanokojisenke, constitutes one of the main traditions widely spread both inside and outside Japan.

Kent Morris provides the reader with an historical introduction of the way of tea in China and Japan, its arrival in western countries, where the first international chapter of the Urasenke Foundation was established in Hawaii in 1951, two years after its foundation in Japan, and an account of the organisation and structure of the Urasenke tradition. He then describes in detail a typical noontime tea gathering (*shōgo chaji*) with a study of its symbolism and interpretation.

The core of the book, and of the anthropological research, is chapter VI “The Japanese Way of Tea in Southern California” where an Urasenke Tea school is analysed in detail, correlated with questionnaires and interviews. The author explores the way a tradition with its roots in Japanese culture has been adapted and what are the dynamics behind this process in a country with a different cultural environment. The main focus of this chapter is to explore who are the practitioners of *chadō* and which motivations lead them to study it. In order to highlight the differences between the students of this particular school in Southern California and the students of a Urasenke Tea school in Tokyo, Morris analyses the results of interviews and a questionnaire given to a small sample of students, both in the USA and in Japan, in which the focus is on the attempt to assess the “general demographic and more specific religious/spiritual/philosophical characteristics of the Tea students respondents” (p. 75). Unfortunately the last chapter dedicated to the conclusion is perhaps too short and does not seem to fulfil completely the initial assumptions.

A difficulty arises if we consider this study from the point of view of the Study of Religions (Religionswissenschaft), because it seems to the reviewer that terms like “religion” and “philosophy” are not always used with adequate wariness. This happens especially when in chapter V “Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Tea” citing Jennifer Anderson’s study on *chanoyu* (1991), which constitutes the major reference book of this research, Zen (Buddhism) is regarded

unexpectedly as a “philosophy”, thus losing its status of religious system. The author explains that *chadō* though a “religious behaviour” is not a “religion because it is primarily based on a philosophy (Zen) whose fundamental premise is that each person must develop his or her own religious convictions apart from that philosophy” (p. 46). As regards the section dedicated to the history of Ch’an and Zen Buddhism in the first chapter “History of Tea”, it is of course a very difficult task to summarize briefly the history of Buddhism from its origins in India to the arrival of Ch’an in Japan, through its development in China. However, this excursus is here perhaps a little too short and does not give a clear view of the history and teachings of Buddhism, especially to those readers who are not so familiar with it. Despite such problems of perspective, this work offers an informative anthropological contribution to *chadō*, the way of tea, as it has developed and adapted in a particular contemporary community outside Japan.

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