

Chanoyu (the Art of Preparing Tea) (Tablet Text)

FIRST PERFORMANCE: Chanoyu (the Art of Preparing Tea)

Chanoyu is the traditional Japanese art of preparing and serving tea. It is often translated as “tea ceremony.”

The preparation and serving of *matcha* (powdered green tea) cultivates spiritual awareness, self-discipline, and aesthetic refinement.

The serving of tea is preceded by careful preparation of the space and utensils. It follows a specific order designed to make the best possible bowl of tea.

The tea, sweets, decorations, and various tea utensils are carefully selected to fit the season and enhance the enjoyment of the guests.

The sweets are served first, then the host begins preparing the tea. The principles of harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility are expressed in the tea-making process.

The phrase “*ichigo ichie*” (each meeting is once in a lifetime) reflects another fundamental concept that gives deep significance to a tea gathering.

The “way of tea” (*sado* or *chado*) is the discipline based on the principles, style, and aesthetics of *chanoyu*. It was perfected by the tea master Sen Rikyu (1522–1591).

The combination of *wabi* (cultivated simplicity) and Zen spiritual discipline with the preparation of tea created a path to self-refinement now practiced worldwide.

When preparations are complete, the host adds powdered *matcha* and hot water to the tea bowl and expertly mixes them with a bamboo whisk called a *chasen*.

When the tea bowl is served, it is rotated so that the front faces the guest.