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**A Teahouse in the Gilded Age:
The Story of the Georgian Court University (GCU)
Meiji Teahouse**

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INTRODUCTION

Tea-drinking is a major feature of the ethnography of Japan. The art of the tea ceremony evokes questions of identity and identification. The Japanese are aware of their distinctive drinking practices, despite the borrowed origins of the tea culture from China. The Japanese tea ceremony reflects the ethnicity, national distinctiveness and identities of the Japanese people. The tea ceremony and its rituals also serve as ethnographic glances into the cultural structure of the Japanese.

It is a form of reproduction of ethnic (Japanese as opposed to East Asians), class (the cultivated against the uncultured) and gender (different ritual steps for women and men). The genderization of the Japanese tea ceremony occurred when what started as a ritual for Zen Buddhist monks and the warrior aristocrats gradually evolved to become a contemporary art-form driven mainly by women. *Chanoyu* or the Japanese tea ceremony is driven by women today.

Identity is also asserted by the other-ing of other cultures. The Western conception of beverage-drinking tends to be associated with celebratory events, using beverages especially alcohol as “gifts and enticements, however meager and unconscious” and “to relax, to laugh, to enhance conviviality”.¹ The Japanese tea ceremony has none of the above elements. It is a Zen-inspired ritual specifically constructed to train and harden discipline (with the need to sit through a long session with ritualized motions to enjoy a final bowl of tea). This contrasting aspect was described by a 1892 Gilded-age New York Times article which noted: “To invite a few friends to “come and drink a cup of tea’ is by no means a simple matter among the Japanese...The famous American “high tea” with its hot cakes, chickens, ham, pies, custards and jams, bears no comparison in point of extravagance preparation.”²

ORIGINS OF THE TEA CEREMONY

After all, Zen itself is a by-product of warrior discipline and self-restraint, having been popularized in Japan after it was transmitted from end-Southern Sung China that was under the threat of the Mongol invasion. Southern Sung Zen monasteries were bastions of Han Chinese patriotism and stoic resistance against the invading Mongols. The samurai warrior class in Japan immediately identified with this strain of Buddhism and before long, laid down their bloodthirsty *katanas* in the guest rooms of the Zen teahouses to enjoy a bowl of tea while cultivating and testing their self-discipline in the process.

Tea itself came from China and was brought to Japan by Zen monk Eisai (1141-1215) who eventually transplanted tea plants to the Shofuku temple at Hakata (which is modern-day Fukuoka).³ Questions of identity and identification have plagued Japan for millennia as it tries to assert its own identity from China’s longstanding cultural hegemony in the region. These issues of cultural borrowings and indigenization were really only resolved by Sen no Rikkyu (1522-91), the undisputed tea master who developed the art of Japanese tea ceremony.

¹ Wilson, Thomas, “Drinking Cultures: Sites and Practices in the Production and Expression of Identity” in *Drinking Cultures* (edited by Thomas M. Wilson) (Oxford and New York: Berg), 2006, p. 7.

² New York Times, “The Tea Ceremony in Japan” dated 17 July 1892 in Proquest Historical Newspapers (NY: The New York Times), p. 6

³ Hammitzsch, Horst, *Zen in the art of the tea ceremony* (New York: Arkana), 1993, p. 29.

Rikkyu's efforts had attracted the aristocratic patronage of Toyotomi Hideyoshi who united Japan under iron rule.

It was the ultimate irony that Rikkyu, who developed the art of Japanese tea ceremony to an art form that even surpassed Chinese understanding, would eventually commit ritual suicide due to disagreements between him and his patron although the exact reasons for this fallout is not well understood. Rikkyu committed suicide in the most honorable of the warrior ways by disemboweling himself. Around 300 years later, his teachings, doctrines and philosophies about the Japanese tea ceremony would be picked up by Okakura Kakuzo and developed into a bridge between East and West.

BRIDGING THE EAST AND WEST – OKAKURA KAKUZO AND THE BOOK OF TEA

At first, East and West did not seem to share their understanding of the concept of tea. In around 14 November 1584, Philip II in Madrid who received Japanese youth emissaries representing Christian feudal lords in Japan remarked about their gifts of tea: "How is that? Don't they drink hot water?" asked the king. The priest who had accompanied the emissaries replied that they did but that they also made wine. The king then asked, "Do they drink the hot water only in winter?"⁴ The priest told the king that the Japanese drink it all the year round, at which the king was greatly astonished. This was the age before the advent of nonalcoholic beverages as hot tea, coffee, and cocoa in Europe.

300 years later, misunderstandings between the East and West in the concept of tea persisted. In the definitive *Book of Tea*, its author Okakura Kakuzo (also known as Okakura Tenshin) the famous tea philosopher and novelist wrote: "The average Westerner, in his sleek complacency, will see in the tea ceremony but another instance of the thousand and one oddities which constitute the quaintness and the childishness of the East to him..."⁵ Anxious about the tensions between East and West, he wrote this observation after his arrival in America⁶, eager to bridge the gap between the two.

At the time of Okakura's cross-cultural anxiety, Japan was an avid learner of Western civilization to the extent that famous philosopher and thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi advised all Japanese to discard the ways of the East and adopt Western learning. Okakura himself was raised with a Western-leaning education, as sons of many merchant-class Japanese⁷ were in the early Meiji era (contemporaneous with the Gilded Age in the US). Okakura himself concentrated on studying English as a key to the modern new world dominated by Western technologies and knowhow; and when he entered the Tokyo Imperial University in 1877, he befriended an American professor Ernest Fenollosa and studied political economy under him.⁸

⁴ Cooper, Michael (translated by Paul Varley), "The Early Europeans and Tea" in *Tea in Japan Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 1989, p. 101.

⁵ Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: Charles E Tuttle), 1972, p. xv.

⁶ Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: Charles E Tuttle), 1972. p. xiv.

⁷ Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: Charles E Tuttle), 1972. p. 119.

⁸ Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: Charles E Tuttle), 1972. p. 120.

As their relationship deepened, the American professor started learning about Japanese aesthetics from his students.⁹ East and West were bridged in a tiny way through this relationship. Both became unofficial emissaries of their cultures to each other's societies as a Gilded Age American interacted with a Meiji Japanese. In line with this individual contribution in bridging East and West, Okakura cried out for rapprochement between the two civilizations: "When will the West understand, or try to understand, the East? ...So much harm has been done already by the mutual misunderstanding of the New World and the Old... The beginning of the 20th century would have been spared the spectacle of sanguinary warfare if Russia had condescended to know Japan better. [referring to Japan's victory over Russia in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War]".¹⁰

Okakura fulfilled his dream in playing the role of facilitator for East-West interactions when he was named advisor to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and, while in New York in 1906, he wrote *The Book of Tea*, the quintessential publication that introduced Japan's culture to America and the West¹¹ through the medium of the Japanese tea ceremony. The efforts of Okakura and many others active in promoting the Japan-US bilateral cultural relations started to lay the seeds for mutual transmission of culture. One such seed sprouted in the Georgian Court estate.

THE TEAHOUSE IN THE PROSPERITY OF THE GILDED AGE.

During the Gilded Age, the fundamentals of national networks of telegraphic and railroad technology were established.¹² The biggest gains in manufacturing came in the 1880s, after which growth slowed before the huge acceleration after 1919 while advancements in communication remains relatively strong throughout.¹³ The 1880s were a big decade for the expansion of industrial sectors such as steel, cigarettes, meatpacking, and petroleum refining while in the 1890s, mining appear to have been a particularly fertile period, together with an acceleration in agriculture.¹⁴

Much of the productivity growth and living standard improvement in the years from 1871 through 1906 was influenced by spillovers from the construction of the railroad and telegraph networks, technologies whose foundations were laid in the pre- Civil War days, as well as

⁹ Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: Charles E Tuttle), 1972. p. 120.

¹⁰ Hall, John Whitney (translated by Paul Varley), "On the Future History of Tea" in *Tea in Japan Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 1989, p. 248

¹¹ Hayashiya, T., M Nakamura and S. Hayashiya, *Japanese Arts and the Tea Ceremony* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha), 1980, p. 161.

¹² Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 6

¹³ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 16.

¹⁴ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 16.

rapid productivity growth within those sectors themselves.¹⁵ Public infrastructure was also built up during the Gilded Age. For example, by 1900, there were over 1,000 central power stations in the U.S, serving mostly residential demand, and also in commerce and manufacturing, particularly in industries such as textiles where electric lighting offered much lower probabilities of inducing explosions than did gas.¹⁶

America also experienced the emergence of the modern business enterprises which employed a multidivisional structure and relied on management information systems, and are operated by a cadre of professional managers who used the telegraph to move information quickly, the typewriter to print and maintain administrative office records, and the vertical file to store them.¹⁷ The linotype machine and innovations in making cheap paper from wood pulp translated to dramatic reductions in the cost of mass media, which were in turn increasingly utilized by department stores, mail order houses, and manufacturers to stimulate demand for their products or services through mass advertising.¹⁸

One individual who profited during this period was Jay Gould who started railroad enterprises and obtained control of the Rutland and Washington Railroad Company, becoming its president, treasurer and superintendent.¹⁹ His name would eventually be connected with the Erie, the Union Pacific, the Texas & Pacific, the Wabash and Missouri Pacific Railroads, the Atlantic & Pacific and the Western Union Telegraph Companies, and the Manhattan Elevated Railroad.²⁰ All these companies laid the economic foundations of the empire that his son and heir apparent George Jay Gould would inherit. George Jay Gould would be the future creator and owner of the Georgian Court Teahouse.

The health benefits of the winter resort town of Lakewood enticed George Jay Gould, son of railroad magnate Jay Gould, to build his Georgian Court estate in 1896, the property so named because it was designed and constructed in the Georgian style, an architectural movement in vogue within Great Britain between 1720 and 1840. The construction began ten years after his marriage to a lovely young actress named Edith Kingdon. Edith and George Gould believed Lakewood would be an ideal spot in which to rear their two sons and four daughters.

¹⁵ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, pp. 24-25.

¹⁶ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 22.

¹⁷ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 19.

¹⁸ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 19.

¹⁹ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 18.

²⁰ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p.18.

The magnificent 155-acre estate is conveniently situated 60 miles from New York and Philadelphia, 10 miles from the beautiful Jersey Shore and borders the National Historic Landmark of Lake Carasajlo with its magnificent statuary, beautiful architecture and lush gardens and was transformed by well-known New York architect Bruce Price hired by the Goulds into a lavish country estate. Price was especially influenced by the great estates that he saw and resided in England and Scotland and his extensive expertise in designing country homes. Gould and Price agreed upon the style of an English estate of the Georgian period, which would substitute a gracious order for the wild terrain and named it Georgian Court.²¹

In 1896, when other wealthy families were constructing houses in summer resorts, railroad magnate George Jay Gould began his opulent spending in the winter resort of Lakewood, New Jersey where he made it a point to out-do the other rich newcomers and to amaze the citizens of the town.²² He imported fine marble from the US, Italy, Ireland, and Africa for this purpose, using them as raw materials for his grand project on the shores of Lake Carasajlo that would later be known as Georgian Court.²³

The Georgian Court Teahouse acted as an intermediary between Japan and the West at a time when they were directly interacting with each other in the great experiment of modernity. Designed by a perfectionist Japanese gardener, it was transported from the austere trappings of a modernizing reformist Japan which was undergoing self-strengthening to the glittery world of the New World's Gilded Age where it served as an immediate form of aristocratic entertainment for the nouveau riche. It was extremely fashionable to own a Japanese teahouse. After all, the Vanderbilts have one too.²⁴

The teahouse features a three-tatami mat tea room with an alcove, one pond designed in a flowing stream pattern (See Annex A, part of the stream that is frozen in winter), a wooden Japanese bridge, a wooden waiting bench (where ancient samurais would sit and disarm before entering the tearoom, See Annex B for a visual capture of the wooden bench), the rice paper on its two front doors replaced with glass panes, sloping wooden roof tiles and a stone lantern. The path leading to the teahouse is lined with stone pebbles and a stone well which holds water traditionally used for washing hands (See Annex C) but the weather is too cold to have a traditional bamboo forest but Japanese maples are beautiful aesthetic substitutes.

After entering the outer garden from the waiting room, the guests make their way to the waiting bench and sit there until they hear the host emerge from the tea room. Rocks throughout the garden represent hills or rocky outcroppings and are placed in such a way as to be visually appealing from different angles in the garden (See Annex D). There is a landscaped island in the middle of the teahouse surroundings giving the feel of zen-like solitude. The teahouse has been wired up for electrical utilities but is seldom used due to fears of electrical fires arising from very old wirings.

²¹ Geis, Christina (Sister), "The George Jay Gould Estate" extracted from *An Estate of The Gilded Age in the Georgian Court University website* [downloaded on 27 March 2009], available at <http://www.georgian.edu/aboutgcc/gould.htm>

²² Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, front flap.

²³ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, front flap.

²⁴ New York Times, "By Mountain Side and Lake" dated 4 July 1909 in *Proquest Historical Newspapers* (NY: The New York Times), p. X1

Along with the teahouse, the Goulds commissioned a Japanese tea garden (*Chaniwa*) around it. Designed by Takeo Shiota, the Japanese Garden is a one acre area with a curve that leads to a small wooden footbridge which crosses a dry-stone stream amidst a series of little hills planted with effectively grouped low trees and shrubbery and stone lanterns that stand on the pebble-cemented banks while the teahouse with its low-pitched roof sits among Japanese maples and flowering rhododendrons; the only uniquely East-West fusion style prevalent at the garden is where Japanese maple trees (See Annex E) and Jersey pines mingle.²⁵

After Gould's death, his heirs sold the estate to the Sisters of Mercy who opened the campus to members of the public and students from 1924 onwards, serving a higher cause as an institution of higher learning as Georgian Court College. One of the reasons for the Sisters' successful purchase of the estate was the condition that the name of the estate would be retained by the Order even after the acquisition.

WHY STUDY THE GCU TEAHOUSE?

The GCU teahouse is selected for this study because of three main reasons. First, a practical one – the GCU teahouse is one of the few surviving authentic Meiji-era teahouses left, not just in the US, but in many parts of the world. Most Japanese teahouses in the US were constructed during the 1980s when Japan's economic power was at its peak before the bubble era of the 1990s and beyond when Japan went into a 10-15 year recession.

Trade frictions between the two countries pushed Japan to sponsor cultural events for the American people in order to promote better understanding of Japan within the US. Many of these Japanese teahouses were designed in East-West fusion, contemporary, postmodern or non-traditional styles. Even those with traditional designs did not have the authenticity and vintage value of the GCU teahouse. They therefore cannot replicate the original setting specified by Rikkyu or be useful for a discussion on the discourse of *chanoyu* which is kept strictly orthodox in Japan by followers of Rikkyu like Okakura and the likes.

Second, the teahouse is symbolic of East-West interactions during the Gilded Age (or the Meiji Period (1868-1912) according to American or Japanese periodization. No other fully-intact Japanese teahouse located in the US survive till today unscathed by the ravages of time and history. On the American west coast, the Storrier-Stearns Japanese Garden in Pasadena is considered the oldest Meiji-like tea garden in California and was designed by master Japanese landscape designer Kinzuchi Fujii (1875 to 1957) although construction began in 1937 and was only completed in 1945. This teahouse was built in the post-Depression period or prewar Showa Japanese reign (1926-1989) and does not even touch the Taisho (1912-26), much less the Meiji period, which provides the historical context for this paper.

On the historically older east coast, the Adirondacks' Saranac Lake White Pine Camp, located on White Pine Road, has one of the oldest teahouse in the great camps, compounds built by the very rich a century or more ago, complete with a beautiful Japanese teahouse on a tiny island reached by a 300-foot wooden bridge. This comparable surviving Japanese teahouse was sold to Alfred G. Vanderbilt in 1901 and was enjoyed by the Vanderbilt family

²⁵ Council of Independent Colleges, "Japanese Garden" in the Council of Independent Colleges website [downloaded on 25 March 2009], available at <http://puka.cs.waikato.ac.nz/cgi-bin/cic/library?a=d&d=p686>.

as their wilderness estate from 1901 for more than 50 years until 1954 when it became a National Historic Landmark & a not-for-profit organization dedicated to historic preservation.

While comparable to the GCU teahouse in age, there are no records indicating the fitness of the facility for a full-fledged formal Japanese tea ceremony performed according to the Rikkyu specifications. The GCU teahouse in comparison hosted two authentic Japanese tea ceremonies in 1984 and 2007. The latter event performed by Teamaster Sensei Nakao Fumiko of the Omote Senke School was attended by representatives of the Japanese consulate in New York City. The authenticity of the GCU teahouse is well-tested and patronized by Japanese teamasters.

The Vanderbilt teahouse is only accessible to the public during public tours organized in July and August, two months out of the year. Unlike the GCU teahouse which is accessible to members of the public all-year round with a simple requisite permission of the university's administration. Thus, in terms of authenticity as an empirical case study of the Gilded Age or Meiji periods, the GCU teahouse is ideal. For example, coming from the actual period, the teahouse can indicate the cosmopolitanism (buying a teahouse from an Anglo-Japanese exposition and transporting across the Atlantic), populism (trendy Orientalism) and elitism (keeping up with the Vanderbilts and the likes) in the Gilded Age.

Third, its historical background involves state exchanges, Gilded-period aristocrats, celebrity designers and architects, giving it colourful and rich historical context for researchers to work with. Because it comes authentically from a period of increased cultural exchanges between Japan and the US, the Georgian Court Teahouse acted as an intermediary between Japan and the West at a time when they were directly interacting with each other in the great experiment of modernity.

Like other Gilded-era aristocrats, the Goulds saw it as their mission to civilize an increasingly economically and industrially confident nation that was lacking in grace. For these cosmopolitans and the aristocrats, the prospects of Eastern art held great possibilities for their respective agendas. The age-old fascination with the antiquity of the East, imitating the colonial tendencies of the Europeans in collecting exotic art, that drew them to Eastern art-forms. Japan, which was rapidly modernizing at this time to catch up with the West and increasingly effective in marketing its culture to the West, became the bridge through which art transmissions became possible.

Japan was not just a state or a country; it was a fascination, a curio and a treasure house of exoticism. All things Japanese including teahouses were cultural items that were displayed prominently at all international expositions in the West. Cultural enjoyment of these Japanese artforms was also made possible by Meiji capitalists who had become the new aristocrats in Japan with the removal of the warrior class. The maintenance of this art and its furtherance by notable merchant families gave the tea ceremony a new status as a means of social advancement, making possible the penetration of Japanese ideas and culture into Gilded Age America by first creating a domestic market for ideas of traditionalism. Given such importance of this East-West exchange, despite the importance of this surviving artifact, very little studies have been done on the teahouse beyond the confines of its association with the university.

BIPOLAR CULTURAL CONTESTATIONS

While America prospered, its art scene during the Gilded Age was driven by two sets of contradictory forces: cosmopolitanism and nationalism on the one hand, and elitism and populism on the other.²⁶ These two diametrically opposing art forms were also patronized by two different groups of people. Artists and critics formed the foundational activists for styles that would capture the essence of America's national character and proactively forge a common identity for a divided society.²⁷ These were the cosmopolitans.

The elitists on the other hand, were drawn from the ranks of capitalist aristocrats. This group represented the elite stratification in society because of their industrial and financial empires and they desperately needed artistic styles that would reflect their sophistication and taste in European art.²⁸ The palaces and the noble houses of Europe were their sources of inspiration. American's Gilded aristocrats saw themselves as the purveyors of refined tastes and took it upon themselves the mission to civilize an increasingly economically and industrially confident nation that was lacking in grace.

One possible reason that resulted in this dichotomous stratification in American society was the unevenness of the distribution of wealth and reach of the Gilded Age. The influence of modern business enterprise was still modest with technologies like the railroads (the most important sector in organizational innovation) comprising a relatively small portion of overall industrial output.²⁹ In comparison with these Gilded technocrats, many Americans were still untouched by industrial civilization and its cultural renaissance.

Besides technology gap, the other cleavage in American society which motivated the cosmopolitans to argue for a uniting force in American arts and cultural tastes was the need to heal Civil War wounds. With over 600,000 fatalities in a population of roughly 31 million, widespread physical destruction in the South, and other wrenching changes, war became a transient but nevertheless sharp dislocation of an economy.³⁰ In the cosmopolitan worldview, having patriotic and indigenous art and cultural tastes could bridge and heal these wounds by developing America's own brand of artistic taste and sense of aesthetics.

²⁶ Lenahan, Daniel Timothy, "Fashioning Taste: Earl Shinn, Art Criticism, and National Identity in Gilded Age America" dated 25 April 2005 in the Haverford College website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at thesis.haverford.edu/dspace/bitstream/10066/668/1/2005LenahanD.pdf, pp. 5-6.

²⁷ Lenahan, Daniel Timothy, "Fashioning Taste: Earl Shinn, Art Criticism, and National Identity in Gilded Age America" dated 25 April 2005 in the Haverford College website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at thesis.haverford.edu/dspace/bitstream/10066/668/1/2005LenahanD.pdf, p. 6.

²⁸ Lenahan, Daniel Timothy, "Fashioning Taste: Earl Shinn, Art Criticism, and National Identity in Gilded Age America" dated 25 April 2005 in the Haverford College website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at thesis.haverford.edu/dspace/bitstream/10066/668/1/2005LenahanD.pdf, p. 6.

²⁹ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 6.

³⁰ Field, Alexander, "US Economic Growth in the Gilded Age" dated April 2006 in Finances Internationales Website [downloaded on 1 September 2007], available at www.financesinternationales.sciences-po.fr/seminaire_conf/convergence_histeco/Field_110506.pdf, p. 7.

For the cosmopolitans and the aristocrats, the prospects of Eastern art held great possibilities for their respective agendas. From the perspective of the cosmopolitans, it represented an alternative to the stuffy old world European monarchic cultures and a chance to incorporate even more ancient and established cultures for their project in creating a new and unique identity for America. Cultural borrowings were a distinct option for experimental hybridization.

Says the cosmopolitan *New York Times*, Japanese tea drinking was distinguishable from high European culture since “very few Europeans can drink it without feeling unhappy, for in the first place the taste is not agreeable, and then it is so intensely strong that it is sure to disagree with them if they do manage to swallow it”³¹. In other words, the Europeans were simply not cosmopolitan enough to enjoy cultural diversity and cultural diversity was what America is about. It is an acquired taste, just like the bitterness of the Japanese *macha* (tea powder). So the message goes.

On the other side of the divide, for the aristocrats, it was an age-old fascination with the antiquity of the East, imitating the colonial tendencies of the Europeans in collecting exotic art, that drew them to Eastern art-forms. Japan, which was rapidly modernizing at this time to catch up with the West and increasingly effective in marketing its culture to the West, became the bridge through which art transmissions became possible. The new-rich aristocrats in the US were also able to reference and incorporate imageries of Eastern sensitivity and antiquity for their civilizing project.

JAPAN’S EMERGENCE ON AMERICA’S HORIZONS.

At about the same time as the Americans were figuring out their cultural identity, the Japanese across the Pacific was in the midst of a revolution (it is more commonly known as a restoration because of the fact that changes in Japan were brought about relatively bloodlessly). Japan’s re-emergence into the international community after centuries of isolationism stimulated a Japanophilic response in the West, including the US.

For example, when the Japanese ship *Kanrin Maru* took Japan’s first official embassy to the US in 1860 to ratify the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, it generated such intensive American interest in that mission that Walt Whitman wrote his “A Broadway Pageant” to celebrate America’s wonder at seeing Japanese parade down the streets of New York.³² In other words, Japan was not just a state or a country; it was a fascination, a curio and a treasure house of exoticism.

Japanese tea writers like Okakura who had arrived in the US near the end of the Gilded Age began to reveal to the West the art of Japanese tea ceremony as “a unified concept of art and life, of nature and art blended into a harmony of daily living, which strikes a responsive chord in a world anxious to find a way out from the maze of complexities into which it has blundered.”³³ Western ignorance of the East now became a fascination.

³¹ New York Times, “The Tea Ceremony in Japan” dated 17 July 1892 in Proquest Historical Newspapers (NY: The New York Times), p. 6.

³² McClain, James, *A Modern History Japan* (New York and London: WW Norton and Company), 2002, pp. 169-170.

³³ Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (Tokyo: Charles E Tuttle), 1972, p. xvi.

Upon his arrival in the US at the last breaths of the Gilded Age, Okakura described his firsthand observations of Western reception of Eastern and Japanese tea culture: “There is a subtle charm in the taste of tea which makes it irresistible and capable of idealisation. Western humourists were not slow to mingle the fragrance of their thought with its aroma. It has not the arrogance of wine, the self-consciousness of coffee, nor the simpering innocence of cocoa.”³⁴

As Okakura wrote about the American society, Japan was also undergoing internal changes. The former warrior class of the sword-bearing samurais who had ruled Japan for millennia had to reconfigure their roles in modernity. Many chose to go into new business enterprises whose products included cultural items that were displayed prominently at all international expositions in the West (Europe, US and Australia). They commercialized the exoticism of Japan and the Orient for customers in the West. It was at one of these expositions, the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition in London 1900, that George Gould’s art collector seems to have procured the teahouse, disassembling and reassembling it in the original form at his estate.³⁵

There are, however, some unanswered questions about the origins of the GCU teahouse. Two authoritative and definitive books on Georgian Court’s history, S. Marie La Salle O’Hara’s *The First Fifty Years* (1981) and S. Christina Geis’ *Georgian Court: an estate of the gilded age* (1982) pinpoint the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition in London 1900 as the origins of the teahouse. The actual date of the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition which commemorates 42 years of cross-cultural links between Britain and Japan, however, is in 1910. To complicate matters, the Paris Exhibition of 1900 also features a Japanese garden although whether there were teahouses was unclear.

In fact, the Paris Exhibition was a ground-breaking preview of Japanese treasures for the Western audience. At the Paris Exhibition of 1900, for the first time, some valuable art treasures owned by the Emperor, noblemen, and temples were exhibited with the model of Kondo (golden hall) in Horyu-ji (twenty meters in height) which was erected near the Trocadero, with all the materials bought in France and the hall contained collections of traditional fine arts and in front there was a small Japanese garden.³⁶

There is, however, no mention of a Japanese teahouse alongside the garden at the Paris Exposition. Visually confirming origins of the teahouse or the iron wrought eagle from the 1900 Paris Exposition is difficult. Many of the postcards and photos of the Exposition are now in the hands of collectors. Some of them have generously uploaded them into the public domain in cyberspace. For example, Prof Jeffery Howe of Boston College has created a digital archive of architecture found at the 1900 Exposition. It only indicates a model of a pagoda temple located behind the Siam pavilion at the exposition.³⁷

³⁴ Cooper, Michael (translated by Paul Varley), “The Early Europeans and Tea” in *Tea in Japan Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 1989, p. 14.

³⁵ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 158

³⁶ Phoenix Bonsai, “The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening” in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

³⁷ Howe, Jeffery, “World’s Fair of 1900, Paris” at the Digital of Architecture website [downloaded on 1 oct 2007], available at http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/fnart/arch/1900fair.html

In another digital archive, an ambitious project attempts to reconstruct a 3D reproduction of the Paris 1900 World's Fair starting from February 2006 but it features only two photos and pictures of the Pavillon du Japon at the Exposition. One shows the Kinkakuji in all its glory with Meiji troops marching in front of it as kimono-clad women look on while the other depicts Parisian women strolling along the model of the Kinkakuji with a small Japanese garden visible on the left side of the photo.³⁸ No iron wrought eagle or teahouse is seen. If there was a teahouse, it is either obstructed from view, not available at the Pavilion or did not feature into the official program materials.

It is also up for speculation if the chronological origin of the teahouse was confused with the purchase of a huge wrought-iron piece, an eagle perched on a dragon, from the Paris Exposition of 1900 through Tiffany and Company from the Japanese Section of the Exposition.³⁹ The Sculpture was made for the Japanese government by the German firm the Brothers Armbruesler of Frankfurt, disassembled for shipping and reassembled at Georgian Court by mounting on a huge base of boulders.⁴⁰

This makes the Anglo Japanese Exhibition 1910 a more credible candidate as the originator of the teahouse. The Anglo-Japanese Exhibition 1910 superseded the scale of the Japanese garden display at Paris in 1900. The Japanese section at the White City covered in all 242,700 sq. ft., three times that occupied at the Paris Exhibition of 1900 and there were now two Japanese gardens which occupied 3,020 *tsubo* and 3,260 *tsubo* respectively (approx. 222,877 sq. ft.), making 466,000 sq. ft. (equivalent to approx. 11 acres) in total.⁴¹ To support the thesis that the GCU Japanese teahouse and tea garden might have come from the 1910 Anglo-Japanese exhibition instead of the Paris Exhibition in 1900, the Japanese Commission sent experts and experienced workmen to London in advance to list the inventory of the raw materials that was needed for the construction and trees, shrubs, wooden buildings, bridges, and even stones were shipped over from Japan for authenticity.⁴²

At a time when a naval journey from Japan to England took about two months by ship, these raw materials necessary for the Exhibition had to be shipped well in advance to be in time for the opening early in May 1910; therefore shipment to London began in the autumn and lasted until the middle of February 1910, when the last shipment was made.⁴³ In contrast, the model

³⁸ Lemog, "Pavillon du Japon" dated 13 July 2007 in the 3d Reconstruction Project of Paris World's Fair 1900 [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at http://lemog.fr/lemog_expo_v2/index.php, http://lemog.fr/lemog_expo_v2/displayimage.php?album=92&pos=0 and http://lemog.fr/lemog_expo_v2/displayimage.php?album=92&pos=1 and http://lemog.fr/lemog_expo_v2/thumbnails.php?album=92

³⁹ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, pp. 145-146.

⁴⁰ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, pp. 146.

⁴¹ Mutsu, Hirokichi (editor), *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910* (Australia: University of Melbourne), 2001, p. 4 and Phoenix Bonsai, "The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening" in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

⁴² Phoenix Bonsai, "The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening" in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

⁴³ Phoenix Bonsai, "The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening" in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

of Kondo (golden hall) in Horyu-ji at the Paris Exhibition of 1900 was constructed out of materials purchased in France itself⁴⁴ but it is not known if the same applied to the Japanese garden materials at this exhibition.

The media frenzy generated by the visit to the site by Queen Alexandra in mid-March 1910, who expressed appreciation of the meticulous preparation of the Japanese gardens with all the materials sent over from Japan, added royal prestige to the Exhibition.⁴⁵ Public and royal attention boosted the morale of British and Japanese men who worked at the site under celebrity Japanese garden designer Izawa Hannosuke who had arrived in the middle of December 1909, worked on the two gardens for almost six months before the opening of the Exhibition and got personal compliments from the Queen for his hard work.⁴⁶ There is scant, if any, information related directly to the existence of a Japanese teahouse amongst these two Japanese gardens on display. If there were, it would most certainly have drawn its construction materials from Japan itself like the Japanese tea gardens for authenticity's sake.

This was how a 1928 publication on Japanese bonsai plants described the Japanese display at the 1910 Exhibition: "In 1910, the Japanese Government presented to the City of London two transportable miniature gardens as a most precious gift. One was a hill garden, the other a tea garden. According to an inscription for the public to read, the trees varied in age from 30 to 150 years; the rocks and stones had been brought from different parts of Japan, and so had all the distinctive marks of a place remarkable for its beauty. The [tiny] palaces and shrines had been modeled in exact conformity to the ancient style, which went back two hundred or even five hundred years. Those who saw these gazed with astonishment on these apparent playthings. Moreover, it is said that King Edward VII had a collection in which he took a keen personal interest."⁴⁷ There are no discernible clues from this statement about the appearance of the tea garden such as its size measured in terms of *tatami* mats although it confirms the existence of a tea garden which is likely to be accompanied by a teahouse.

What we do know, however, was that there was a structure at one of the two Japanese gardens (the "Garden of Peace") which resembles a teahouse and it was displayed against a canvas screen backdrop constructed at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, held at White City in Shepherd's Bush, London.⁴⁸ This is probably the teahouse referred to on page 37 of the publication *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*.⁴⁹ Whether this teahouse was the one that the Goulds purchased and moved to Lakewood remains somewhat unclear. Visually, it would be difficult to tell apart teahouses constructed in 1900 and 1910 since stylistically, they would be similar given the configuration of "spacious gardens for

⁴⁴ Phoenix Bonsai, "The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening" in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

⁴⁵ Phoenix Bonsai, "The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening" in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

⁴⁶ Phoenix Bonsai, "The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening" in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

⁴⁷ Gothein, Marie Luise, *A History of Garden Art* (reprinted by Hacker Art Books, New York; 1966. First published in English, 1928), pg. 268

⁴⁸ Science and Society Picture Library, "Japanese 'Garden of Peace',. 1910" in the Science and Society Picture Library website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.scienceandsociety.co.uk/results.asp?image=10308198&wwwflag=2&imagepos=2>

⁴⁹ Mutsu, Hirokichi (editor), *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910* (Australia: University of Melbourne), 2001, p. 37.

strolling planned for princes and feudal lords in the Edo period, 1615-1868"⁵⁰ left over from the early Meiji period combined with teahouse construction materials and designs catered to the boom in teahouse constructions within the estates of the American and European wealthy classes.

The official photos of the tea gardens at the 1910 Anglo-Japanese exhibition found in UK's National Archives, unfortunately, are also not that helpful. They show the Japanese tea garden in its splendor with a rock garden, stone bridge, stone lanterns and two tea pavilions aside a lake. However, visual images of the teahouse itself was not available.⁵¹ The stone bridge over the water is also larger in scale and constructed out of stone rather than the much-smaller wooden bridge found at the GCU teahouse. It is likely that the teahouse itself is hidden from view in the photo of the tea garden taken at the Exhibition. The photos also do not distinguish between the "floating garden" and the "Peace Garden" in the Japanese pavilion. It seems only one of them was a tea garden and the other purely a Japanese garden. Part of the remains of one of the gardens can be seen in a public park at the White City near the BBC Centre in the UK although it has deteriorated in appearance due to the lack of constant maintenance.⁵² Due to the severe ageing of the badly-maintained Japanese garden in the UK, it would be hard to piece the GCU teahouse with the remains of the garden to see if the two matches.

JAPAN'S OWN GILDED CAPITALISTS.

Just as Gilded capitalists were becoming the new aristocrats of America, Japan's own capitalists who emerged from the traditionally-disdained merchant class were now the new patrons of the Japanese tea ceremony⁵³ in the rapidly-industrializing Meiji Japan. Previously rejected as low life-forms at the bottom of the caste system in Edo Tokugawa Japan for profiteering from others, the Meiji capitalists now rivaled the traditional power centers as the new aristocrats. They basked in the decline of the previously-dominant warrior class of the feudal period.

The maintenance of this art and its furtherance by notable merchant families gave the tea ceremony a new status as a means of social advancement. Members of this class also started the collecting habit as they accumulated antique tea wares belonging to former feudal lords (daimyos) and the disappearing warrior samurai class.⁵⁴ Big-time capitalists like the Iwasaki

⁵⁰ Leggett, Margaret Anne, *Middlegate Japanese Gardens: Preservation, Private Property and Public Memory* (Missisipi: University of Missisipi), 2004., p. 25.

⁵¹ National Archives of the UK "Japan-British Exhibition, White City, 1910: Japanese garden Image reference: COPY 1/546" in the National Archives website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/imagelibrary/events/03.htm> and National Archives of the UK "Japan-British Exhibition, White City, 1910: entrance Image reference: COPY 1/546" in the National Archives website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/imagelibrary/events/03.htm>

⁵² Phoenix Bonsai, "The State of Horticulture in Britain, With an Eye to Japanese Gardening" in Phoenix Bonsai website [downloaded on 1 Oct 2007], available at <http://www.phoenixbonsai.com/BigPicture/1910.html>

⁵³ Hayashiya, T., M Nakamura and S. Hayashiya, *Japanese Arts and the Tea Ceremony* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha), 1980, p. 162.

⁵⁴ Hayashiya, T., M Nakamura and S. Hayashiya, *Japanese Arts and the Tea Ceremony* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha), 1980, p. 162.

family (founders of Mitsubishi Steamship Company), Mitsui, Konoike, Sumitomo and others were just some of the examples of Japan's new rich which paralleled the rise of the Gilded rich in America.⁵⁵ On both sides of the Pacific, the elite fraternity had the same yearnings for status and cultivation in their lifestyles.

THE GEORGIAN COURT TEAHOUSE (CHASEKI)

It was against this backdrop of rapid change and dizzy array of cultural forces that the Japanese teahouse and garden on the Georgian Court estate originated. The teahouse served as an oasis for George Gould's wife away from the grandeur of the mansion for her to entertain guests informally.⁵⁶ The tranquility that Mrs Gould enjoyed in the Japanese garden and the teahouse is a deliberate state of mind described by the founder of the Japanese tea ceremony himself.

Describing this sense of serenity and simplicity, Grand Master Sen no Rikkyu said: "The art of the Tea Way consists simply of boiling water, preparing tea and drinking it."⁵⁷ Sen no Rikkyu revealed this in his poetry:

Chanoyu is nothing but this:
Boil water, infuse tea, and drink.
That is all you need to know.⁵⁸

But it is also a state of mind for people who discover how to "live" life, to be no longer dominated by the world 'out there', to surrender themselves wholly to whatever they are doing, to absorb themselves in it without thought and without fear of outer, irrelevant circumstances."⁵⁹ There is a strong sense of self-surrender in being one with the surroundings. Seconding this opinion, famous author of *The Book of Tea*, Okakura Kakuzo (also known as Okakura Tenshin his alias) states: "Teaism is a cult founded on the adoration of the beautiful among the sordid facts of everyday existence"⁶⁰

To construct this little utopian one-acre allocated corner of the estate, George Gould chose well-known garden designer Takeo Shiota (1881-1946) for the job.⁶¹ This was how Shiota described his creation: "It is delightful in the daytime. It becomes quiet and poetic at night.

⁵⁵ Hayashiya, T., M Nakamura and S. Hayashiya, *Japanese Arts and the Tea Ceremony* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Heibonsha), 1980, p. 162.

⁵⁶ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 158.

⁵⁷ Hammitzsch, Horst, *Zen in the art of the tea ceremony* (New York: Arkana), 1993, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Murai, Yasuhiko (translated by Paul Varley), "The Development of Chanoyu: Before Rikyu" in *Tea in Japan Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 1989, p. 4

⁵⁹ Hammitzsch, Horst, *Zen in the art of the tea ceremony* (New York: Arkana), 1993, pp. 9-10.

⁶⁰ Murai, Yasuhiko (translated by Paul Varley), "The Development of Chanoyu: Before Rikyu" in *Tea in Japan Essays on the History of Chanoyu*, edited by Paul Varley and Kumakura Isao, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 1989, p. 3.

⁶¹ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 158.

Even in midwinter its beauty never departs. The older a Japanese garden, the more natural it looks and added years serve only to increase its glories.”⁶²

In Japanese Zen culture, there is a deliberate emphasis on rustic (*wabi* and *sabi*) elements. The more worn or seasoned an object becomes, the greater its aesthetic quality. In this manner, even the moss that grows on the stones in the Japanese garden or the worn-out polished pebbles that comes with age in the Garden contributes to its beauty and rustic-ness. This was what Shiota meant by the enhancement of the garden’s beauty through age acquisition.

THE JAPANESE GARDEN’S CREATOR

Born in 1881, forty miles east of Tokyo, Takeo Shiota was the offspring of a wealthy farmer. Shiota describes his hometown in the following manner: “Near my home are many beautiful streams, and wild scenery with old historical castles, tranquil shrines and large temples.”⁶³ The Georgian Court Teahouse’s stone lanterns which are commonly found in Japanese temple and shrine gardens perhaps bear testimony to this early formative experience. Like the Japanese garden, Shiota’s temperament mellowed with age: “In my school days I was known as a rough mischief-maker; but when, as I grew older, I decided to take up the profession of landscape gardener, my character changed and I became quiet and thoughtful.”⁶⁴ This same sense and character of tranquility that came with the appreciation of Japanese gardens became coincidentally one of the rationale for the Gould’s interest in a teahouse on their estate.

To perfect the art of creating Japanese gardens, Shiota traveled on foot through half of Japan to take notes and admire the beauty of Japan’s nature and arrived at two guiding philosophies of garden creation: “the one, a garden reflects the work of a mediocre or skillful landscape gardener, and second, gardening is like the art of a painting, infinite.”⁶⁵

Determined to fend off mediocrity, Shiota went to the metropolitan city of Tokyo and studied for five more years under different Japanese master gardeners before going to New York City in 1907, to pursue the American dream.⁶⁶ At the height of his success after eight years in the US, he declared: “My greatest ambition is to design a garden more beautiful than all others in the world, and thus to prove the truth of the saying “Japanese landscape gardening is the Queen of all the Arts.” My greatest enjoyment is in nature and the contemplation of natural things, landscape and the actions of animals or fishes. For that reason I go hunting. I go to the deep woods of North Carolina and Virginia to hunt deer, to shoot ducks and quail, for at least

⁶² Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 161.

⁶³ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 162.

⁶⁴ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 162.

⁶⁵ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 162.

⁶⁶ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 162.

three months of the year. To go far from the noise of civilization, to live the simple country life and breathe deeply of pure air- that is the cleanser of life.”⁶⁷

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Japanese tea ceremony in general and the Georgian Court Teahouse represent a penetration of Japanese ideas and culture into Gilded Age America. The handful of figures associated with the Georgian Court Teahouse made enormous efforts to learn everything they could about the world outside their normal routines in the hope of discovering more about the opposing other. Okakura Kakuzo and Takeo Shiota were central figures in making a teahouse in Gilded Age American possible from the perspective of the Orient and Japan. The Goulds, Fenollosa and the cosmopolitans/Gilded aristocrats made it possible for the US to be the receiving end of this culture. The immense effort expended in bringing the Teahouse to Lakewood is a testimony to the power and strength of world cultures and their relationship with the equally forceful capitalism.

⁶⁷ Geis, Christina, *Georgian Court An Estate of the Gilded Age* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), 1982, p. 162

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ANNEX A



ANNEX B



ANNEX C



ANNEX D



ANNEX E

