

Two Portuguese in Japan: Essays on Japanese Culture from João Rodrigues Tçuzzu, S.J. to Wenceslau de Moraes

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Abstract: A comparison of essays on Japanese culture from the first period of Portuguese missionary activity, represented by João Rodrigues (in Japan 1577-1610), and from the period of exoticism and aestheticism of the late nineteenth century in Wenceslau de Moraes (in Japan 1895-1929). Includes a survey of scholarship on the Portuguese in Japan and descriptions of the tea ceremony by Rodrigues and Moraes, with English translations.

Of the Westerners in Japan who lived there for long periods, devoted much of their attention and interest to its culture and wrote extensively, whether as history or essay, on Japanese cultural rituals, two of the most interesting are the Portuguese missionary João Rodrigues, in Japan from 1577 until 1610, and the consul and aesthete Wenceslau de Moraes, in Japan from 1895 until his death in 1929, thirty-three and thirty-four years in Japan, respectively. Although their arrivals in Japan were separated by more than 300 years, the devotion of each to Japanese cultural ceremonies and the detailed descriptions they penned allow the contemporary reader to contemplate a rare comparison over the centuries. Each writer-traveler's exposition of Japanese cultural traits and practices—the observation of detail, knowledge of purpose and mean-

ing, familiarity with use of objects, and awareness of cultural difference in their depictions—does more than achieve its aim of communicating Japanese culture to the Portuguese; indeed, it exemplifies ways of being in a radically different culture, behaviors and mentalities that enhance and challenge the writer's home culture and language, in the context of their different times.

What did the Portuguese know about Japan in the second half of the sixteenth century? The question has been treated in detail by historians and researchers whose works form essential reading for anyone interested in the early contacts between Europe and Japan. A contemporary synthesis can be found in British historian Charles R. Boxer's *The Christian Century in Japan* (University of California and Cambridge University, 1951) and in the introduction by Boxer's student Michael Cooper, S.J. to his translation, *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth Century Japan*, printed in London by The Hakluyt Society in 2001. Boxer and Cooper, both fluent in Japanese, provide comprehensive chronological accounts of the writings in and about Japan by Portuguese who traveled or lived there, as well as detailed analyses of interaction with the Japanese and the kinds of knowledge conveyed in their voluminous histories, letters, and reports. Portuguese voyages reached Japan in 1543, and the presence of the religious orders began on 15 August 1549 with the arrival of Francis Xavier, the first Superior of the Jesuit mission in Japan until 1551. Portuguese religious orders dominated the old Japan mission field and the first primary documents on Japan, which range from the report by Captain Jorge Álvares in December, 1547, to the official history of the Church in Japan written by João Rodriguez, Tçuzzu, S. J. (1562-1633) in Macau and reportedly finished by 1624. Boxer notes that the Portuguese were in general keen observers of Japanese life and that "many [...] observations still hold good today" (36). One could even consider some chapters written on Japanese culture and customs to be a credible form of early anthropology that are still valuable sources of information; this observation is seemingly confirmed by complaints of religious authorities at the time about excessively detailed descriptions of Japanese social structure, cultural practices, and political leaders in Jesuit writings.

Many primary texts containing early information about Japan have been published only in recent years, such that to answer our basic question about the state of knowledge would require an extensive bibliographical essay. An essential checklist for early information on Japan would begin with reports by Barnardino de Escalante and Jorge Álvarez, Francis Xavier's (1506-1552) letter of 5 November 1549, and *Peregrinação* by Fernão Mendes Pinto (1509?-

1583) with its reports on the adventurer's early visits to Japan and meetings with Xavier. Alessandro Valignano's (1539-1606) "Sumário" of 1580, with an expanded version added in Cochin in 1583, contains a laudable description of the national character, and he later wrote his own history covering the period 1542-1564. Luís Frois's (1532-1597) history of Japan, whose introductory book contains 37 chapters on Japanese life, was composed from 1585-93, and João Rodrigues's grammar of the Japanese language (Nagasaki, 1604) covered letter writing and poetry to a degree that "demonstrates his rich knowledge of Japanese literature and culture" (Cooper, "Bibliography" xxi). To complete our list is Rodrigues's shorter art of the Japanese language (Macau, 1620) and his expansive history of the Church in Japan, whose first thirteen chapters cover cultural topics such as the climate, population, political system, food, medicines, writing, and the tea ceremony, similar to the account Frois had composed some three decades earlier. If these documents with their first-hand cultural descriptions had been published or copied, a deeper understanding of Japanese culture would have been available in Europe from the late sixteenth century, yet one of the few titles widely read was Mendes Pinto's fanciful and novelistic prose account of his travels in Asia, *Peregrinação*, published in Lisbon in 1614. The valuable perspectives of those who knew Japan best were all but lost to Europe, or died with the few who had knowledge of them.

Other contemporary scholars who have dedicated their research to the historiography of the Portuguese expansion in Asia include Georg Schurhammer, S.J., who translated and published the first part of Frois's history of Japan (*Die Geschichte Japans*, 1549-1578, Leipzig, 1936); Joseph Wicki, S.J., who published Valignano's history (*Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias Orientales*, 1542-1564, Rome, 1944) and the five volume edition of Frois's history (*História de Japam*, Lisbon, 1976-84); Schurhammer and Wicki who edited and published the letters of Francis Xavier in 2 volumes (*Epistolae S. Francisco Xavier aliaque ejus scripta*, Rome, 1944-45); João do Amaral Abranches Pinto, who edited and published the second part of Frois's history with Y. Okamoto (*Segunda parte da História de Japan*, 1578-1582, Tokyo, 1938) and also published João Rodrigues's history (*História da Igreja do Japão pelo Padre João Rodrigues Tçuzzu*, S.J., 2 vols., Macau, 1954-55); J. L. Alvarez-Taladriz, who published a Spanish translation of Rodrigues's book on the tea ceremony (*Arte del cha*, Tokyo, 1954); and Doi Tadao, who translated into Japanese and published Part I, Books 1 and 2, and Part II, Book 1 of Rodrigues's history (*Nibon Kkyokai Shi*, Tokyo, 1967-70).

Renewed attention to early contacts between Portugal and Japan in the 1990s occurred in the context of the commemorations of the 500th year of the Portuguese discoveries. In 1990 the national commission published an anthology of documents from the first contacts, *Os Portugueses e o Japão no século XVI: primeiras informações sobre o Japão*. On the 450th anniversary of the first contact with Japan, 1543-1993, the commission sponsored an international conference on the Christian century of Japan, taking the title of Boxer's now classic history, *O século cristão do Japão: actas do Colóquio Internacional Comemorativo dos 450 Anos de Amizade Portugal-Japão, 1543-1993*. Numerous publications that year include a book on Japan as seen by the Portuguese, *O Japão visto pelos portugueses*, and Léon Bourdon's massive history of the Jesuits in Japan, *La Compagnie de Jésus et le Japon, 1547-1570*. Pertinent recent work includes João Paulo A. Oliveira e Costa's *A descoberta da civilização japonesa pelos portugueses* (Macau and Lisbon, 1995) and Jacques Bésineau's *Au Japon avec João Rodrigues: 1580-1620* (Lisbon and Paris, 1998). In 1997, a facsimile edition appeared of the Jesuit letters printed in Évora in 1598, *Cartas que os padres e irmãos da Companhia de Iesus escreuerão dos Reynos de Iapão & China aos da mesma Companhia da India, & Europa des do anno de 1549 até o de 1580*. On the Japanese side, in 1997 an international conference in Tokyo on Luís Frois produced a book of proceedings (1999). While some primary texts have been translated to English, knowledge of Portuguese and Japanese is required to negotiate the primary texts of European and Japanese contacts.

At the last outpost of the far-flung Portuguese seaborne empire, "here at the end of the world" in the words of João Rodrigues, Nagasaki was a two-year voyage from Lisbon, with obligatory stops at Goa, Malacca, and Macau because of winds and monsoons. Time and distance themselves account for the vicissitudes of early Portuguese documents. Much valuable information contained in the early Portuguese reports was lost, and most of what did survive in manuscript remained inaccessible for hundreds of years; the fate of the Japan books and manuscripts constitutes a fascinating adventure story of its own. Yet writing and printing were constant features of the Portuguese seaborne empire carried to Japan. Arriving in 1579, Alessandro Valignano, S.J., ambassador of the Viceroy of Portuguese India, asserted "the need to keep Europe well informed through official annual letters" discoursing on such topics as "the weather, the degrees of longitude, the dress, food, housing, numbers and customs of the inhabitants" (Cooper, "Bibliography" xxiii). The Jesuit letters published in two volumes at Évora in 1598 constitute one of the prime

sources of cultural information. Padre Gaspar Vilela's letter of 17 August 1561 describes the popular Buddhist festival of *O-Bon*; Luís Almeida wrote the first account of the formal tea ceremony on 25 October 1565. Many of the annual letters were written by Frois, Valignano's secretary who had met Xavier in Goa. Valignano brought a printing press with moveable metallic type to Nagasaki, where he trained Japanese youths in printing and engraving; early books printed at the Jesuit press have become rarities comparable to the Gutenberg *Bible* and Shakespeare's first folio. He thought it necessary to form a Japanese clergy, for the reason that Westerners could never become sufficiently proficient in the Japanese language, and in 1582 he arranged for a visit of Japanese boys to Rome, accompanying them as far as Goa and again joining them on the return voyage in 1590. Valignano made three trips to Japan (1579-82; 1590-92; 1598-1603); on his third he witnessed the ordination of the first two Japanese priests in 1601.

Japan was of special importance to the religious orders because of its advanced civilization, and conversion was thought to be more meaningful there. Service in Japan was considered the equivalent of "living with cultivated and intelligent people" (Boxer 80), and without exception Portuguese writers complimented Japanese culture, pointing out its cleanliness, order, hospitality, formality, pride, reserve, security, and even the mobility of unaccompanied women. Xavier praised their honor and honesty: "They have one quality which I cannot recall in any people of Christendom; this is that their gentry howsoever poor they be, and the commoners howsoever rich they be, render as much honor to a poor gentleman as if he were passing rich [...]. They are a people of very good will, very sociable, and very desirous of knowledge; they are very fond of hearing about things of God, chiefly when they understand them [...] never yet did I see a people so honest" (Boxer 38). Of the palaces and houses, Frois wrote, "I never yet saw anything comparable to this in freshness, elegance, sumptuousness and cleanliness" (Boxer 62). Rodrigues's history was thought to be unrivaled in its perception of Japanese etiquette and social life, about which he writes at great length and in minute detail. He attributes sharp wit and retentive memory to the practice of letters, "as the letters are signs expressing the things in an almost natural way" (*João Rodrigues' Account* 333). As other Portuguese, Rodrigues is aware of Japanese society's equality or even superiority in many respects, as Valignano had observed earlier.

Japan's importance and impact on the Portuguese was naturally much greater than local interest in their arrival and presence, since it was the Portu-

guese goal to penetrate and integrate a much different culture possibly superior to their own. The awareness of mutual differences is brought out in one of the few Japanese texts to comment on the Portuguese, as recorded in the chronicle *Yaita-ki*:

These men are traders of Seinamban [Southwest Barbary]. They understand to a certain degree the distinction between Superior and Inferior, but I do not know whether they have a proper system of ceremonial etiquette. They eat with their fingers instead of with chopsticks such as we use. They show their feelings without any self-control. They cannot understand the meaning of written characters. They are people who spend their lives roving hither and yon. They have no fixed abode and barter things which they have for those they do not, but withal they are a harmless sort of people. (Boxer 29)

Valignano expresses the Portuguese sense of living in an opposite cultural context:

White, which with us is a festive and cheerful color, is a sign of mourning and sadness with them, whereas they like black and mulberry as gay colors. Our vocal and instrumental music wounds their ears, and they delight in their own music which truly tortures our hearing [...]. We remove our hats and stand up as a sign of politeness; contrariwise they remove their sandals and squat down, for to receive guests standing up would be the height of rudeness. We admire golden hair and white teeth, whereas they paint theirs black. We mount a horse with the left foot, they with the right. They never bleed the sick, and the purges they give them are all sweet smelling and mild, and in this way they have much the advantage of us, since ours are very harsh and bitter." (Boxer 77)

In the context of this cultural encounter, the role of language, translators, and cultural mediators should not be overlooked in the composition of early essays on Japanese cultural practices. Valignano insisted that Europeans conform and adapt as much as possible to local social customs and behavior. Xavier had arrived accompanied by the Japanese refugee named Yajiro, who had become a Catholic and studied at the Jesuit College of St. Paul in Goa, and two other youths. Yajiro's role in Japan as interpreter and cultural guide constitutes an uncanny parallel to that of the Moor Monçaide in South India at the arrival of Vasco da Gama half a century before. The role of cultural mediator was soon taken over by Japanese

youth in the seminaries, drawn from the nobility and gentry. Francisco Pasio's letter of 16 September 1594 describes studies at the Arima seminary:

There were this year in the seminary about one hundred pupils divided into three classes of Latin, written and oral, of writing Japanese and Latin, and of chanting and playing musical instruments [...]. Twenty students will graduate this year [...]. The painters and those who engrave on metal plates become daily more skillful. (Boxer 205)

No European was more knowledgeable and adapted to Japan, however, than João Rodrigues, who grew to know Japan so intimately because he arrived there in 1577 at age 15. He became fluent in Japanese and spent more than thirty years in the country before his expulsion in 1610. His role as translator cast him into prominence, and he was well known to all the Japanese leaders. Notwithstanding Valignano's superior culture, learning, and status in the Society, he was utterly dependent on Rodrigues's mediation and translation. Rodrigues joined the Society in 1580 and was ordained in 1596. Living his last 23 years in Macau, he was the only figure of his age to have visited both Miyako and Beijing; in later years, he could write with authority on Chinese influences on Japanese letters, history, and society. His lack of formal education as a youth gave him a certain rusticity and naturalness, and he wrote with genuine interest about art and culture, including etiquette, the tea ceremony, flower arranging, painting, and calligraphy. His linguistic ability is reflected in his two grammars of Japanese language and poetics, known as the "*Arte grande*" (Nagasaki, 1604) and "*Arte breve*" (Macau, 1620).

Rodrigues's understanding of Japanese arts and social life is based on more than 30 years of intimate acquaintance with the language and people. More than observations of an early cultural anthropologist, his essays on Japanese life could be considered cross-cultural descriptions to serve the didactic purpose of the Jesuit charge to understand local society. Two examples will suffice to demonstrate the depth of his explanations of Japanese cultural rituals and ceremonies. He begins describing the tea ceremony with general considerations of the Japanese character that suggest he is thinking in terms of parallels with Western forms of religious meditation:

The Japanese are in general of a melancholy disposition and nature. Moved by this natural inclination, they take much delight and pleasure in lonely and nostalgic

places, such as woods with shady groves, cliffs and rocky places, solitary birds, torrents of fresh water flowing down from rocks, and in every kind of solitary thing imbued with a natural artlessness and quality [...]. Hence they are much inclined towards a solitary and eremitical life, far removed from worldly affairs and tumult. Thus in olden days many solitary hermits devoted themselves to contempt of the world and its vanities [...]. They shave their head and beard, and exchange their secular robes for religious and sober dress [...]. The beginning and origin of this *cha* meeting [...] are found on this natural disposition. (*João Rodrigues' Account* 283-84)

In his highly detailed discussion of a form of tea ceremony, or *chanoyu*, called *suki*, Rodrigues reveals a surprising understanding and respect for the philosophers of the Zen sects:

Those who practiced *chanoyu* were also greatly versed in the subject, and when they changed something or added something new, they did not explain in words the reason [...] for they leave everything to the consideration and reasoning of their students [...]. This is how the masters of the Zen sects teach their doctrine [...]. The art of *suki*, then, is a kind of solitary religion. (*João Rodrigues' Account* 288)

After an extensive description of tea and the tea ceremony in China and Japan, Rodrigues summarizes the purpose and benefits of *suki*:

So *suki* has three principal and essential features [...]. The first is the extreme cleanliness in everything [...]. The second is the rustic solitude and poverty, and the withdrawal from a multitude of superfluous things of every kind. The third and principal feature is the knowledge and science of natural proportion and suitability, and the hidden and subtle qualities inherent in natural and artificial things [...]. The genuine and discerning *suki-sha* [...] found *suki* a great help towards virtue. (*João Rodrigues' Account* 307-08)

Rodrigues came to occupy an intermediate position between the two cultures, from which he was further able to draw parallels in feeling, sentiment, and value between the Portuguese and Japanese cultures in certain instances. His portrayal of the inchoate feeling of *sabi*, the "transcendental loneliness" of the wanderer, to repeat Cooper's expression, as found in his description of a painting, must have produced echoes of the untranslatable medieval Portuguese word, *saudade*, similarly described as a longing melancholy:

The first scene is a certain famous place with the clear autumn moon reflected in the water. They go out on autumn nights to gaze at the moon in a sad, nostalgic mood. The second view is of a valley or remote wilderness where a hermitage bell, rung at sunset or at night, is heard sounding softly from afar. (Cooper, "Bibliography" xxxviii)

His Portuguese *saudade*, which he knew from memories of childhood, has been transliterated into the Japanese cultural attitude of *sabi*.

At the conclusion of his description of the interiors of houses and palaces, Rodrigues makes a comment that can be applied by poetic extension to the whole of the Portuguese writings on Japan in the second half of the sixteenth century. He writes, "Indeed, unless you have seen this, it is impossible to describe adequately or imagine the reality of it all" (*João Rodrigues' Account* 152). Over the distances and travel times of the maritime empire, knowledge about such a different culture could be conveyed only to a certain degree, in fragile documents, and only by persons possessing the necessary cultural experience and depth; Rodrigues's experiences "here at the end of the world" must have seemed incommunicable and incommensurate with the Portugal he left as a youth, or even to many of his colleagues in the Society. Yet as perhaps the first Portuguese cross-over to Japanese culture, Rodrigues's writings communicate more successfully and fully than he himself is aware the inner nature of Japanese society and character in the late sixteenth century, and with a degree of comprehension and directness that preserves their freshness to the present day. In recovering and studying the documents that contain the first European knowledge of Japan, the highest goal to which present day readers can aspire is to find themselves, in Bésineau's words, "in Japan with João Rodrigues."

The Tea Ceremony

An English translation, by Michael Cooper, S. J., of the chapters on Japanese culture in João Rodrigues's *História da Igreja do Japão* (in *João Rodrigues' Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan*), followed by the only printing of the Portuguese text (Macau, 1954-55), document the depth of Portuguese interest and understanding of Japanese culture dating from the second half of the sixteenth century. The descriptions, written in 1620-21, in Macau, are those of an educated, experienced observer who understands not only the form but also the philosophy of the ceremony, which is described in detail, in a sequence or chronology of preparatory acts, observances, and obsequious expressions. The

narration constitutes a formal guide for the uninitiated by a neutral, although sympathetic, observer, whose deep interest and profound knowledge of the ceremony becomes apparent in his comments on the meaning of acts and gestures, as well as the great value of rusticity and its contrast to other spheres of life. The extreme purity of the ceremony, close to a religious sense of life, must have appealed to João Rodrigues's sensibilities, as well as to long apprenticeship in Japanese culture from arrival as a youth.

The custom of drinking *cha* among the Chinese and Japanese is common throughout the whole kingdom and is one of the principal courtesies with which a guest is entertained. [...] Ordinary people of inferior rank, yet of gentle birth, who practise this manner of *cha*, may invite any lord or noble to it, and he may not decline on account of the person who invites him unless he has some prior engagement. (272, 282)

This gathering for *cha* and conversation is not intended for lengthy talk among themselves, but rather to contemplate within their souls with all peace and modesty the things they see there [...] and thus through their own efforts to understand the mysteries locked therein. In keeping with this, everything used in this ceremony is as rustic, rough, completely unrefined, and simple as nature made it, after the style of a solitary and rustic hermitage. (282)

The vessels and dishes used in this gathering are not of gold, silver, or any other precious material, nor are they richly and finely wrought. Instead they are made of clay or iron without any polish, embellishment, or anything that might incite the appetite to desire them for their beauty or luster [...]. Above all else, they pay more attention to the cleanliness of everything, however small it may be, in this rustic and ancient setting [...]. As they greatly value and enjoy this kind of gathering to drink *cha*, they spend large sums of money [...] to buy the things needed [...]. [This] will appear as madness and barbarity to other nations that come to hear of it. (283)

The small [tea] house was constructed of drab materials in keeping with the rustic and solitary life [...]. Nevertheless, the workmanship was first class and it was kept extremely clean. The utensils included a copper stove and its cast-iron kettle of a certain fashion and shape for the hot *cha* water; the vessel of cold water to pour in and replenish the kettle [...] and also to cool the hot water; a little container

for the *cha* ground into powder and its small spoon with which it is put into the porcelain cup when the drink is being prepared; a small delicate cane brush to mix and dissolve the *cha* in the hot water; and various porcelain cups, with their salvers, from which they drink the *cha*. There was a box containing charcoal made from a certain kind of tree, and with this they replenish the fire in the stove that heats the kettle of water, as only charcoal is used in the fire. [...] This, then, is what was called then and subsequently *chanoyu*, and those who performed it *chanoyu-sha*. (285-86)

This art of *suki* is [...] in imitation of the solitary philosophers of the Zen sects who [...] give themselves up to contemplating the things of nature, despising and abandoning worldly things [...]. Hence, [tea masters] have come to detest in *suki* any kind of contrivance and elegance, any pretence, hypocrisy and outward embellishment, which they call *keibaku* in their language [...]. Instead, their ideal is to promise little but accomplish much: [...] always to use moderation in everything; [...] finally, to desire to err by default rather than by excess. [...] The more precious (the utensils) are in themselves and the less they show it, the more suitable they are. (292)

The purpose of this art of *cha*, then, is courtesy, good breeding, modesty, and moderation in exterior actions, peace and quiet of body and soul, exterior humility, without any pride, arrogance, fleeing from all exterior ostentation, pomp, display, and splendour of social life. Instead, sincerity without any deceit as befits a hermit in the wilderness, honest and decent attire, with certain order, neatness, and plainness in everything in use and in the house [...]. (289)

How Guests Are Especially Entertained With *Cha* in the *Suki* House

Because the *cha* house is small, they invite only one, two, or even three, and at most four persons. They send them a brief and polite letter saying they wish to entertain them with *cha* [...] either in the morning, or at midday, or in the afternoon [...]. Before [the guest] attends [...] he goes in person to thank the host for having invited him to drink *cha* [...]. At the appointed hour [...] each guest robes himself neatly [...] and proceeds to the private gate and entrance to the woods. The gate is so small and low that a person can enter only by stooping down [...]. There is a rough, clean stone where the guest changes his sandals. Now comes the master of the house, opens the gate and without locking it retires [...]. The guests relax and gaze at the wood [...] they quietly contemplate everything there. There is crystal-clear water [in a stone] they take with a vessel and pour on their hands.

They now approach the closed door of the small house. The host is not present, and the place is empty except for some *cha* utensils.

When everyone has finished [contemplating everything there] and squatted on his knees, the host enters [...] and thanks his guests for having come to his retreat, while they return him thanks for having invited them. Then they converse [...] until the host rises and fetches the charcoal and the ash in special containers along with a suitable copper spoon [...]. All draw near to watch him put on the charcoal [...]. Then in deep silence each one sits down again in his place. The host [...] comes out with the necessary vessels [...]. He then puts the *cha* into the cup with a cane spoon. Having poured in a spoonful of the powder, he says, "Your Honors had better drink this *cha* weak, for it is very poor stuff." But the guests beg him to make it stronger for they know that it is excellent when drunk thus. So he pours as much *cha* as is needed [...] and [...] pours hot water on top of the powder. He next stirs it with a small cane brush and places the cup on the mat in front of the guests. They then pay each other compliments as to who shall be the first to drink. (303-04)

João Rodrigues, *História da Igreja do Japão*. 2 vols. Macau: Notícias de Macau, 1954.

O costume de beber chá entre os chinas, e Japoens hê commum por / todo o Reyno, e he hua das principaes cortezas com que se agazalha hum hospede, antes he a primeira. [...] [A]s pessoas de menos qualidade populares, mas limpas que profissão este modo de Chá podem convidar a elle qualquer Senhor, e pessoa nobre sem o poder refuzar respeito da pessoa que o convida, salvo se tivesse impedimento. (437, 457)

Donde este convite de chá, e conversação, não he para longas praticas entre sy, mas para com grande quietação, e modestia, comtemplarem dentro do animo as couzas que ali vem [...] e entenderem por sy os mysterios que em sy enserrão; e conforme a isto tudo o de que nesta cerimonia se uza hé rustico, e grosseiro sem artificio algum, mas só naturalmente como a natureza o criou, congruente a hermo, solidão, e rusticaria. (458)

Os vazos, e louça de que neste serviço ser uza, não são de ouro nem prata, nem de outras materias preciosas, rica, e polidam(en)te feita, mas de barro, e ferro tal sem lustro, e ornato algum, nem couza que naturalmente convide o appetite a desejala

por seu lustre, e beleza [...]. E sobre tudo entre esta velhice, e rusticaria esmerão-se na limpeza, a qual he a mór que se pode imaginar acerca de todas as couzas por minimas que sejam. E por que os Japoens se deleitão m(ui)to, e fazem muito cabedal deste modo de convite ao Chá, gastando muito dinheiro [...] e em comprar as couzas necessarias para o uzo deste modo de Chá [...] couza que as outras naçoens que isto ouvem parecerá doudice, e barbaria. (459-460)

Era esta casa pequena, e de materiaes não lustrozos para que fosse conforme a vida que vivia rustica, e solitaria, mas de feitio muito primo com estremada limpeza [...] [os aparelhos], como são fogzão (*Furo*) / de cobre, e a sua panella (*Kama*) de ferro coado de certa forma, e feição para a agoa quente do chá, e vazo (*Koboshi*) de agoa fria para dali lançar [...] e para temperar a quente, h'ua vazilha (*Katatsuki*) de chá moido em pó com sua colherzinha (*Chashaku*) com que se lança na persolana quando se prepara, e h'ua escovinha (*Chasen*) de canas fina para mexer o chá que fique delido na agoa quente, as diversas persolanas com suas salvas com que bebem o chá, h'ua caixa com carvão de certa laya de arvore com que se vay cevando o fogo do fogão que aqueuta a panella da agoa por ser o fogo só se carvão [...]. Isto hé o que se chamou então, e depois Chanoyû (*Cha-no-yû*) e os que o professsão Chanoyuxas (*Cha-no-yû-sha*) [...]. (462-463; 466).

He pois esta arte do Suky um modo de religiam solitaria [...] a imitação dos phizophos solitarios da Seyta dos Jenxos, os quaes [...] desprezando, e apartandose das couzas mundana [...] se dão a contemplação das couzas naturaes [...]. E daqui vem aborrecrem grandemente no Suky, toda a sorte de artificio, e galantaria, todo o fingimento, e hipocrizia, e ornato exterior que em sua lingua chamão Keifacu (*Keihakku*) [...] antes prometer pouco e cumprir muito [...] uzando sempre acerca de tudo da moderação [...] e querer antes faltar por demenos, que por demais [...] as quaes (os aparelhos) quanto mais preciosas são em sy, e menos o mostram a vista / servem mais. (471-472; 478-479)

Tem pois por profissão esta arte do Châ a cortezia, bom ensino, modestia, e moderação nas açoens exteriores, socego, e quietação do corpo, e alma, com humildade exterior, sem altiveza, e arrogancia, fugindo do fausto, pompa, e aparato de fora, e magnificencia do trato forense, antes singeleza sem dobres como he conveniente ao solitario do hermo, vestido honesto, e dessente, com certa ordem, limpeza, e chaneza em todas as couzas de seu serviço, e da casa [...]. (473-474)

Como se convida em particular ao Châ na Caza do Suky e porque a caza do Chá he pequena [...] só convidão h'ua pessoa duas e athe tres e ao summo quatro. Mandandolhes h'ua carta breve, e cortes em que lhe dizem que as querem convidar a beber h'ua vez de Chá [...] porque ou hê pela manhã, ou ao meyo dia, ou a tarde [...]. E antes que vá ao Convite, vay em pessoa darlhe as graças de o convidar ao Châ.. No dia, e hora determinada se veste cada hum limpa, e honestamente [...] se vão a porta particular por onde se entra no bosque [...]. E a porta pequena e baixa quanto h'ua pessoa muito inclinada pode passar, diante da qual está huma pedra tosca, e limpa onde o hospede an- / tes de entrar troca as alparcas [...] e vem o dono da daza, abrea [...] o serra a porta sem a fechar, e se recolhe para o interior [...] (os hospedes) contemplando quietamente o que alli há. ss. o bosque todo [...] a pia de pedra tosca para lavar as mãos em que está agoa limpissima transbordando com um vaso para botar nas mãos [...] chegando a porta da cazinha [...] sem o dono da caza estar ali mas tudo só com alguns instrumentos do châ.

[T]endo todos concluido, visto, e assentado sobre o(s) joelhos, abre o dono da caza h'ua porta interior por onde entra na cazinha, e dalhes as graças de virem a sua hermda, e elles de os ter convidado, praticão hum pedaço seria, e modestamente de / couzas boas athe que o dono da caza se alevanta, e tras o carvão em um vaso para isso, e cinza em outro com h'ua colher accommodada de cobre [...] e todos se chegão a ver pôr o carvão [...] e elles entre sy com grande silencio sem praticarem nada [...]. Sae com os vazos necessarios [...] e bota o chá na persolana com a colher de cana e tendo botado h'ua colherinha dos póz diz bebã Vossas Mercês o châ, ralo porque he ruim. os hospedes então lhe pedem que faça grosso por saberem ser excellente para assim o beberem, e assim bota mais Châ quanto baste, e com hum vazo accommodado a isso tira a agoa quente da panella, e a bota por cima dos póz muito quente, e as mexe com a escovinha de cana, e assim a poem sobre a esteira diante dos hospedes, os quaes tendo entre sy seus cumprimentos de quem começará a beber [...]. (494-499)

The Tea Cult (1905)

Almost 300 years after João Rodrigues, the Portuguese exile, writer, and diplomat Wenceslau de Moraes (1854-1929) discovered in Japan his lost paradise through voyages from Macau in 1893-96 and permanently thereafter, being named consul in Kobe in 1899:

Estive cerca de cinco anos na China, tendo ocasião de vir ao Japão a bordo de uma canhoneira de guerra e visitando Nagasaki, Kobe e Yokohama. Em 1893, 1894, 1895 e 1896 voltei ao Japão, por curtas demoras, ao serviço de Macau, onde estava comissionado na capitania do porto de Macau. Em 1896 regressei a Macau, demorando-me por pouco tempo e voltando ao Japão (Kobe). Em 1899 fui nomeado cônsul de Portugal em Hiogo e Osaka, lugar que exerci até 1913. (*Dicionário Cronológico*)

Although with a reputation in Portugal for his complete adaptation to the Japanese ways of life, Moraes had simply found in Japan the world of deep aesthetic feeling for which he had searched but never encountered in Portugal. Of all the examples of orientalism and exoticism in Western literature at the end of the nineteenth century, there is none more dramatic than his. His description of geishas in the tea ceremony parallels his delicate description of the two women who would be the muses of his meditations for the last thirty years of his life; Ko-Haru, whose name means “those vanishing days at the end of autumn,” personifies a kindred spirit out of its place and time, a deceit of nature in which we read a metaphor for the presence of the Portuguese diplomat in the Orient:

[...] acarinhados de brisas consoladoras, resplandecentes de amenas alacridades solares, embebidos de transparencias azues do firmamento [...] certas arvores de florescencias primaveris—as ameixeiras e as cerejeiras, por exemplo—chegam até a enganar-se, julgando-se em pleno março ou em pleno abril, vestindo-se de folhas novas e enfeitando-se com flores. (15)

Alienated from European civilization, the social life and belles lettres of his country, Moraes dedicated his writings to Japan, a world that he compared to an enchanting muse who evoked the nostalgia for the world and being lost in the distance and past time, exchanged for the strange reality of the Extreme Orient.

The case of Moraes takes on a double strangeness in Japan, where Portuguese had been present since the sixteenth century, including writers such as João Rodrigues and Luís Frois, who were themselves dedicated to Japanese culture and history, although with an immediacy and sense of novelty far removed from the aesthetic sense of exoticism and orientalism that could only develop over the long centuries of empire. Rodrigues and Frois lived Japan as an authentic experience, a cultural apprenticeship necessary to their profes-

sion as well as to their understanding of the world. Closed to Portuguese since 1610, Japan was forgotten at the edges of the Portuguese world until Moraes returned, under the shadow of the epic discoveries of three centuries before and the ruins of an empire. Unlike his predecessors, however, Moraes's exile was also linguistic for the same effect of shadow and separation. The intimate prose with which he describes and comments on Japanese culture is meant for the "[i]rmãos pelo pensamento, conhecidos e desconhecidos [...] que falam a mesma língua portuguesa que eu falo" ["brothers in thought, known and unknown (...) who speak the same Portuguese language as I speak"]. In the tradition of the historical chroniclers of the sixteenth century, Moraes directs his words and thoughts to the metropolis, but in the minor key of a decadent, nostalgic poet whose goal is not to teach but to absorb, not to discover but to lose himself in the other culture, not to explain but to emote. In his exotic attraction to Japan, one observes the appeal of prohibition, of a closed culture and a radically different reading of reality. Unlike Rodrigues, Moraes wrote with an inevitable comparison between Japan and the lost world of his "brothers" because he cultivated a consciousness of his exile and his difference. Rodrigues's "brothers" were the members of his religious order in Nagasaki, in a world of their own.

Even though his imagination was taken over by a state of delirium while in Japan, Moraes at heart recognized the impossibility of changing his way of life, even after adopting Japanese cultural ways for many years. Having arrived as a youth of 15, Rodrigues became completely Japanese and because of his fluency was always accepted, even sought out, by the *daimos*. In stark contrast with Rodrigues, Moraes's "very insufficient" knowledge of Japanese, plus his inescapable classification as *ketô-jin* ("bearded savage") by the Japanese ethnic system, would have never allowed him to become a citizen or completely exchange his Portuguese soul for his adopted country and culture. The perspective of this early twentieth-century wise traveler, and the point of view he takes in his prolix writings about Japanese culture, is that of an observer who is out of place, a permanent exile between the two worlds, two perceptions, two or more religions. Armando Martins Janeira states that Moraes felt a profound anguish at not being able to reconcile and to live simultaneously in two such different cultures (367). Moraes confesses that he never felt completely happy in Japan because of the constant impression of suffering, passed and future, a sentiment that colors his effusive descriptions of his adopted land: "O Japão! paiz de largas paizagens paradisíacas [e] grandes alastramentos pasmosos [...] a alta aristocracia do vício e da miséria" (141).

Even though fascinated by extremes, Moraes passed beyond superficial exoticism to live in a “temps perdu,” a state of enchantment and passion produced by the filter of melancholy and literary meditations: “A minha religião [é] a noção melancolica da impermanencia das coisas, do anniquilamente como lei suprema, [...] a paixão pelo que foi e já não é” (119). His outlook as an inhabitant of two worlds in a certain sense places him as an exile from his own experience, an Epicurean of the tragic unfolding of personal experience, one who waits both with passion and with resignation.

In his descriptions of the tea ceremony, instrumentally parallel to Rodrigues’s, Moraes colors his account with visions of captivating difference and feminine artistry in strict obedience of the ancient rituals, conscious of his inferior position as a “poor ignorant Westerner.” Moraes’s aesthetic contrasts painfully with the rational, scientific, and participatory sharpness of Rodrigues’s history, where the emphasis was on detail, completeness, and significance, for the purpose of learning and acculturation. Moraes applied to the “tea cult” an aesthetic treatment and nostalgia that had no knowledge of the keen intellectual curiosity or of the lost essays of his brothers in Japan.

Wenceslau de Moraes, *O Culto do Chá*. Kobe: Typographia do “Kobe Herald,” 1905; 3rd ed. Preface by Armando Martins Janeira. Lisbon: Vega, 1993.

[1905]

No Japão, toda a gente toma chá,—ricos e pobres, nobres e plebeus:—bebe-se na ocasião das refeições e a toda a hora, a pequeninos goles [...].

Na casa, nua de moveis, porem mimosa de accios requintados, figura sempre o brazeiro sobre a esteira, e nas brazas vae fervilhando a chaleira de ferro, cheia de agua; o *bon* (uma bandeja) está cerca, contendo o bule, as cinco chavenas (cinco, porque? talvez por serem cinco os dedos em cada mãosita japonesa), os cinco pires de madeira ou de metal, o cofre de estanho contendo o chá em folhas e ainda o pequenino recipiente em porcellana, chamado *guzamashi*, cuja ordinaria serventia vae muito em breve conhecer-se.

A agua passa da chaleira para o *yuzamashi*, onde arrefece, pois é preceito fazer-se o chá com agua que ferveu, mas ja não ferve; prepara-se depois no bule a infusão, que é offerecida aos hospedes nas pequeninas taças de fina porcellana.

Eis a singela practica e eis a modesta offerta, actos da vida intima não poucas vezes repetidos durante cada dia, desde pela manhã até á noite. [...] Para a alegria

dos olhos, a simples preparação do chá imprime um relevo delicioso á graciosidade innata na *musumé*, na attitude que lhe é mais habitual, de joelhos sobre a esteira, junto do seu brazeiro. A mimica é impressiva, unica; privilegio d'aquella figurinha meiga e ondulante e d'aquella buliçosa mão, de finissimos contornos, da japonesa, que é, em summa, a Eva mais gentilmente pueril, mais captivamente chimerica, mais feminina emfim, de todas as Evas d'este mundo.

O chá japonéz, servido invariamente sem leite e sem assucar, que lhe prejudicariam o aroma, é a bebida mais suavemente agradável que possa offerecer-se ao nosso paladar (não de todos porem, mas um paladar sentimental, um tanto sonhador [...] que n'isto dos nossos órgãos de sentir ha temperamentos, aptidões affectivas características [...]).

Variadissimos objectos devem encontrar-se no aposento, como o brazeiro, o carvão de reserva contido num cestinho, a chaleira, o abano de pennas, o cachimbo, o tabaco, o pincel, o papel e a escrevaninha. Os artigos destinados particularmente ao chá, muitas vezes contidos n'um estojo especial, são os seguintes: a boceta com perfumes, que antes de tudo se lançam sobre as brazas e embalsamam o ambiente; a jarra com agua fria e a competente colher feita de um pedaço de bambu; o chá em pó n'um cofresinho de charão e a colherinha adjuncta; duas taças, de barro ou de porcellana, uma usada no verão, de côr clara, e outra escura, usada no inverno; um curioso utensilio feito de finas lascas de bambu reunidas em feixe, com que se agita na chavena a mistura do chá em pó com a agua morna; finalmente a tigela onde se lavam e o pedaço de seda, de finissimo tecido, com que se enxugam, as peças empregadas.

Não me peçam agora, a mim, profano na materia e viajero fatigado de tão multiplices impressões que tenho vindo colhendo por este mundo fora, uma opinião pessoal sobre o *chá-no-yu*. Estive uma vez, é certo, com dois outros amigos, em uma das *chayas* de mais fama da cidade de Kobe; e Tama-Guike (o Malmequer—Precioso) era a esplendida sacerdotiza da cerimonia. A impressão que d'aquella noite guardo é indefinida, fugidia, como de um vago sonho que tivesse. Ficaram-me reminiscencias indecisas do luxo sobrio e harmonioso e do accio extremo das coisas impregnadas de exotismo onde poisou o meu olhar. Nas meia luz do placido aposento, amplo e silencioso como um templo, contornava-se, distante, um vulto de mulher, de joelhos, envolta em sedas magnificas. As attentões fixavam-se especialmente, como que por attracção hypnotica, nas suas mãos finissimas, alvejando no espaço como se fossem de marfim, tomando de estranhos utensilios, preparando não sei que filtro de magia, poisando em mimicas hieraticas, quaes mãos de mystica officiante de uma religião desconhecida. Por fim, convi-

dado a partilhar no sacrificio, aceitava uma taça com chá que me era offerecida e levava-a aos labios commovido, com não sei que subitos escrúpulos de apostata mal firme [...].

Tama-Guiku concluíra. Ergueu-se, deslumbrante de graças, de atavios, de magestade. O seu rostinho meigo illuminava-se então da exaltação beatífica que lhe electrizava o espirito; dirigia sobre nós a ardencia negra dos seus olhos, saudou-nos reverente [...] reverente não porque uma ínfima cortezia sequer lhe merecessemos—pobres occidentaes ignaros!—mas em estricta obediencia aos preceitos rituaes; e desapareceu da scena.

[1905 (our translation)]

In Japan, everyone drinks tea, —rich and poor, nobles and plebeans: —it is drunk with meals and at any time, in very small gulps [...].

In the house, with no furniture but filled with beautiful artistic objects, there is always a brazier on the mat, and an iron tea kettle full of water boiling on the coals; the *bon* (a tray) is nearby, containing the pot, the five cups (five, why five? perhaps because of the five fingers on each little Japanese hand), the five wooden or metal saucers, the tin container with the tea leaves and the small porcelain recipient, called *guzamashi*, whose usefulness will soon be explained.

The water goes from the kettle to the *yuzamashi*, where it cools, since it is customary to make the tea with water that had boiled, but is no longer boiling; the infusion is then prepared in the pot, which is offered to the guests in little cups of fine porcelain.

Such is the singular practice and modest offering, acts of home life repeated not a few times during each day, from morning until night. [...] For the joy of the observer, the simple preparation of tea imprints a delicious profile on the innate gracefulness of the *musumé*, in her most habitual pose, on her knees over the mat, next to the brazier. The mimicry is impressive, unique; it is the privilege of that sweet and undulating image, and of that restless hand, with the finest contours, of the Japanese girl who is, in sum, the most politely adolescent, the most captivatingly chimerical, most feminine, of all the Eves of this world.

Japanese tea, served invariably without milk and without sugar, which would spoil its aroma, is the most smoothly agreeable drink that could be offered to our palates (not everyone's, however, but to a sentimental palate, a bit dreamy [...]) for our sensory organs have temperaments, characteristic affective aptitudes [...].

The most varied objects should be found in the dwelling, such as the brazier, the coal kept in reserve in a little basket, the kettle, the feather fan, the pipe,

tobacco, the brush, paper and little writing desk. The articles meant especially for the tea, often kept in a special container, are the following: a jar of perfumes that are thrown before anything else over the coals and spice the atmosphere; the jar of cold water and the spoon that goes with it, made of a piece of bambu; the powdered tea in a little wooden chest and its spoon; two cups, of clay or porcelain, one used in the summer, of a light color, and another dark, used in the winter; a strange utensil made of fine strips of bambu tied together, with which the mixture of powdered tea and warm water is mixed in the cup; finally the bowl where they are washed and the piece of silk, of the finest fabric, with which the pieces used are dried.

Don't ask me now—someone estranged from the subject and a traveler tired from multiple impressions that he has collected in wide travels through this world—for a personal opinion about *chá-no-yu*. One time I was with two friends, it is true, in one of the most famous *chayas* in the city of Kobe; and Tama-Guika (the *Lovesmenot* – *Precious*) was the splendid high priestess of the ceremony. The impression that I have of that night is indefinite, fleeting, like any vague dream. There remain uncertain reminiscences of shadowy and harmonious luxury and of the perfect cleanliness of things impregnated with exoticism wherever my glance came to rest. In the half-light of the placid dwelling, ample and silent like a temple, the distant outline of a woman could be made out, kneeling, wrapped in magnificent silks. My attentions were fixed, in a special way, as if by hypnotic attraction, on her most delicate hands, whitening the space as if made of ivory, grasping strange utensils, preparing I don't know what magic filter, resting in hieratic mimicry, like the hands of a mystic leader of an unknown religion. Finally, invited to participate in the sacrifice, I accepted a cup with tea that was offered to me and carried it to my lips overcome with I don't know what sudden scruples of an unsteady apostate [...].

Tama-Guika had concluded. She rose up, astonishingly graceful, adorned with ornaments, with majesty. Her delicate sweet face was illuminated with the beatific exaltation that electrifies the spirit; she looked at us with her ardent black eyes, reverently greeted us [...] reverently not because we were deserving of the slightest courtesy,—poor ignorant Westerners!—but only in strict obedience to the ritual precepts; and then she disappeared from the scene.

*

While the aesthetic and didactic intentions of the two Portuguese writers on the tea ceremony are as distant as the three centuries that separates them, one nonetheless notices strong parallels in their observations and even in the nature of their experiences. Each writer is keenly aware of the meaning of drinking and preparing tea in Japanese society; while their remarks may be read as introductory, they are in actuality preparing the reader for the profound details of ceremonial ritual. Rodrigues tends to present his observations as would an anthropologist and Moraes as beneficiary of the experience as aesthetic and emotional pleasure. The descriptions of the nature of the tea itself, its mode of selection and use, as well as the expositions of the objects—their meaning, use, and value—may seem to the modern reader almost interchangeable. The acuteness of observation and the unchanging nature of ritual form are, then, the constants in the two accounts, being in the case of Rodrigues a science to be understood and mastered, a cipher for his deeper understanding of the Japanese mind, and for Moraes a drama, opera, or theater in which he is bodily transmuted to the enchanting and enchanted land of his aesthetic ideal.

Would Wenceslau de Moraes have written differently, or lived differently in Japan, had he been able to read the essays on Japan by João Rodrigues? Did Rodrigues ever imagine, writing about Japan in exile in Macau in the 1620s, that he was writing for twentieth-century Portuguese, who would read him long after they had read Moraes? In our comparison of the two descriptions of the tea ceremony, it is as if the original text both supersedes and corroborates its copy.

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