

TITLE: **Japanese Ceremonial Tea Set (Chabako)**

ARTIST: **Unknown**

DATE: **2004**

MEDIUM: **Bamboo, Wood, and Porcelain**

ACCESSION #: - 88.1.13(Tea Powder Container)

- 88.1.34 (Tea Bowl)

- 88.1.45d-e (Bamboo Whisk with Cover)

Additional Work by Artist in Collection:

Yes No Unknown X



History

Tea was first cultivated in Japan during the Chinese Tang Dynasty (c.618) when seeds were brought to Japan and traded by the Chinese. About 100 years later texts were written which reference early Japanese tea ceremonies. Roots for these ceremonies can be traced back to early Chinese Buddhism. Monks would meditate and perform tea rituals. By the 12th century tea was very popular in Japan and people performed tea ceremonies every day.

Object Description

This tea set consists of a porcelain tea bowl with a wooden stir stick, a wooden tea powder container, and a bamboo whisk with a wooden cover. The tea bowl has a glossy finish with several cracks throughout showing its previous use and wear. The decorative imagery on the bowl includes a branch from which extend smaller branches sporting yellow flowers with small reddish-brown centers. All of these items are placed in a wooden box known as a *Chabako*, which was used to easily transport the tea set.



This set features the pieces necessary to prepare and serve tea for a Japanese Tea Ceremony, including a wooden box to transport the pieces.

Tea Ceremony

The Japanese tea ceremony is most commonly performed using "matcha" which is a fine powdered green tea. In an informal tea ceremony, known as Chakai, people share a thin tea over a light meal with not much preparation. A Chaji tea ceremony is much more formal and can last several hours. It will include a full course meal with desserts and several different types of thin and thick tea. Chaji will usually start with a cup of warm water or a very light tea for all the guests. Once everyone arrives guests will go to another room and wash their hands and then continue to the tea house. Guests will remove their shoes and sit on cushions on the floor with their legs folded. After some talking they will be served a meal consisting of several courses as well as sake and some desserts made from bean paste and fruits. After the meal guests will leave this tea room as it is being prepared for the tea portion of the night. Once ready guests wash their hands and return. A thicker tea will now be served. As the host hands the bowl of tea to the first guest they both bow to each other as a sign of respect. After they take a sip the bowl edge will be wiped and handed to the next guest. Both guests will bow to each other as they pass the bowl and this will continue until all guests have taken a sip. Part of this phase of the ceremony is admiring the bowl and its decoration. Once this is done guests can talk more casually. Soon a thin tea will be served to everyone. Each guest will have an individual bowl. After conversations come to a close the ceremony is now over.

References

- The Japanese Way of Tea: From Its Origins in China to Sen Rikyu

<https://www.questia.com/read/95933716/the-japanese-way-of-tea-from-its-origins-in-china>

- Flower Meaning

<http://www.flowermeaning.com/japanese-flower-meanings/>

Lesson Plan K-5

Make Your Own Tea Cup

Session Activity: Tea Ceremonies have existed since about the 7th century. They were used to achieve a sense of meditation and bring people together in a social setting. Students will hand-build ceramic teacups and paint them using traditional Japanese symbolism.

Materials: Clay, access to a kiln, food and drink safe ceramic glazes or acrylic paint (if glaze is not available be sure to note that acrylic paint is toxic so cups will not be useable), paintbrushes.

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about the process of handcrafting ceramic teacups.
2. Students will learn about Japanese symbolism and its meaning.

Procedures: Students will hand-build their own teacups. After the cups are fired, students will use glaze or acrylic paint to add designs using Japanese symbolism like cranes, sakura, or lotus. Remind students, if using acrylic paint they will not be able to eat or drink from their teacups. If using paint, when completely dry, students can apply gloss to finish their cups and protect the paint.



Next Generation Sunshine Standards (K-5)

Big Idea VA.K-5.S.1

Skills, Techniques, and Processes

Enduring Understanding 1: The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating interpreting, and responding to art.

VA.K-5.S.1.2: Use diverse resources to inspire expression and achieve varied results.

Next Generation Sunshine Standards (6-12)

Big Idea VA.6-12.S.1

Skills, Techniques, and Processes

Enduring Understanding 1: The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating interpreting, and responding to art.

VA.6-12.S.1.3: Interpret and reflect on cultural and historical events to create art.

Lesson Plan for Grades 6-12

Make Your Own Tea Set

Session Activity: Students will make a number of tea set pieces using ceramics. This set should include the tea cup, a stir tool, and a box to hold the pieces. Sets like these are known as *Chabaka*. Then students will paint and decorate the pieces using traditional Japanese symbolism. A member of the Japanese community should visit the class to explain the culture of Japanese tea ceremonies.

Materials: Clay, access to a kiln, food and drink safe ceramic glazes or acrylic paint if glaze is not available (be sure to note that acrylic paint is toxic so cups will not be useable), paintbrushes.

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about the process of crafting ceramic tea cups as well as the other pieces that would be found in a basic Japanese Tea Set (*Chabaka*).
2. Students will learn about Japanese symbolism and the way it relates to traditional tea ceremony culture.

Procedures: Invite a member of the Japanese community to explain the tea ceremony process and give some background. Students will each hand-build a teacup, a stir tool and a box to fit these parts. All pieces will then be fired and glazed. Cups and boxes should be decorated with traditional Japanese symbolism.

Examples of Japanese Symbolism with Meanings

- ✧ **Crane** – Represents longevity and good fortune.
- ✧ **Lotus** – Represents living your life to the fullest.
- ✧ **Sakura** – Japanese for Cherry blossoms, represents the beauty and fragility of life.
- ✧ **Daruma** – Symbol of achieving goals.
- ✧ **Sun** – According to myth, Japanese people were known as the "Children of the Sun."
- ✧ **Folding Fan** – Shows status. Also symbolizes the journey of life.
- ✧ **Butterfly** – Symbol of transformation.

Resources:

- Japanese Motifs - <https://nalatanalata.com/journal/motifs-in-japanese-design/>
- Making a Japanese Style Teabowl - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4gs9lCmMQ8>