

## **Furuta Oribe, Feudal Lord and Tea Master** - The Development of Chanoyu after Rikyû -

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### **Abstract**

In the second half of the sixteenth century, a commoner named Sen-no-Rikyû rose to the position of foremost tea master to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, ruler of Japan. In 1591, Rikyû was forced to commit ritual suicide and although until that time all of Hideyoshi's tea masters had been commoners, Rikyû's place as tea master of the realm was taken by Furuta Oribe, a feudal lord. Oribe would later become tea master to the second Tokugawa shogun Hidetada, and was succeeded by another feudal lord, Kobori Enshû.

This paper will discuss what social and political changes caused this swift from commoner to warrior class tea master and will explain what role Oribe played in the development of the tea ceremony, then known as chanoyu, for the warrior class.

Keywords: Furuta Oribe, chanoyu, tea ceremony, Toyotomi Hideyoshi

### **1 Introduction: The Development of Chanoyu after Rikyû**

In the second half of the sixteenth century, Sen-no-Rikyû (千利休, 1522-1591), a commoner, rose to the position of the foremost tea master and one of the most trusted advisors of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, ruler of Japan.

Hideyoshi had a great interest in the tea ceremony, or '*chanoyu*' (茶湯) as it was then called. According to the *Yamanoue Sôjiki* (山上宗二記), a record written by one of Rikyû's foremost students, Yamanoue Sôji (山上宗二, 1544-1590), Hideyoshi employed no fewer than eight tea masters: Tanaka Sôeki (田中宗易), Imai Sôkyû (今井宗久, 1520-1593), Tsuda Sôgyû (津田宗及, ?-1591), Jû Sôho (重宗甫, ?-?), Sumiyoshiya (Yamaoka) Sômu (住吉屋・山岡宗無, 1534-1612<sup>1</sup>), Mozuya Sôan (万代

屋宗安, ?-1594), Tanaka Jôan (田中紹安, 1546-1607) and Yamanoue Sôji himself<sup>2</sup>.

‘Tanaka Sôeki’ is the name by which Rikyû was known among his contemporaries and Tanaka Jôan is Rikyû’s eldest son from his first wife. Jôan is better known as Sen Dôan (千道安), the name he adopted later.

All of the above-mentioned tea masters were commoners and members of the upper-tier merchant class of Sakai, a wealthy and powerful city in the vicinity of Osaka. Sakai was not only Japan’s richest trade city at the time, but it was also the center for the production of and trade in firearms. As a part of his strategy to strengthen his control over the country, Oda Nobunaga had sought rapprochement with the city and had employed a number of its most influential merchants as his tea masters. Hideyoshi had continued this policy<sup>3</sup>.

With the backing of Hideyoshi, Rikyû became the most influential tea master of his time and played an important role in the further popularization of chanoyu. However, in 1591, Rikyû was forced to commit ritual suicide or *seppuku* (切腹) by his patron. After Rikyû’s untimely death, it was not one of the remaining seven commoners that served Hideyoshi as tea masters succeeding Rikyû, but Furuta Oribe (古田織部, 1544-1615)<sup>4</sup>, a feudal lord and student of Rikyû.

This paper will discuss the position of Furuta Oribe as feudal lord and tea master, explaining what socio-political changes caused the shift from commoner to warrior-class tea master. It will also discuss what role Oribe played in the development of chanoyu at the beginning of the Edo period (1603-1868)<sup>5</sup> and in particular what role he played in the development of a form of chanoyu for the warrior class.

## 2 Furuta Oribe and the Rikyû Shichitetsu

As mentioned, in 1591 Rikyû was ordered to commit *seppuku*. What offense Rikyû had committed to receive the wrath of Hideyoshi remains unclear. There are different theories concerning this matter, however these are not part of the focus of this paper and will therefore not be discussed here.

Hideyoshi employed seven other tea masters alongside Rikyû but it was Furuta Oribe, a feudal lord and student of Rikyû, who followed in his mentor’s footsteps and became the leading tea master in the country.

Oribe was the son of Furuta Shigesada (古田重定, ?-1598) and together with his father first served Oda Nobunaga. Because of the important role Nobunaga gave to chanoyu in his political strategy, also known as *ochanoyu-goseidô* (御茶湯御政道, i.e. ‘the way of tea and politics’), most of his vassals practiced it and it seems therefore

likely that Oribe did too. However, until Oribe reached his forties he does not appear in any entry of the records of the tea gatherings compiled by his contemporaries and from this it may be concluded that he did not have much of a personal interest in it.

In 1582, the Honnô-ji incident (本能寺の変) occurred, in which Nobunaga was attacked at the Honnô-ji temple in Kyoto by his trusted vassal Akechi Mitsuhide (明智光秀, 1528-1582), and committed *seppuku*. After Nobunaga's death, his vassal Hideyoshi defeated Mitsuhide and established himself as the new leader of the country. Many of Nobunaga's former vassals became vassals of Hideyoshi and Furuta Oribe was one of them.

Although, as will be discussed later, the Tokugawa seem to have appreciated Oribe's skills as a tea master more than his skills as a warrior, his services under Hideyoshi were such that in 1585, he was appointed *daimyô* or feudal lord of Yamashiro-Nishioka (山城西岡), a domain of 35,000 *koku*<sup>6</sup> in the south of present Kyoto prefecture. At the same time he was also promoted to the lower fifth court rank (従五位下) and received an honorary position known as Oribe-no-shi (織部司)<sup>7</sup>. It is since this time that Oribe, who whose birth name was Furuta Shigenori (古田重然), became known as Furuta Oribe. When Hideyoshi passed away in 1598, Oribe retired and left control over his domain to his heir Shigehiro (重広, ?-1615).

However, in 1600 Oribe came out of retirement to support the Tokugawa and their allies in the battle of Sekigahara and was rewarded for his services with an appointment to the position of *daimyô* with an income of 10,000 *koku*. It seems that Oribe's support of the Tokugawa in the battle that would decide the fate of both the Toyotomi and Tokugawa clan was largely recognized and this raises questions concerning the image of Oribe as lacking in martial skills.

As mentioned, Oribe did not seem to have had much interest in chanoyu when he was younger, but this changed after he came into the service of Hideyoshi. Oribe became a student of Rikyû, who like him had become a vassal of Hideyoshi after first serving Nobunaga. From this time onward, Oribe appears in various tea records and he would later become known as one of the seven foremost students of Rikyû, also known as the '*Rikyû-Shichitetsu*' (利休七哲).

This list of the Rikyû-Shichitetsu or just 'Shichitetsu' was not put together by Rikyû himself, but is an invention of later ages and can therefore be regarded as arbitrary. However, the fact that Oribe's name is on this list does show the recognition he received from his contemporaries. There are a number of different theories of who does and does not belong within the Shichitetsu. Some versions also include Rikyû's

son Sen Dôan and Oda Nagamasu Uraku (織田長益・有楽, 1547-1622), a younger brother of Nobunaga<sup>8</sup>.

The most widely recognized version of the list is the one that appears in the *Kôshingegaki* (江岑夏書), written by Rikyû's great-grandson Sen Kôshin Sôsa (千江岑宗左, 1613-1672) in 1633. Sôsa was the tea master of the Kishû Tokugawa family (紀州徳川) and the *Kôshingegaki* contains the official lineage of the Sen family as it was presented to the Tokugawa. It also contains many entries concerning Sôsa's father, Sen Sôtan (千宗旦, 1578-1658), and his great-grandfather Rikyû. As there are very few reliable contemporary sources concerning Rikyû, this manuscript is often used for research into the development of chanoyu. It is, however, not a contemporary source, and although it seems to a great extent reliable, it should be kept in mind that it was written over forty years after Rikyû's death.

Concerning the seven tea masters belonging to the Shichitetsu the entry in the *Kôshingegaki* gives the following seven names<sup>9</sup>:

1. Gamô Ujisato (蒲生氏郷, 1556-1595)
2. Takayama Ukon (高山右近, 1552-1615)
3. Hosokawa Sansai (細川三斎, 1563-1646)
4. Shibayama Kanmotsu (芝山監物, ?-?)
5. Seta Kamon (瀬田掃部, ?-1595)
6. Makimura Toshisada (牧村利貞, 1546-1593)
7. Furuta Oribe

It is not exactly clear on what criteria this list was based. A famous student like the aforementioned Yamanoue Sôji is for instance not included in it even though various sources show that he was one of Rikyû's foremost students and it seems to ignore the fact that he was one of Hideyoshi's eight tea masters.

What all the Shichitetsu do have in common however, is the fact that they were feudal lords. Rikyû had a great number of students among the feudal lords of the country and as all of the commoners among his students are omitted, this seems to be a list of the foremost of his students among them.

Although this list is in fact not a list of all of Rikyû's students, the fact that Oribe is included in the Shichitetsu together with other acknowledged tea practitioners like Gamô Ujisato, Shibayama Kanmotsu and Hosokawa Sansai, does show the recognition he received for his achievements in the world of chanoyu.

Until the time of the reign of Hideyoshi, the vast majority of the leading tea masters in the country had been commoners. To explain the reason why in this time period a

feudal lord became tea master to the Toyotomi and later the Tokugawa family, it is necessary to take a closer look at the socio-political developments in Japan at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century.



Furuta Oribe<sup>10</sup>

### 3 Chanoyu and the Development of Class Society

As mentioned above, Oribe was the first feudal lord to become tea master to Toyotomi Hideyoshi. At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Hideyoshi took a number of measures that would lead to the development of a social system that was based on a strict division of social classes. In 1588, peasants were prohibited from possessing weapons and were forced to give up the weapons they already held, a measure known as the *katana-gari* (刀狩) or ‘sword-hunt’. This was a measure to both control the group of people that had weapons and could form a large force of potential enemies, and at the same time also to help establish a stable group of farmers. This measure was extremely important to secure a steady supply of food, which was in turn necessary to stabilize society.

In 1591, the year Rikyû died, Hideyoshi promulgated the ‘Separation Edict’ (身分統制令), which prohibited warriors from becoming merchants, and peasants from abandoning their fields and engaging in business or craftsmanship.

During the Sengoku-period (戦国時代, c.1467 - c.1603), a period in Japanese history that was marked by near-constant warfare and political intrigue, many vassals of lower ranks overthrew their lords to become feudal lords in their own right, a practice known as *gekokuujô* (下剋上). The Toyotomi government tried to prevent this kind of practice and the promulgation of the Separation Edict was one way in which they tried to stabilize society by limiting social movement, the same kind of social movement that had enabled Hideyoshi himself to rise to the position of *kanpaku* (関白), and become the most powerful man in the country.

Under Hideyoshi’s rule, a beginning was made with the division of society into four

classes: those of the warriors (samurai), farmers, artisans and merchants. This system was gradually developed further in the first decades of the Edo-period and was completed under third Tokugawa shogun Iemitsu (徳川家光, 1604-1651).

This division of society naturally also influenced the world of chanoyu and Oribe made it an essential part of his chanoyu etiquette. However, commoners were not deliberately excluded from its practice; rather, what did occur is an institutionalization of differences in the treatment of participants of the ceremony depending on their social status. A form of etiquette based on social status was in itself not a new development in chanoyu nor in fact a diversion from Rikyû's ways. The Yamanou Sôjiki-record is one of the sources that clearly show that the etiquette of chanoyu already distinguished between people of different social status even if they participated in the same gatherings. It has, for instance, a number of entries that explain how nobleman or *kijin* (貴人) should be treated when they took part in a tea gathering, or how one should behave when invited by someone of such high status<sup>11</sup>.

The Yamanoue Sôjiki-record also explains that within ten years of the start of Hideyoshi's reign (1585-1591), 'the usage of three tatami and two-and-a-half tatami rooms without regard to social status or rank' had become common<sup>12</sup>. In other words, within the practice of chanoyu it seems that these social difference had faded. However, at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the division of society into social classes became stronger because of the measures that were taken by Hideyoshi, and it can be argued that Oribe on the one hand, upheld the etiquettes of chanoyu as they had existed all along and on the other, adjusted them so that they better suited the changing social circumstances at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century.

Commoners such as Sen Sôsa did continue to instruct the warrior class, but they no longer held the high social status that Rikyû and the other famous tea masters of his time had enjoyed.

Because of the important role that chanoyu had been given by Nobunaga and later his successor Hideyoshi, chanoyu had become an inextricable part of the etiquette of the warrior class elites. The fact that a feudal lord like Oribe became the foremost tea master in the country can therefore be seen as a logical consequence of the above described socio-political developments that made it more complicated for a commoner to interact with members of the warrior class even at a semi-private social level.

There is also an often quoted theory that Toyotomi Hideyoshi requested Oribe to develop a form of chanoyu that better suited the status and etiquette of the warrior

class elite than that practiced by Rikyû. This theory is based on Kuwata Tadachiku's 1979 research of the *Furuta-kafu* (古田家譜)<sup>13</sup>, the family record of a branch of the Furuta family that served as house elders of the Oka domain in present Ōita. Part of the *Furuta-kafu* describes the history of the head branch of the family, which became extinct when Oribe and his family were forced to commit seppuku and it is this part that was published and explained by Kuwata.

However, a recent study of the manuscript in possession of the Taketa Municipal Historical Museum (Taketa-city, Ōita prefecture) by Miyashita Harumasa of the Furuta Oribe Museum, has shown that the text doesn't read 'Hideyoshi' but 'Hidetada', indicating that Kuwata somehow misread this. 'Hidetada' in this source points at second Tokugawa shogun Hidetada, and the *Furuta-kafu* does therefore not link Oribe's development of chanoyu to Hideyoshi but instead to Hidetada, thirteen years later than was argued by Kuwata.

Hidetada was responsible for the promulgation of various edicts that strengthened the division of society into four classes that was started by Hideyoshi, including the 1615 'Laws for the Military Houses' (武家諸法度), governing the position of the warrior class and 'Laws for the Imperial Court and Court Nobles' (禁中並公家諸法度), governing the responsibilities of the Imperial court and the court nobles. A request by Hidetada to develop a form of chanoyu for the warrior class would therefore be in accordance with the role he played in the social-political developments that established the class society of the Edo period. However, there is no additional evidence that supports this claim by this branch family of the Furuta. Furthermore, although the *Furuta-kafu* is one of the few remaining sources related to Oribe, the fact that it was not produced by Oribe or another member of the main branch of the Furuta makes it difficult to accept it as a primary source for Hidetada's involvement in the development of chanoyu.

Although the entry in the *Furuta-kafu* may not be sufficient proof that Oribe was actually requested by Hidetada to develop a new form of chanoyu, it does show that his relatives considered the changes and adjustments Oribe made in the practices of chanoyu (as discussed later) to be intentional. The record strongly indicates that Oribe tried to develop a new form of chanoyu etiquette, either on Hidetada's request or on his own initiative, that distinguished itself from the one that was practiced by commoners like Rikyû.

#### 4 The Decline of Sakai as the Center of Chanoyu Practice

Next to socio-political developments, another factor that strongly influenced the position of commoners in chanoyu is directly related to the declining influence of Sakai city, home of most of the commoner tea masters. After having brought most of Honshu and Shikoku under his control, Hideyoshi started a military campaign to subjugate Kyushu. In July 1586, he moved into Kyushu and by April 1587, Hideyoshi had brought all the daimyô of the island under his control.

The city of Sakai was no use to him in this campaign and instead he changed his focus to another trade city, Hakata in northern Kyushu, which was an important center for trade with Asia. It is no coincidence that from around this time, Kamiya Sôtan (神屋宗湛, 1551-1635), a tea master and merchant from Hakata, begins appearing regularly in various sources as a guest at Hideyoshi's tea gatherings. With the support of Hideyoshi, Sôtan became the most influential merchant of Hakata and in return he financially supported Hideyoshi during his Kyushu Campaign.

Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea (1592-1598) were another reason why Hideyoshi kept a close relationship with Hakata: because of its close location to the Korean peninsula and its connections with Korean merchants, Hakata was of great interest to him.

Rikyû was forced to commit seppuku in 1591 and shortly after that the two other great tea masters of Sakai, Tsuda Sôgyû (1591) and Imai Sôkyû (1593) also passed away. Their deaths effectively ended Sakai's special relationship with Hideyoshi and its role of importance in the world of chanoyu. Sôtan would continue to play a role of some importance, but he never reached the fame and influence of Rikyû and the other masters of Sakai.

#### 5 The Image of Oribe as Tea Master

As the aforementioned list of the Rikyû's Shichitetsu shows, there were a number of feudal lords among Rikyû's students whose abilities as tea masters were widely recognized. That Oribe had a closer relationship to Rikyû than most other feudal lords is clear from a great number of sources, the most famous one being the letter Rikyû sent to Matsui Hiroyuki (松井康之, 1550 - 1612), house elder of Hosokawa Sansai, in 1591. In this letter, Rikyû describes his surprise to the fact that Sansai and Oribe had come to see him off when he was placed under house arrest in Sakai two weeks before he was forced to commit seppuku<sup>14</sup>. Both Sansai and Oribe are included in the list of the Shichitetsu. Interestingly, however, the list of the Shichitetsu in the Kôshingegaki



is followed by a remark by Sôsa saying, ‘Oribe has no talent for chanoyu’<sup>15</sup>. This is an interesting remark as it is awkward, as it seems quite unlikely considering the large following of students Rikyû had among the feudal lords of the country that Oribe would have been named to this list if he really did not have any talent for chanoyu at all. It would have been sufficient to have made a list of the ‘six students’ of Rikyû.

In addition to Oribe’s inclusion in Sôsa’s list of the Shichitetsu, there are a number of other sources that support Oribe’s status as a tea master. The most important source is arguably Matsuya Hisashige (松屋久重, 1567 - 1652), who was the last of three generations of the Matsuya family that contributed to the famous *Matsuya-kaiki* (松屋会記) tea record. Part of his work was reprinted in 1926 by Matsuyama Ginshô-an as *Sadô-shi-so-densho* (茶道四祖伝書) or ‘Written Records of the Four Founders of the Way of Tea’ and in it Hisashige includes Oribe in his list of four founders of tea, together with Rikyû, Hosokawa Sansai, and Kobori Enshû<sup>16</sup>. The fact that a contemporary of Oribe, who was the co-writer and compiler of one of the most important tea records in Japanese history, regarded Oribe as one of the founders of the way of tea is clear evidence of the recognition he received from his contemporaries.

Oribe is also mentioned in the *Tamon’in-nikki* (多聞院日記), a highly reliable historical record that was written by the monks of the Kofuku-ji (興福寺) temple in Nara. An entry from 1599 mentions a visit by expert tea master Oribe from Fushimi, again supporting that Oribe’s position as a tea master had been generally accepted<sup>17</sup>. In addition to being referred to as a *meijin* (名人) or ‘expert’, it is important to notice that the monks chose to call him a tea master instead of using the titles he held as a feudal lord.

Another source that proves Oribe’s status as a tea master, albeit in a somewhat negative context, is the *Sawashigetsu-shû* (茶話指月集)<sup>18</sup>. The *Sawashigetsu-shû* consists of a collection of the teachings of Rikyû’s grandson Sôtan that were written down by his student Fujimura Yôken (藤村庸軒, 1636 - 1728). In one of its entries, Rikyû’s eldest son Dôan complains about the fact that although Oribe is widely known in the world as a tea master or tea expert, the way in which he arranges the ash in the brazier he uses is poor. This entry clearly shows that Dôan was aware of Oribe’s reputation as a tea master, although Oribe’s practices may not have been to his own liking.

Oribe also appears in a large number of entries concerning tea gatherings. In 1607, he joined Oda Uraku (included among the Shichitetsu on some versions of the list) to perform a tea ceremony at Osaka castle for Toyotomi Hideyori (豊臣秀頼, 1593 -

1615), Hideyoshi's successor as head of the Toyotomi family. In 1610, he was invited to Edo castle by Tokugawa Hidetada. At this occasion, Oribe not only performed tea for Hidetada, but on his way to see the shogun first performed a ceremony for retired shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu in Shizuoka before proceeding to Edo. It is actually from that time on that Oribe was regarded as the *de facto* tea master of the Tokugawa shogunate, although no official position as such existed.

Kumakura Isao explains that although Tokugawa Ieyasu did not show a great interest in chanoyu at any time, he did show a great liking for Oribe<sup>19</sup>. As Kumakura points out, the *Tokugawa Jikki* (徳川実記) records of the Tokugawa family state that although Oribe had made little name for himself as a warrior, he had in the field of chanoyu<sup>20</sup>, which is a sharp contrast to the remarks made by Sen Sôsa.

The above mentioned sources refute Sôsa's critical remark concerning Oribe's abilities as a tea master and there are a number of other sources, like the aforementioned Matsuya-kaiki record, that show Oribe's intensive involvement in the world of chanoyu. Sôsa's remark criticizing Oribe in the Kôshingegaki is in fact the only source that questions Oribe's abilities as a tea master, although admittedly the entry concerning Dôan in the Sawashigetsu-shû is also rather critical of the tea gathering Dôan took part in.

It seems likely that both Dôan and Sôsa disagreed with the way in which Oribe had moved away from the way of tea as originally practiced by their ancestor Rikyû, and this might have caused them to be quite critical of Oribe. However, there is a difference between disagreeing with Oribe's tea practice and stating that he has 'no talent for chanoyu'. It is clear that Oribe's talent was widely recognized by his contemporaries and it is plausible that this criticism of Oribe's talent for chanoyu stemmed from Sôsa's opposition to the changing social and political conditions that directly influenced the Sen family's social status and its position as tea masters of the higher elite of the warrior class. Sôsa wrote the Kôshingegaki at the request of Tokugawa Yorinobu (徳川頼宣, 1602-1671), head of the Kishû Tokugawa family that employed him as their head tea master. Yorinobu had requested an explanation of the lineage of the Sen (Tanaka) family and Sôsa may have felt the need to appeal to the status of the family as the 'true' heirs to Rikyû's chanoyu in order to protect the Sen family's position as tea masters to this important branch of the Tokugawa family.

Although the Sen family may be regarded as the legal heirs to the legacy of its ancestor Rikyû, Rikyû had a great number of students and all of them could claim to be heirs to his chanoyu practice. The fact that the social status of the Sen family as

commoners in the changing socio-political circumstances prevented them from taking his place as the tea masters of the realm, may have been a reason for Sôsa to make such critical comments about someone who was acknowledged as the foremost tea master of the country and who was respected to such an extent that Sôsa could not omit him from the list of the Shichitetsu he published in his own record.

Sôsa's infamous remark is in fact the only source that criticizes Oribe's qualities as a tea master and seems to have had a disproportionately strong influence on Oribe's image.

## **6 The Image of Oribe as Warrior**

In the same way that the remark by Sôsa negatively influenced the image of Oribe as a tea master, so has the aforementioned entry in the Tokugawa Jikki, stating that Oribe had made little name for himself as a warrior, influenced his image as a warrior.

It seems strange however, that although Oribe joined many of the battles and sieges that were fought by both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, somehow survived all of them, and was subsequently appointed by Hideyoshi to the rank of daimyô for his achievements, his skills as a warrior are questioned.

Oribe became the foremost tea master of Japan and that he achieved more fame as a tea master than as a warrior is clear. However, his military achievements were reason enough for Hideyoshi to appoint him daimyô, as is also remarked by Kuwata Tadachika<sup>21</sup> and to survive the turmoil of the Sengoku period. Furthermore, his support of the Tokugawa at Sekigahara was clearly such that the Tokugawa appointed the then-retired Oribe again to a specially created new position of daimyô.

However, in spite of the close relationship Oribe seems to have had with the Tokugawa, he was accused of high treason during the battles at Osaka in the summer of 1615 (大阪夏の陣). It remains unclear whether Oribe indeed betrayed the Tokugawa, but there is no evidence that he appealed the verdict. Oribe and his entire family were forced to commit seppuku.

A misinterpretation of Oribe's dishonorable deed and the fact that as tea master of the realm he was obviously more famous as a tea master than as warrior, may be blamed for the fact that such a questionable image of him as a warrior remains.

## **7 Oribe's Tea Ceremony and Utensils**

In the preceding sections, Oribe's rise to the position of leading tea master of the country was explained against the background of the socio-political developments at

the end of the 16<sup>th</sup>, and beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the following sections, the contents of Oribe's chanoyu will be discussed.

To determine to what extent Oribe's chanoyu differed from that of his contemporaries, and if it was indeed specially designed for the needs of the warrior class as was stated in the Furuta-kafu, the logical thing to do would be to perform a comparative research of different sources that describe the performance and etiquette of chanoyu as it was practiced by Oribe and his contemporaries. However, at the end of the sixteenth century, chanoyu was taught through oral tradition and not through written instructions. A good example of this is the aforementioned Yamanoue Sôjiki-record, which describes the history of chanoyu and some of its philosophical background, while being particularly detailed regarding the utensils that were used for the ceremony. It does not, however, give any detailed information concerning the performance of the ceremony, only stating that it should be taught through oral tradition<sup>22</sup>. Oribe's chanoyu is no exception and there are no sources that describe its performance.

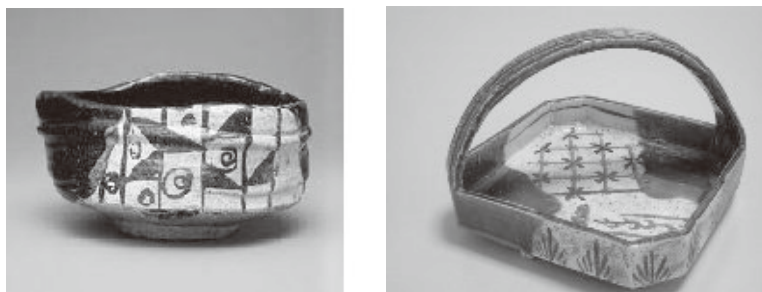
Hirota Yoshitaka of Kobe University's Graduate School has conducted research comparing the differences between the ceremonies of 44 tea traditions that still exist today, including that of Oribe<sup>23</sup>. Hirota's research gives an interesting insight into the differences that exist between tea ceremony schools at present and the possible background of these differences. However, as it does not use any historical sources it cannot be used to determine to what extent the ceremonies performed by these schools represent chanoyu as it was performed at the end of the 16th century. Another problem with this research is that many of the present schools actually developed during the Edo period, after Oribe passed away. For instance, the three branches of the Senke family known as Ura-senke (裏千家), Omote-senke (表千家) and Mushanokoji-senke (武者小路千家) that are the main schools of tea today, were established in the 1630's.

Although there are no sources that describe Oribe's performance of the tea ceremony, the entries concerning Oribe in the Sôtan-nikki and other records of tea gatherings do contain some remarks about the utensils he used and Oribe seems to have had a great interest in their form, shape and color. The earthenware of his own design, also known as *oribe-yaki*, is known for its extravagant shapes and colorful designs and these designs were so extremely different from what his contemporaries used that in the Sôtan-nikki they are specifically called *he-ukemono* (へウクモノ) meaning 'playful' or 'funny'<sup>24</sup>.

As Oribe's contemporaries did not hesitate to comment on the utensils he presented

but had nothing to remark concerning the ceremonies themselves, it seems safe to assume that his performance of the ceremony was not particularly different from that of his contemporaries, at least not in a way that they found ‘playful’ or ‘funny’ enough to discuss in their records.

Oribe’s design did become very popular in his time as explained by Yabe Yoshiaki<sup>25</sup> and others, and is still produced today. It did not however replace already existing forms of pottery, thereby creating a new style of utensils especially for the warrior class, but was used along the more traditional forms and pottery by members of the warrior class, as well as commoners.



examples of Oribe-yaki

Although there are no sources that concern the performance of the chanoyu ceremony, there are sources that show that there were two clear differences between the way Oribe and Rikyû made tea for their guests. The first can be found in the *Kôshingegaki* in which Sôsa states that Oribe preferred to make his *koicha* (濃茶) or ‘thick tea’, thicker than Rikyû did<sup>26</sup>. This is probably related to the fact that at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it had become fashion to have *usucha* (薄茶) or ‘thin tea’ after *koicha*. This meant that guests did not have to leave with the full and bitter taste of *koicha* still in their mouths, but softened this taste with *usucha*<sup>27</sup>. Hence, *koicha* could be made thicker and tastier, the way it is still made at present.

It is since this time that the custom of drinking *usucha* after *koicha* became an integral part of the chanoyu gathering, but this is not a development of Oribe’s own design. It rather seems to have been the fashion of the day and there are no sources available that prove that this development can be attributed to Oribe.

The same can be said about another difference between the ceremony of Rikyû and Oribe that has become common practice in the chanoyu ceremony. When performing the *koicha* ceremony, Rikyû would prepare one bowl of *koicha* for every guest separately, Oribe on the other hand would only prepare one bowl of *koicha* to be

shared by all of his three guests<sup>28</sup>. This way of serving *koicha* also seems to have been the fashion at that time and there is no proof that this development can be attributed to Oribe.

Oribe's tea ceremony was in some ways different to that of his master Rikyû but he seems to have followed the conventions of his time and there is no proof that he personally initiated the changes that occurred. On the contrary, the utensils he used were of a radically different design than those of his contemporaries. There is, however, no indication in any source that this design was related to the development of a form of *chanoyu* for the warrior class, but rather seems to have stemmed from Oribe's own creative vision. His utensil designs remained as a separate 'Oribe-style' and as such had an abiding influence on *chanoyu*, but they did not replace the designs that were fashionable before his time nor did they become part of a specific form of *chanoyu* for the warrior class.

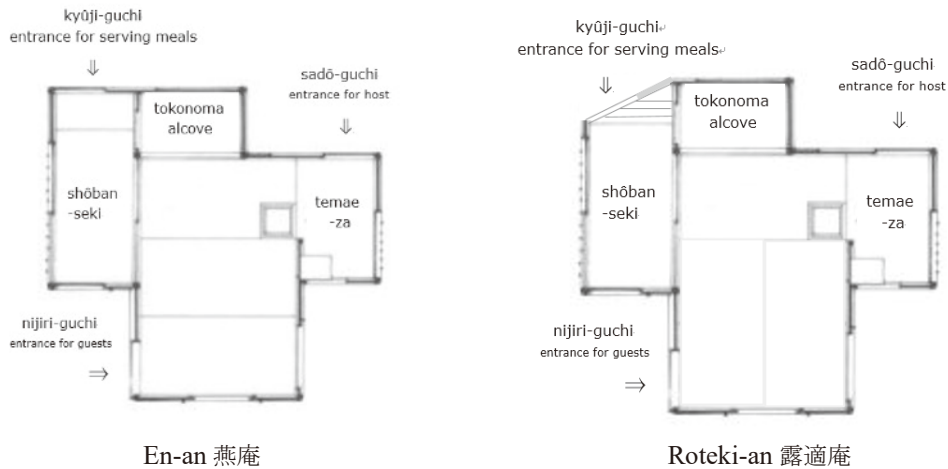
## 8 Oribe's Tea Rooms

Next to the ceremony and the utensils that are used during the ceremony, the most distinctive feature of the *chanoyu* is the usage of *chashitsu* (茶室), rooms specially designed for the purpose of holding a *chanoyu* gathering. A comparison of the tea rooms used by Oribe to those used by Rikyû and his contemporaries is complicated by a lack of contemporary sources concerning in particular Rikyû. However, the tea rooms designed and used by Oribe have a number of characteristic features, some of which were not found (or less so) in the tea rooms designed by Rikyû and his contemporaries.

Particularly noticeable differences can be found in the size of the rooms he designed, the way in which he used windows, the fact that he often added an extra space known as *shôban* (相伴) or *shoban-seki* (相伴席) and his usage of a room designed by him, known as *kusari-no-ma* (鎖の間). The following sections address each of these differences in turn.

### 8.1 Oribe's Tea Rooms: Size and *Shôban-seki*

Rikyû used all sorts of tea rooms, depending on the situation and the guests that were invited. He used the official *shoin* (書院) style rooms for ceremonies related to affairs of state and like his contemporaries seems to have had a liking for the four-and-a-half tatami room. However, after he became a vassal of Hideyoshi, he started experimenting with smaller tea rooms and he seems to have developed a taste for



small tea rooms of three tatami to one-tatami-daime<sup>29</sup>. A *daime* (台目) is a tatami of 3/4 tatami (approximately 135 cm x 90 cm), that was used as *temae-za* (点前座), the tatami on which the host sits during the gathering. The daime-tatami is the smallest possible space in which to prepare tea; in contrast, a one-tatami space is regarded as the smallest size tatami for guests to sit on in the case of a visit of one or two guests.

Oribe seems to have preferred rooms of a larger size than were used by Rikyū, especially when entertaining guests of high social standing, so-called ‘kinin’ (貴人). This becomes particularly clear from an entry in the *Furuta-Oribe-tsukasadonomonsho* (古田織部正殿聞書), that literally states that when entertaining kinin, the smallest room to use was that of three-tatami-daime<sup>30</sup>. Miyashita Harumasa gives a list of 26 designs of tea rooms that were designed by Oribe and are included in works like *Ensōjūi* (遠宗拾遺), written by Kamiyanagi Hosai (上柳甫齋, 1591 - 1675), a student of Oribe’s successor Kobori Enshū<sup>31</sup>. Out of these 26 designs, 13 are of a three-tatami-daime room and none are smaller than two-tatami-daime.

His extensive usage of daime is another distinctive feature of Oribe’s tea room designs and out of the 26 designs presented by Miyashita, no fewer than 22 include one. Even though Oribe preferred to use larger rooms than his teacher Rikyū, he did not compromise the usage of the smallest possible tatami size as *temae-za*.

Oribe’s usage of the daime-tatami was in agreement with the teachings of his master Rikyū, but he invented another way to enlarge the tea room without actually enlarging the space that was used for the official gathering itself, by adding a so-called *shōban* or *shōban-seki*. This *shōban-seki* is a one-tatami space that can be closed off from the main space of the tea room with sliding doors, and is an addition to the tea



En-an tea room. The shōban-seki can be seen on the left.



En-an tea room seen from the shōban-seki

room that does not compromise its conventional floorplan. This shōban space was typically used by the servants of a feudal lord or kinin, so that they could accompany their lord without actually being present in the space of the tea room that was a part of the ceremony itself. Another function of the shōban space was to give the otherwise somewhat confined three-tatami-daime room a larger appearance when thought necessary, without actually changing the setting of the ceremony. Oribe only used the shōban space for rooms smaller than three-tatami-daime and seven out of the thirteen tea rooms he designed of three-tatami-daime and smaller, were equipped with a shōban-seki. The two rooms that appear in the pictures used for this section, En-an (燕庵) and Roteiki-an (露適庵) are both three-tatami-daime rooms with a shōban-seki<sup>32</sup>.

The addition of the shōban space may appear an insignificant innovation, however the fact that Oribe actually created space in the tea room for servants to accompany their master, thereby enlarging the room and the number of individuals present, can be seen as a radical separation from the way of chanoyu of his mentor and was at the same time a revolutionary development in the setting of the tea room. Even though Oribe enlarged the tea room considerably, he did not compromise the intimacy that was one of the key features of chanoyu. The shōban-seki was the most noticeable innovation that Oribe himself made to the tea room and that convincingly differed from the designs of the tea rooms of Rikyū and his contemporaries.

Murai Yasuhiko concludes that Oribe reintroduced the treatment of guests according to social status where Rikyū had tried to ignore social status within the tea room<sup>33</sup>. This innovation or invention by Oribe clearly had the needs of the upper-tier warrior class in mind. Rikyū experimented with the size of his tea rooms trying to achieve the ultimate environment for his chanoyu gathering and ignored the conventions concerning social status. Oribe on the other hand, was very much aware of the fact that at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century these



conventions had only become stronger. He lived in a world that was no longer that of ‘gekokujō’, but that of Tokugawa Hidetada who tried to establish a strict social hierarchy that would strengthen the Tokugawa’s control over the country.

It is important to recognize, however, that Oribe did not merely add space to the tea room to serve the needs of the kinin and their servants. Oribe himself did not seem to have liked spaces that were too confined, as can be concluded from the fact that there are no designs of his hand left of rooms smaller than two-tatami-daime and that two out of the four rooms that he designed of two-tatami-daime have a shōban-seki, even though that was a size Oribe did not usually use for kinin.

## 8.2 Oribe’s Tea Rooms: Windows

Another characteristic of Oribe’s tea rooms are the large number of windows he used and the various new designs of windows he applied. Tea rooms from before Rikyū’s time were usually relatively large rooms of four-and-a-half-tatami and typically had no windows, but used *shōji* paper sliding doors (障子) to bring in light from the outside. The rooms were therefore relatively bright. In Rikyū’s time, tea masters started designing smaller rooms, and experimented with the use of windows instead of sliding doors, making the room darker and more intimate.

Oribe, however, preferred to make his tea rooms brighter and he implemented a large number of windows. He regarded windows as an important part of the design or ‘landscape’ of the room, and felt that the usage of windows had a positive influence on the state of mind of the participants in the tea gathering<sup>34</sup>. He used windows in the roof of the room, known as *tsugi-age-mado* (次上げ窓), constructed windows in the walls of the *temae-za*, making it a stage for the performance of the ceremony, and even constructed a window in the wall of the *tokonoma* alcove, the so-called ‘*Oribe-mado*’ (織部窓), creating a natural, modest spotlight for the flowers and scroll that were displayed there.



view from the shōban-seki of En-an



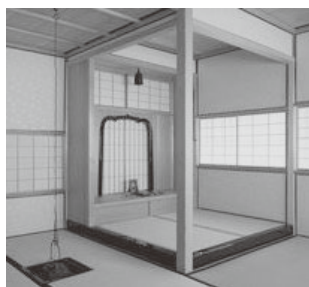
windows at the *temae-za* of Roteki-an

Oribe made use of the effects of light-fall by placing windows strategically around the tea room and as an overall effect made the room considerably lighter than was the case with the designs by Rikyû and his contemporaries. Oribe's tea room En-an for example has ten windows, including two windows in the *shôban-seki* and the window in the *tokonoma*. Tai-an (待庵), the only tea room still existing today that is directly linked to Rikyû, only has three.

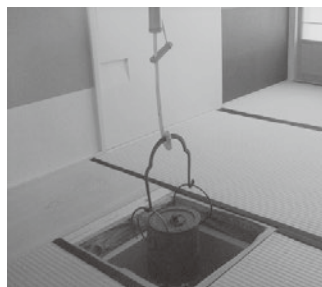
Oribe's student and successor, Enshû was clearly influenced by his mentor and further enlarged the number of windows, going as far as designing a room with thirteen windows.

### 8.3 Oribe's Tea Rooms: the *Kusari-no-ma*

The greatest difference between Oribe's *chanoyu* and that of Rikyû's was Oribe's usage of the *kusari-no-ma*. The *kusari-no-ma* was an official style room with a writing alcove known as *shoin* (書院), in which Oribe would prepare a *tsurigama* (釣釜), an iron kettle suspended on a chain, the whole year through. He used this room instead of the tea room itself to serve meals and display certain more elaborate artifacts than the ones that according to the ruling etiquettes could be presented in the 'simple' and 'rustic' rooms that were used for the tea ceremony.



example of a *kusari-no-ma*



example of a *tsurigama* kettle

Depending on the participants and the circumstances, guests would leave the tea room through the *kyûji-guchi* (給仕口), an exit that was also used for serving the meals that were part of the tea ceremony and would proceed to the *kusari-no-ma*, where the entertainment of the guests would continue. The use of this kind of room gained wide popularity among the members of the elite of the warrior class, not in the least because of the possibilities it opened to show more artifacts, and it became a characteristic feature of the *chanoyu* of the warrior class. There is, however, no evidence that Oribe created this room to develop a form of *chanoyu* for the warrior class. Oribe had a great fondness for the usage and display of rare and unusual utensils

and more than anything the creation of a room where these artifacts could be shown seems to have come from his artistic approach to chanoyu.

## 9 Conclusions

Rikyû, the foremost tea master of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, died at the end of the 16th century, a period in which Japan transitioned from a state of continuous warfare and upheaval created by the practice of gekokujô, to a rigidly hierarchical society in which social movement was discouraged and strict rules and etiquettes were enforced for all social classes, including the warrior class elite.

Because of the important role that chanoyu had been given by Nobunaga and later Hideyoshi, chanoyu had become an integral part of the etiquette of the elite of the warrior class. Most of the tea masters employed by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi had been commoners, but the socio-political developments that occurred at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century made it complicated for commoners and the elite warrior class to interact with each other, even at a semi-private social level. As a consequence, Rikyû was succeeded as tea master of the realm by Furuta Oribe, a feudal lord who had been one of Rikyû's foremost students.

Oribe, who had earned recognition as a warrior lord, being appointed to the position of daimyô by both Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, became widely accepted as Rikyû's successor, even though after his death he was harshly criticized by Rikyû's great-grandson Sôsa who accused him of having no talent for chanoyu.

Oribe's abilities as a warrior have also been questioned, but there seems to be no basis for questioning his achievements in this field nor in that of chanoyu. His position as feudal lord and his talent for chanoyu allowed him to become the foremost tea master of the Tokugawa shogunate and based on his own ideas concerning art and design, he created his own style of chanoyu enjoyment, different from that of his mentor Rikyû.

The record of the Furata family states that Oribe was requested by shogun Tokugawa Hidetata to create a form of chanoyu that was suitable for the etiquette of the warrior class. This part of the record is quoted in almost every work on Oribe, but there is very little evidence that he actually tried to do this.

The shôban-seki that Oribe designed fitted the needs of the upper-tier warrior class, and the kusari-no-ma room he designed was also appropriate for the entertainment of kijin. Consequently the usage of both spaces was quickly adopted by the members of the elite and with their design Oribe laid the basis for the development of a form of

chanoyu that was in particular enjoyed by the warrior class.

It is however, not clear if Oribe did this intentionally. Some of the rooms Oribe used the shōban-seki for were too small to welcome kijin and it clearly also functioned as a tool to adjust the atmosphere of the tea room for other purposes. The same can be said about the usage of the kusari-no-ma room. Although on one hand the comfort and structure of this style of room were appropriate to entertain kijin, it also seems to have satisfied Oribe's own artistic ideas concerning the display of artifacts.

Oribe implemented the rules that were created for the different social classes into his chanoyu, but there is no evidence that he intentionally designed a form of chanoyu especially for the elite of the warrior class. Commoners were not deliberately excluded from its practice and what rather occurred was an institutionalization of differences in the treatment of participants of the ceremony depending on their social status that followed the conventions of Oribe's time.

Oribe had a profound influence on the creation of new styles of pottery, today collectively known as Oribe-yaki and also strongly influenced the further development of the design of tea rooms. Oribe made use of the effects of light-fall by placing windows strategically around the tea-room and as an overall effect made the tea-room considerably brighter than was the case with the rooms designed by Rikyū and his contemporaries.

Oribe laid the basis for a new style of tea enjoyment that was continued by his student Kobori Enshū, and that would become particularly popular among the members of the elite of the warrior class but except for the records of a branch of his own family, there is no clear evidence that supports the theory that this was his explicit aim.

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- 1 There is some discussion concerning Sumiyoshiya's date of birth and his death, this paper follows the explanation of the Sadō-daijiten. Tsutsui H. (editor) (2010). Sadō-daijiten 茶道大辞典. Tankōsha 淡交社. Kyoto: p.616
  - 2 Kuwata T. 桑田忠親 (1971). Sadō-koten-zenshū, Yamanoue-Sōji-ki 茶道古典全集, 山上宗二記, Part 6 第六卷. Tankōshinsha 淡交新社. Kyoto: p.105
  - 3 Yamashita N. 山下龍 (2016). The Development of Tea in Japan from Kissa to Chanoyu, the Relationship between the Warrior Class and Tea. Journal of Center for Language Studies Nagasaki University 長崎大学言語教育研究センター論集. Nagasaki University 長崎大学. Nagasaki: p.92-95

- 4 There is some discussion about Oribe's date of birth, this paper follows the explanation of Kuno Osamu 久野治 (1997). Oribe, Furuta-Oribe-no-subete Oribe 古田織部のすべて. Chôteisha 鳥影社. Tokyo: p.72-73
- 5 This paper takes 1603, the year Tokugawa Ieyasu appointed shogun, as the first year of the Edo-period, instead of 1600, the year of the battle at Sekigahara at which the Tokugawa established their hegemony over Japan.
- 6 A domain of 10,000 to 50,000 koku was regarded as a small domain, of 50,000 to 200,000 koku as a medium domain and of 200,000 and above as a large domain.
- 7 Also pronounced as 'oribe-no-tsukasa' and written as 織部助 or 織部正.
- 8 Kuwata T. 桑田忠親 (1990). Furuta-Oribe-no-sadô 古田織部の茶道. Kôdansha-gakujutsu-bunkô 講談社学術文庫. Tokyo: p.195
- 9 Sen S. 千宗左 (1977). Sadô-koten-zenshû, Kôshingegaki, Part 10, 茶道古典全集 第十卷, 江岑夏書. Tankôshinsha 淡交新社. Kyoto: p.71
- 10 Wikipedia public domain
- 11 Kuwata T. (1971): p.90-104.
- 12 Idem : p.101
- 13 Kuwata T. 桑田忠親 (1979). Sadô-no-rekishi 茶道の歴史. Kôdansha 講談社, Tokyo p.129-137
- 14 The 1591 letter from Rikyû to Matsui Yasuyuki, was displayed at the Sagawa Art Museum, Moriyama-city, Shiga-prefecture in October 2015, as part of the 400 year commemoration of Furuta Oribe Exhibition, It is in the possession of Kumamoto University Library Matsui Bunko.
- 15 Kuwata (1979) : 此内 織部茶之湯能無候
- 16 Kôzu Asao 神津 朝夫 (2011). Chôandôki-sadôshisodensho 長闍堂記・茶道四祖伝書 (抄) . Tankosha 淡交社, Kyoto.
- 17 Kuwata T. 桑田忠親 (1951). Shinshû-sadô-zenshû-sonogo-chajinhen 新修茶道全集其の五茶人篇 (一) . 春秋社 Shunjusha, Tokyo. p.329
- 18 Tanihata Akio 谷端昭夫 (2011). Chawagshigetsushû-kôshingegaki 茶話指月集・江岑夏書. Tankôsha-shuppan 淡交社出版, Kyoto.
- 19 Kumakura I. 熊倉功夫 (1995). Shiryô-ni-yoru-chanoyu-no-rekishi, Second part 史料による茶の湯の歴史, 下. Shufu-no-tomosha 主婦の友社. Tokyo: p.139
- 20 Idem.
- 21 Kuwata T. 桑田忠親 (1980). Sadô-to-chajin (1), part 8 茶道と茶人(一) 第八卷. Akita-shoten 秋田書店, Tokyo: p.119
- 22 Kuwata T. 桑田忠親 (1971). Sadô-koten-zenshû, Yamanoue-Sôji-ki 茶道古典全集, 山上宗二記, Part 6 第六卷. Tankôshinsha 淡交新社. Kyoto: p.105
- 23 Hirota Yoshitaka 廣田吉崇 (2015). Ocha-tenmae-no-kenkyû, chanoyu-44-ryuha-no-hikaku-to-bunseki お点前の研究 茶の湯 44 流派の比較と分析. Ôsumi-shoten 大隅書店, Ôtsu. Shiga.
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- 28 Ichino C. 市野千鶴子 (1976): p.266
- 29 Ibid.: p.99-104
- 30 Idem.: p.56  
Also: Nakamura Masao 中村 昌生 (1998). Chashitsu-no-rekishi 茶室の歴史, Tankosha 淡交社, Kyoto. p.74
- 31 Miyashita Harumasa 宮下玄覇 (2014). Furuta-oribe-no-sekai 古田織部の世界. Miyobishuppansha 宮帯出版社, Kyoto. p: 148-151
- 32 En-an (燕庵) is situated in Kyoto and was designed by Oribe for the Yabunouchi (藪内) family, head of the Yabunouchi school of tea in Kyoto and Roteki-an (露適庵) is a reconstruction of a structure that Oribe designed for his own use and that was moved to its present place in Onomoichi-city, Hiroshima in 1814.
- 33 Murai Yasuhiko 村井康彦 (1983) . Sadô-shûki part 4 Furuta-oribe-roni 古田織部論 茶道聚錦 4. Shôgakukan 小学館, Tokyo. p. 66-75
- 34 Ichino C. 市野千鶴子. (1976): p.58