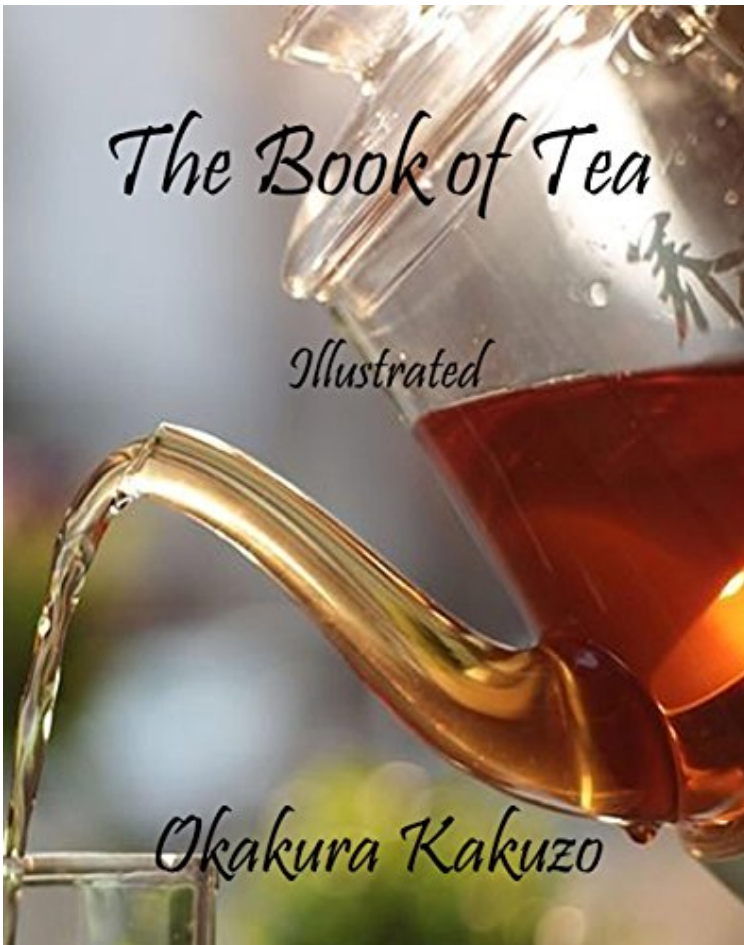


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# The Book of Tea: Illustrated



*Par Okakura Kakuzo*  
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**Description :** Description du produitTea began as a medicine and grew into a beverage. In China, in the eighth century, it entered the realm of poetry as one of the polite amusements. The fifteenth century saw Japan ennoble it into a religion of aestheticism --Teaism.

Prsentation de l'diteurThe Book of Tea: Illustrated, by Okakura Kakuzo was first published in 1919.A Japanese Harmony of Art Culture The Simple Life. - Containing many illustrations in colour and in black and white.This little book is illuminating in its revelation of the old world of Japanese thought and culture, with its reaction on Japanese daily life. It is not a translation, but was written in English.The author, the late Okakura Kakuzo, was one of theleaders in the movement which a generation ago set itself to stem the western invasion, spreading like a malaria over every field of intellectual activity and threatening to submerge entirely the ancient beautiful Japanese civilisation.The illustrations are chosen from our own National collections, and in the appendix will be found further details as to the Tea Ceremony and its various accessories..comThat a nation should construct one of its most resonant national ceremonies round a cup of tea will surely strike a chord of sympathy with at least some readers of this review. To many foreigners, nothing is so quintessentially Japanese as the tea ceremony--more properly, "the way of tea"--with its austerity, its extravagantly minimalist stylization, and its concentration of extreme subtleties of meaning into

the simplest of actions. The Book of Tea is something of a curiosity: written in English by a Japanese scholar (and issued here in bilingual form), it was first published in 1906, in the wake of the naval victory over Russia with which Japan asserted its rapidly acquired status as a world-class military power. It was a peak moment of Westernization within Japan. Clearly, behind the publication was an agenda, or at least a mission to explain. Around its account of the ceremony, The Book of Tea folds an explication of the philosophy, first Taoist, later Zen Buddhist, that informs its oblique celebration of simplicity and directness--what Okakura calls, in a telling phrase, "moral geometry." And the ceremony itself? Its greatest practitioners have always been philosophers, but also artists, connoisseurs, collectors, gardeners, calligraphers, gourmets, flower arrangers. The greatest of them, Sen Rikyu, left a teasingly, maddeningly simple set of rules: Make a delicious bowl of tea; lay the charcoal so that it heats the water; arrange the flowers as they are in the field; in summer suggest coolness; in winter, warmth; do everything ahead of time; prepare for rain; and give those with whom you find yourself every consideration. A disciple remarked that this seemed elementary. Rikyu replied, "Then if you can host a tea gathering without deviating from any of the rules I have just stated, I will become your disciple." A Zen reply. Fascinating. --Robin Davidson, .co.ukBoston Globe"Beautifully written."